Volunteers

A Guide for Volunteers and Their Organisations

Mary Woods

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To Susan

One of the Crones of volunteering.

Keep on being a wise woman

With best wishes

Mary

4/3/05

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Contents

Preface

This book grew out of my experience as a volunteer and as a paid worker working with volunteers.

I am grateful to all the people I worked with as a volunteer in Playcentre, PTA, Good Samaritan Society, Pregnancy Help Inc., my parish of St Peter's Beckenham and the Canterbury Volunteer Centre. They all contributed to my knowledge of volunteering. I am also grateful to the clients of such organisations, who taught me much about effective helping.

It was the experience of working with volunteers that led me to apply for a Winston Churchill Fellowship. The generosity of this fellowship allowed me to travel to Canada, England, Scotland and the US, where I heard the stories of hundreds of volunteers and their coordinators. Much of what I know about the management of volunteers was crystallised for me by two women I met on this journey – Liz Burns in Scotland and Marlene Wilson in Boulder, Colorado.

I first met Liz when I heard her give the keynote address to the national conference of the Volunteer Centre UK in Birmingham in 1991. A few days later she gave her time generously to this wandering Kiwi in Stirling, Scotland, where she is director of Volunteer Development Scotland. She helped me impose order and perspective on the gallons of information that I had gleaned over the previous six weeks of travel and interviewing. She helped me draw from my own experience and from hers the patterns of volunteering and the processes of managing volunteers. She also taught me that Scotland is not England and New Zealand is neither of them. History and culture shape the volunteer structures of each country. She then sent me off to meet more people who would help me further develop the threads of volunteering.

I had already read some of Marlene's work when I participated in her volunteer management programme. I felt privileged to work with this energetic woman, learn some new ways of working and have some of my existing methods affirmed and expanded. She and her team at Boulder are certainly the most creative and fun-loving educational group I have experienced. She describes herself as a crone – a woman of age, knowledge, experience and wisdom. I would endorse that.

I learned much from the wisdom and experience of these two women.

My subsequent paid work in the area of training with Pregnancy Help Inc., Birthright NZ, Christchurch Catholic Social Services and various other welfare groups in Christchurch have all helped expand my experience and contribute to my knowledge.

In the process of developing this book, many people have told me their stories of volunteering. I am grateful to these people, as they have helped expand my understanding.

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I must thank my husband Les who, as well as bearing with the limitations of a wife who is always doing something else, helped with editing and was available to unravel the computing hitches that inevitably seem to invade my life. I greatly appreciate the support of my extended family – sisters, brothers and in-laws who contributed in various ways by commenting on parts of the text, sharing their experiences and offering ideas. Special thanks go to my sister Helen O'Callaghan for her editorial work. I also thank my mother, mother-in-law, and children – Catherine, Greg, Margaret and Peter – whose cooking improved as their mother wrote. This feels very much like a family and community production and that is what volunteering is really about.

Thanks must also go to Meta Whiteside, whose drawings enliven the text, and to Rachel Scott, who edited the final version.

Introduction

Volunteering has always been part of my life. My father spent many of his Saturday and midweek hours organising and coaching schoolboy rugby. My mother was the president of the local National Council of Women. This position, a voluntary one, could only be reached through years of voluntary experience with some of the organisations that made up this council. Now in her eighties, she still works for Amnesty International and other justice causes.

Every spring my husband and a friend spend days of unpaid time marking out a running track on a park in our suburb to be used by the local running club and various schools who hold their sports there. His mother is the local president of the Country Women's Institute. Among their community activities, this group's members spend many hours knitting baby clothes for mothers in need.

One of my daughters spends much of her holiday time working as a volunteer in primary schools. The other one at 17 runs with her friend a junior youth group in our church. My eldest son, like his grandfather, gives time to schoolboy sport. He coaches volleyball. The youngest at 13 will play in the orchestra for the children's Christmas service, even though it's not his favourite style of music.

Our family is not unique. When I look around our neighbourhood I see similar stories unfolding. The woman on one side of us was a Girls' Brigade leader. The couple on the other side work many long hours on conservation and anti-nuclear issues. A woman further up the road bakes and makes jam and pickles to raise funds for children's athletics. A group who meet regularly at the local swimming pool each summer were on the Playcentre committee together 20 years ago. Even the school swimming pool is open for use over the summer because people in the neighbourhood are prepared to volunteer to clean and maintain it each day.

Regularly there will be a knock on the door as volunteers come to collect for the Foundation for the Blind or Corso or Red Cross or Salvation Army or some other voluntary group in the community.

All these activities are carried out by people who choose to do them without being paid for their work. This is voluntary work.

Most of my life I took this all for granted. Volunteer work was something

you did. Sometimes it was a good experience and sometimes it wasn't. However, in recent years people have looked more deeply into why people volunteer and what makes volunteer work effective for the volunteer, the organisation and the community.

In this book I am putting my own experience of volunteering in New Zealand together with what I have learnt here and in Canada, Britain and the United States. I have written it because I have the greatest admiration for people who work as volunteers. I want them and the rest of the community to recognise the enormous value of their contribution. I want to share what I have learnt to help make volunteering a better experience for all.

In Part 1 I look at what volunteering is, its history, the extent of it and what motivates people to do it. Part 2 is about the management of volunteers. Here I discuss the various procedures that are needed to make volunteering work. They are the practices needed to ensure continued quality volunteering. They are applicable wherever volunteers work. However, procedures alone do not guarantee success when dealing with people, so Part 3 examines some of the ways in which things can go wrong. This leads to ideas for working more constructively. Part 4 looks at volunteering in different contexts. It highlights the features that are important because of the varying demands made of volunteers on boards, in church groups, in sport and in the care of others.

I have included stories to illustrate particular points. Where the story is my own it is true. Where the story is about other people I have changed details and sometimes fused together different people to protect identities (and retain friendships!).

Each reader will have their own story to add so I have included questions throughout the text to encourage individual readers and groups to explore the ideas in the light of their own experience.

As a Pakeha woman I have written from that experience – about people volunteering in Pakeha organisations in New Zealand, simply because that is my culture. This model of volunteering is based on the volunteering traditions of white English-speaking cultures: England, Scotland, Canada and the United States. As I write it I am conscious of the gap left because, while I have at times referred to Maori organisations, I have not included the experience of Maori. Yet as a Pakeha woman I must write first from my own experience.

In volunteering as in all other activities, different cultures will see things through different lenses and do things in different ways. I can claim that what I write will have relevance to those who share my heritage. I do not

wish to imply that these ideas are common to people of all cultures. I would like to think that in the future there will be another book, a bicultural book giving the perspectives of both Maori and Pakeha cultures.

Meantime I must give birth to this book in the belief that it is through the understanding of my own culture that I learn to appreciate another.

I greet the tangata whenua, the people of this land, who received my ancestors.

Part 1

The Volunteers

Chapter 1

Volunteer Work

The Value of Volunteers

Over a million people volunteered in New Zealand in the four weeks prior to the 1996 census. That is, over a million people chose to work for others without payment. This volunteer workforce is nearly half the size of New Zealand's paid workforce. Volunteers therefore make a significant contribution to the well-being of people in New Zealand society. They could well be one of the country's biggest assets.

There has been an increasing awareness of the importance of the contribution of volunteers in recent years. While in the past people may have been left to find their own ways of supporting their volunteer work, recently there has been worldwide interest in finding ways to effectively manage and support volunteers. Volunteer centres have started up in some cities. Some polytechnics and private training facilities are offering training in the management of volunteers. Agencies are starting to appoint staff who have the specific responsibility of managing and training volunteers.

Just as the business world is forever looking at better ways of managing its workforce, so people are discovering that appropriate management strategies can enhance the benefits of volunteering for both the volunteer and the community.

Volunteers deserve to be well managed.

Formal management of volunteers can and does borrow from the world of paid work with job descriptions, contracts and mission statements. But it needs to adapt these to suit the unique situation of volunteering, which assumes that although volunteers do not expect monetary returns, they have other motivational needs. The basis of the management of volunteers is finding appropriate ways to meet volunteers' motivational needs so that they continue to enjoy being effective providers of a service.

If an agency is to have an effective volunteer programme it needs to know how to manage its volunteers.

Volunteers are more than just a significant part of the workforce. They are people choosing to work for reasons other than money. They follow dreams and support causes. They give generously. Their methods are

creative. They are not limited by the need to see a financial return from their work. They are flexible. They form relationships. They expect to have fun. Voluntary work is done by the community for the community. It gives people a connection with the community they belong to and a sense of purpose. It helps build community. Volunteer management needs to take into account volunteers' diversity as well as their commonality. Volunteers deserve to be managed well.

Volunteers are people who choose to work without monetary payment.

Before looking at how to better manage volunteers it is necessary to explore how volunteers are viewed in current society and some history to explain this view.

Volunteers are people who choose to work without monetary payment. They present a way of living that is different from the monetary-based system of the market economy so it is not surprising that a market-driven society views volunteers with ambivalence. Some of the conflicting ideas that people express are:

- Volunteers are generous.
- Volunteers fill the gaps.
- Volunteers are unpaid workers.
- Volunteers are unreliable.
- Volunteers never let you down.
- Volunteers take responsibility.
- Volunteers are mugs.
- You can't expect much of a volunteer.
- Volunteers work professionally.
- They are only volunteers.
- Volunteers are our most valuable asset.

Much of this ambivalence has an historical basis.

The History of Volunteering

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* states that the word 'volunteer' originated from the Latin *voluntas* meaning 'free will'.

The term volunteer has been traditionally used in a military context to distinguish soldiers who sign up from choice from those who are called up for compulsory enlistment. In this context the volunteer is the professional soldier. Tied in with this is the concept of giving service as a duty owed to society. But we also know the caricature of a commanding officer calling for volunteers: 'You, you and you.' Here the so-called

volunteers are the mugs who did not get out of the way fast enough. But then again there are some tasks that are too difficult or dangerous to be allotted to a particular person, so volunteers are called for. Here the volunteer is the one who is the bravest. The military derivation of the word thus brings with it the conflicting concepts of professionals, mugs and heroes. This same ambivalence seems to carry over to the concept of volunteers working unpaid in our communities.

The mixed strands of history give some explanation for the ambivalence and negativity often experienced by volunteers.

The other concept of a volunteer comes from charity, religion and philanthropy. Since their beginning the Christian churches have had a mandate to care for the poor, the sick and the homeless. This was often the work of religious orders and many orders were founded for the particular purpose of performing charitable work. The Salvation Army was formed with a specific welfare focus, but all denominations had their outreach groups involved in welfare and education. In colonial days these were frequently led by the minister's wife. The 20th century has seen the decline of many religious orders and the care of those in need has increasingly become the work of lay people, often on a voluntary basis.

Despite the genuine professional caring work done by many Christians through the ages, the word volunteer in this context is sometimes tainted with the charitable 'do-gooder' image, of one who is full of goodwill but naive and thus incompetent, so again there is ambivalence.

Charitable giving has always involved gifts of time, money, and goods. The term volunteer describing the charitable gift of time is likely to have entered the English language in the latter part of the 19th century, when massive poverty and deprivation gave rise to great philanthropic and charitable endeavour.

Volunteering exists across countries and cultures, though it may be expressed in different ways. Colonialists who sailed to 19th-century New Zealand came to a land where working for and giving to the community were already an integral part of marae life. They tried to produce copies of British charities doing good for the poor. It became a way to 'demarcate the respectable from the unrespectable and to establish status'.[1] Inevitably, however, New Zealand volunteer organisations took on their own flavour, moving with the social, political and racial climate of this place and time. Ambivalence was again evident as the colonialists were loath to acknowledge the presence of needy people in this new society.

Prominent in New Zealand in this period was the Women's Christian Temperance Union, formed in 1885. This is best known for its political role in leading the world to gain the vote for women, but it was also involved in welfare and the needs of children. Maori were involved in volunteer political and welfare action both separately and in Pakeha organisations. Nga Komiti Wahine were women's committees on the marae, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union had a separate Maori section by 1894.

The unique pattern of welfare in New Zealand was shaped by development of the welfare state. Many people saw the government as the provider of all health and welfare needs. This may have seemed to reduce the need for much volunteer activity until the middle of this century, but did not exclude it.

By the 1960s people were realising that there were needs that could not be met by the state. This saw the proliferation of voluntary groups providing for particular needs. It also led to the rise of the 'self-help' model, where groups of people came together to meet the needs of their own members. Many of these were groups formed by women to help other women, often victims of violence or other abuse. The nature of the work done in these groups was truly voluntary. Members came of their own free will to help others with their difficulties and to be helped themselves. During this period of New Zealand's development funding for voluntary work was provided by government as well as private philanthropic trusts.

This was also a time of growing political awareness of such issues as sexism and racism. Maori groups were formed to challenge the country to look seriously at the 20th-century implications of the Treaty of Waitangi. Maori also formed groups to find more culturally appropriate ways to meet their own needs in what was by now a predominantly Pakeha society. Pakeha and Maori worked together to protest against apartheid in South Africa and against nuclear testing. The work of these groups was to bring about social change. They added a political dimension to charitable work. While they do not always see themselves as such, these 'community activists' can be described as volunteers. They work unpaid for the good of the community.

Again we see a pattern of ambivalence. A movement from the 'Lady Bountiful' help of the rich giving to the poor, to community and self-help: one group helping others, and groups formed for the members to help themselves. 'Do-gooders' and genuine carers have volunteered throughout this history. Welfare work and political action have been side by side.

These rather mixed strands of history give some explanation for the ambivalence and negativity often experienced by volunteers in the 1990s. The concept of being a volunteer comes from many sources and carries with it a mix of conflicting ideas. Are they mugs or heroes? Can they be

professional, though amateur? Is volunteering just about a duty to society? Are they a bunch of do-gooders or activists or a self-help group? How does society recognise their presence and their worth?

Is it any wonder that volunteers do not always see the value of their contribution to society?

What words come into your mind at the mention of the word volunteer? What is the history of the volunteer role you fill?

Definitions

As we get further into our discussion of volunteers, some definitions are needed.

- A volunteer is a person who chooses to offer or perform a service without receiving a financial reward.

A volunteer may be a chairperson of a board, a manager or a worker in an organisation. The work they do has a wide range. Some volunteers perform skilled work. Others do work that requires no great skill but is nevertheless important to achieve the purpose of the group. They may make a commitment to a single project or to continuous service over a period of time – weeks, months or sometimes many years.

As we shall see later, a volunteer would normally expect to have the expenses related to their volunteer work paid. Some volunteers may receive an honorarium. This is a sum paid to a person in a voluntary position that demands specific skills (often a secretary). It is not equivalent to a wage, so a person receiving such an honorarium would still be considered a volunteer.

Volunteers can and should be expected to give a high standard of service.

- A **voluntary organisation** is an organisation set up voluntarily in the community to meet a particular need. It is not a government or a profit-making body. The North American term is a 'not-for-profit' organisation.

A voluntary organisation is often governed by a board made up of volunteers, either appointed or elected. Its staff may be either paid or volunteer; or a mixture of both.

- Recent years have seen the rise of **volunteer centres**. They are central groups in some towns and cities with the common purpose of promoting volunteering. They do this by keeping the work of volunteers in the public

eye. Some have a role in recruiting, selecting, training and placing volunteers in organisations that have suitable work for them. They also figure largely in the recognition of the contribution made by volunteers to the community they work in.

At this time there is a New Zealand-wide national network of volunteer centres. It is working towards a role of watchdog for legislation that could affect volunteers. It could be a lobby group to put forward the needs of volunteers and work to prevent them from exploitation.

Volunteer centres are modelled on similar bodies that have been an integral part of the British and North American scene for some years. They are an encouraging development, which should enhance the recognition of the worthwhile contribution of volunteers in the communities they work in.

Measuring and Valuing Volunteer Work

In our society work is generally valued by the amount of money that is paid for it. It is common in groups to hear the suggestion that if a service or training is being offered, a charge should be made purely so that people will value it more.

At a gathering people will ask a woman (more often than a man): 'Do you work?' meaning: 'Are you in paid employment?' This gives the impression that the only 'real' work is paid work. Yet there are thousands of hours of unpaid work done by volunteers in the community, not to mention the unpaid work of parents who care for their children at home.

The recording of statistical information about volunteering is very recent and still at a minimal level. Marilyn Waring in her book *Counting for Nothing* [2] addresses the issue of the invisibility of women's work in the United Nations National Accounts. When countries gather their statistics and record their national accounts they typically exclude volunteer work and work done by women at home. This way of recording information institutionalises the view that unpaid work has no value. Policies based on statistics that do not include measures of the value of voluntary work are inappropriate and oppressive of the people who do the invisible work.

Not measuring and not valuing volunteer work belittles the major contribution made by volunteers to society and to the economy.

The behaviour that Marilyn Waring describes confirms the widely held view that volunteer work is not 'real' work. Yet the difference is only in the amount paid and not in the nature of the work. The following examples illustrate this:

Betty is a young mother with two preschoolers and expecting her third child next month. She is tired and the demands of her children and her housework are getting her down, but she does not qualify for paid home help. June comes as a volunteer from an agency for two hours twice a week. June hangs out washing, makes beds, cleans the bath, cleans floors and does some ironing.

Betty's neighbour Rose fell and broke her leg. Through the Accident Compensation Corporation Rose is able to get paid help. Kath comes into Rose's house and performs exactly the same activities as June does in Betty's.

Because Kath is paid to do her work it is recorded and counted in national accounts and statistics. It is called work. Because June is not paid, her work is not recorded in national accounts; in fact it is often not even called work.

It is not only at the basic level of work that this happens.

Anne is head of a section of a government department. Part of her work is to prepare a budget each year. She is paid to do this so it is recorded as productive work. She then spends her weekend preparing a budget for the local drama group. This is unpaid and therefore not counted and not considered to be real work.

Not measuring and not valuing volunteer work has the effect of belittling the major contribution made by volunteers to society and to the economy. The effect of this is to devalue the people who do volunteer work as well as the work done. Sadly many volunteers themselves have a very low image of their work because they believe the negative messages given them by society. They often refer to themselves as 'just a volunteer'.

Volunteer work has a history of being unacknowledged, so it is heartening to see some governments making efforts to take volunteers more seriously. Two significant examples are:

- In the United States, as from 15 December 1994, non-profit organisations are required to record in their corporate financial statements the value of volunteer service that requires specialised skill.
- The New Zealand government has included a question on voluntary work in the last three censuses.

Regardless of its invisibility to the institutions of government, volunteering, done well, greatly increases the nation's wealth.

Volunteering is good for the volunteers. It enables them to put their skills to use and develop new skills. It enhances their self-esteem and makes them feel worthwhile. It gives them a group to belong to.

Volunteering is good for the recipients of the service. They receive a service that they would not otherwise get. The quality of service given by volunteers is often different from that given by paid workers. Ideally a volunteer brings to their work a sense of caring that a paid worker may not have time to give.

Volunteering is good for the community. When volunteers reach out beyond their own needs to serve others without being paid for their service, a sense of community care and responsibility develops that makes the community a better place for all its members.

Volunteers need to know they are appreciated for the contribution they make and this happens when they experience good volunteer management.

Volunteering is good for volunteers, the recipient of the service and the community.

Who benefits from your volunteer work?

Who are New Zealand's Volunteers?

Recent censuses have attempted to measure the extent of volunteer work done in New Zealand. Census figures are designed to give an overall picture of a population. The degree to which they can do this depends on how the question is asked and how people respond to it. This is highlighted by the differences in response to questions on volunteering in the 1991 and 1996 censuses respectively.

In the 1991 New Zealand census, question 18 requested information on unpaid voluntary work and focused on the organisations this might be done for, e.g. Playcentre, sports club, church, club, marae or a neighbour. This question drew a positive response from 485,976 people, i.e. 19 per cent of the population over 15 years of age. (Appendix 1)

In the 1996 census, question 38 asked for information about work being done without pay for people not living in the same household. It specified types of work, e.g. childcare, household work, training, coaching, counselling, attending meetings and fundraising. This more inclusive question drew a positive response from 1,148,685 people, or 41 per cent of the population over 15 years of age. Of these, 44 per cent were men and 56 per cent were women.

More than one million people in New Zealand volunteer.

This latter figure does not represent a major shift in the number of people volunteering. It is far more likely that the 1991 figures represented

those who viewed themselves formally as volunteers, while the 1996 figures included a large number who identified more clearly with doing specific work for other people rather than working through an institution or agency. The former is more informal and carried out in less structured situations, but is every bit as important as the volunteering done formally through organisations.

Some 44 per cent of volunteers come from the full-time workforce.

The 1991 census figures can be used to fill out the picture. They reveal that the highest rate of volunteering (30 per cent) is by women who are employed in or seeking part-time work. Many of these women choose to work part-time in order to allow time for their voluntary work. The lowest rate (13 per cent) is by men who are not in the labour force. This belies the myth that most volunteers are people who have time on their hands because they are not in paid work. In fact 44 per cent of all volunteers come from the full-time workforce, while 35 per cent are not in the paid workforce.

The percentage of women who volunteer rises rapidly in the 30–35 age group and peaks between 35 and 39. This coincides with the time when they have maximum involvement in educational activities, with their children at preschool and school. Their involvement, however, stays high past this age as many transfer their volunteer activity from education to welfare.

The percentage of men who volunteer peaks at age 40–44, then declines evenly. During their time of highest activity, the bulk of their volunteer efforts are split fairly evenly between sport and welfare.

Reflect on your volunteer experience. What has been the pattern over your own life?

Look at the membership of your group. What is its make-up in terms of men and women, age distribution, employment status?

While statistics give us an overall picture of volunteering in New Zealand, the detail can be obtained by looking at a sample of specific organisations.

Volunteers contribute to all levels of education.

Volunteers contribute to all levels of education. Playcentres are preschools run by volunteer committees. They employ a paid supervisor who is assisted by volunteer parent helps. One of the features of this movement is regionalised training for parent helps, executives and supervisors. This has been the place where many a public figure first learned her committee skills. The other major preschool systems, kindergarten and kohanga reo, are also managed by volunteer committees.

Whether in the state system or private, the majority of schools in New

Zealand are run by a committee or board of trustees. These are made up of volunteers and some paid teaching staff. While a small honorarium is paid to members for attending meetings, it does not cover the hours of work they do.

Out of school time the Scout and Guide movements provide a creative and constructive experience for many young people. Again this is done with a largely voluntary workforce.

Volunteers are pivotal to sport and recreation. Every Saturday morning hundreds of parents take their children out to play a wide range of sports – netball, rugby, soccer, hockey, cricket, softball, athletics, swimming... These sports are administered, coached, refereed and organised by volunteers. With very few exceptions this continues right to international level.

Teams of volunteers assist the Department of Conservation in the upkeep of tracks in the mountains. Theatre, opera, ballet and museums depend on volunteers for all sorts of assistance, particularly at the local level. Volunteers paint sets, make costumes, sell tickets and act as ushers.

Whether in the major political parties or in a small group promoting one specific issue, much of the work involved in political activity is done by volunteers. They design, print and deliver pamphlets. They write letters. They speak at meetings. They plan and implement campaigns. They raise funds to pay for the materials they use.

Many voluntary health and welfare organisations have arisen to meet a specific need. Some are local, some are national. Most are run by a volunteer management board and many have volunteer workers. Some also employ paid workers.

The Maori Women's Welfare League spans both political and welfare activities. It acts as a representative and consultative body for Maori women's issues. But it is also actively involved in the provision of services for Maori in the fields of health, welfare, education and promotion of Maori culture and language.

Most mothers in New Zealand will have experienced the work of the Plunket Society. This national voluntary organisation, which provides a service to mothers and babies, is governed by a national executive made

Most voluntary health and welfare organisations are run by a volunteer management board.

up of volunteers. It employs managers and specifically trained nurses to give professional care and guidance to mothers on family health and development and the feeding and safety of the baby. Local volunteer executives become involved in fundraising and social activities for mothers.

Women's Refuge and other support organisations for women fleeing violent partners operate as a collective rather than employing the hierarchical model of management board and workers. The collectives can have a mix of paid and unpaid workers. They were the first to develop parallel services for Maori and Pakeha women, equal and side by side.

Citizen's Advice Bureau volunteers respond to people's need for information. Pregnancy Help volunteers give assistance to expectant and new mothers. Birthright volunteers give support to one-parent families. Samaritans and Lifeline volunteers provide a 24-hour telephone counselling service for those in life crises. Some of these groups have a mix of paid and unpaid workers.

Many local groups provide support for people who are lonely, or who are dealing with sexual abuse, rape or various illnesses. These are often 'self-help' groups, which come together to meet the needs of their own members.

Red Cross, Save the Children Fund, Oxfam and Corso operate with both paid workers and volunteers. They provide welfare services at an international level.

Even state-funded services such as public hospitals have huge numbers of volunteers supporting the work of health professionals and increasingly raising money for ongoing services.

Churches run social services for the community at large, with a mix of volunteers and paid workers in both management and service delivery. They also use volunteers for all manner of educational, community, musical and other pastoral and liturgical service activities for their membership and often for the wider community.

This whole book could be filled with descriptions of volunteer activities – fire brigades, specialist museums, SPCA, Search and Rescue, service clubs, protectors of forests, wildlife, environment. The list could go on and on. But this is sufficient to show that many of the vital, much of the caring and most of the leisure activities in our society are organised and carried out by volunteers.

The catch-phrase of one American volunteer recognition campaign was: 'Volunteers Light Up Our Lives.'[3]

What volunteer work do you do?
How do you benefit from the work of volunteers?

The place of volunteer work in society is the context for the rest of this book, which deals with management issues for individual volunteers and groups of volunteers in agencies. For all who work with volunteers there is a general body of knowledge about volunteering that is universally applicable. In the last three chapters of this book some of the issues particular to specific groups will be teased out in more detail.

Chapter 2

Volunteers and Motivation

'Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davey, Dan'l Whidden, Harry Hawk, Old Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all.'
— 'Widdicombe Fair', *The Oxford Book of Ballads*

Volunteers are Individuals

There is no such thing as a typical volunteer.

Volunteers are all ages and come from all walks of life. The stereotype that volunteer work is done by middle-aged married women with time on their hands is far from the truth. The list below shows a little of the range.

Jane is a 40-year-old nurse with two teenage daughters who works as a volunteer for a counselling service.

Betty is single. She is personnel manager for a factory, a more than full-time job, and she works voluntarily for the preservation of historic buildings.

Bert retired early because of ill health but is a voluntary driver for people going to hospital appointments.

Lesley is a young university graduate who volunteers as a support person to teenage mothers.

Kerry is unemployed and volunteers at a food bank.

Paul is a builder's apprentice who coaches a rugby team for 10-year-olds.

Anne finishes her work at the bank then leads a Girl Guide pack.

Bill is a teacher who writes the neighbourhood association newsletter.

Eileen spent her retirement from being a hospital matron in setting up a voluntary caring group.

Pat is a trainer who spends her evenings and weekends as a voluntary trainer of workers in caring groups.

Lucy is a grandmother who babysits for young mothers to give them a break.

Penny is 14 and volunteers her artistic skill to make posters for many groups in her church and school community.

Bert is an optometrist who volunteers his professional skills for two weeks each year in remote Pacific Islands.

Volunteers are all sorts of people. They volunteer for all sorts of reasons. They can be professional people or children. They may be in employment or they may not. They may have tertiary education or they may have left school at 15.

The Uniqueness of Each Volunteer

In fact each volunteer is unique. Angie Lichty, who manages the Volunteer Bureau in Dryden, a little town 100km north of the US border right in the middle of Canada, approaches her work with the philosophy that: 'Each person who volunteers is *unique* and important and has abilities that fit together with those of other volunteers like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.' Our uniqueness can show itself in all sorts of ways.

I am not an early riser. My creative mind is very dead in the morning. I wake up slowly. By about 11am my mind is starting to function and my energy is rising. My best time for writing is between 4pm and 7pm, much to the frustration of my family, who believe that is the time for me to be cooking and eating. My husband, on the other hand, rises early and will have done a couple of hours' work before I am prepared to face the day. He of course needs to go to bed early. I often work with a friend who bounces out of bed at 6am. Her creative mind is very much alive in the morning; her energy is flagging as mine is rising. I am an owl. My husband and my friend are larks. Our working patterns and

our sleeping patterns are very different. To live and work together we need to take into account these differences.

The same is true when working with volunteers. Each of them bring their own unique needs and patterns that affect how they work.

What time of day is your creativity and energy at its highest? What is your low time? How does that fit in with other members of your group?

A useful exercise for a group is to form a continuum of larks to owls, according to which part of the day they function best in.

These differences are very simple but important. Imagine what's going to happen if you are running a camp with a tight timetable and you set a group of owls to cook breakfast or leave the larks responsible for putting the fires out at night!

Why Do People Volunteer?

A useful way of learning about volunteer motivation is to track your own volunteer experience.

Start by making a list of any volunteer work you have done or are doing.

It is important to understand the reasons why people volunteer.

The volunteer workforce has two unique attributes: its members work of their own free choice and they work for reasons other than money.

To be able to work effectively with volunteers it is important to understand the reasons why they volunteer and the motivation behind their reasons. It is the understanding of these that is the key to making volunteering a good experience for the volunteer and the organisation using them.

Go back to your list of volunteer work you have done. Why did you volunteer to do each job?

In broad terms, there are two sorts of volunteers:

- Those who volunteer because of their belief in a particular cause.
- Those who volunteer because they have a skill or need and that organisation is a place where that skill can be used or that need met.

People volunteer for a whole range of reasons. There are no 'right' reasons or 'wrong' reasons for volunteering. There are just reasons.

There are no 'right' reasons or 'wrong' reasons for volunteering.

Reasons Why People Volunteer

- to gain work experience
- to express religion or belief
- to learn new skills
- to avert loneliness
- to get to know people
- because of belief in a worthwhile cause
- to have a group to belong to
- to change society
- to repay help received
- to use skills for the good of society
- it looks good on a CV
- it's a means to an end
- to benefit children or other family members
- to gain recognition
- to get perks (e.g. free tickets)
- to set an example
- to please someone else
- to work with caring people
- to test leadership skills
- to help people in need
- to right a wrong
- to work as part of a Christian or Buddhist or Hindu community
- to acquire self-confidence
- to get out of the house
- to give time and skills instead of money
- for spiritual development
- to feel a sense of power and success
- because of tradition
- to help the growth of others
- to keep active
- to escape a difficult life
- to maintain health
- for personal development
- to have their skills appreciated
- to improve the environment

These are some of the reasons people give for offering their services free of charge. People will offer themselves for positions that they think will fulfil the needs expressed by these reasons, but if these needs are not met they are unlikely to continue.

The reasons cover a wide range, and so do the needs they reflect, which makes the thought of having to meet them rather daunting. A number of theorists, however, have done work that allows us to look at them in broad categories.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The first of these theorists is psychologist Abraham Maslow.[4] Maslow is widely quoted and written about in many contexts. His theory is that people have a hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation. Having these needs met is a source of motivation for their behaviour.

Maslow believes that for humans to be able to develop their human capacity to the fullest degree their basic needs must be met. In general the lower needs in the hierarchy must be met before the higher ones can emerge.

Maslow's theory is that the need to move from the lower to the higher needs motivates people.

Maslow's theory is that the need to move from the lower to the higher needs motivates people to act in such a way that their needs will be met. The needs at the bottom of the hierarchy – the physiological and safety needs – are the basic needs for survival. If these needs are not met the human body will not survive.

Meeting the more basic needs can become totally consuming. The person who does not have enough food or water finds it is impossible to reach out to other people. This is recognised in the safety procedures on airlines. If oxygen masks are needed, adults are instructed to fit their own masks before attending to a child. After all, the adult will very quickly become incapable of caring for the child if they run out of air.

Working through the needs, we will look at how they relate to reasons for volunteering.

Physiological Needs

The physiological needs are clean air, food, water, shelter, rest and warmth. They are whatever is needed for physical survival. While most people have to have these needs met before they can consider working as volunteers,

occasionally a person will volunteer to help in a place where they would get a free meal. At this level most people are totally occupied with meeting their own needs – their survival depends on this.

Safety Needs

Once the physiological needs have been met, the next issue a person has to deal with is their own safety. They need to feel secure, stable and free from fear of attack. Again, this is an all-engrossing need that until it is met does not leave much energy for outside activity. The need, however, to be in a safe place could be a motivator for some refuge workers.

In our society people need money to meet their physiological and safety needs. As volunteer work does not produce money these needs do not act as a motivator for volunteering except in rare cases. Volunteering, however, can meet the higher needs.

Social Needs

These are the needs for acceptance, having and being able to give love, friendship and intimacy. Maslow called this belongingness and love. Our list of reasons for volunteering does start to include reasons that fit into this category – to avert loneliness, to get to know people, to have a group to belong to, to benefit children or other family members, to please someone else, to work with caring people, to get out of the house, to work as part of a community. Certainly many people are motivated to volunteer as a means of meeting their social needs.

Esteem Needs

These include the need for self-confidence, to feel important, respected, competent, useful and needed. These are needs that can much more clearly be met by reaching out to other people. The list of reasons includes: to learn new skills, to repay help received, to gain recognition, to acquire self-confidence, to maintain health, for personal development, to feel a sense of power and success. Volunteer work is well recognised as a way of improving self-esteem.

Self-actualisation Needs

This is the need to reach one's full potential, whatever that is. It involves developing one's gifts and becoming a fully integrated person. In this regard volunteering can offer opportunities to gain work experience, to learn new skills, to express religion or belief, to keep active, to add to a CV, to test leadership skills, to give time and skills instead of money.

Self-transcendence

Within self-actualisation Maslow included another motivating force: self-transcendence. Later writers have named this separately.

This highest need is the ability to move beyond one's own needs to serve the needs of others. It involves the development of the spiritual as part of the human. Reasons for volunteering might include: to express religion or belief, because of belief in a worthwhile cause, to change society, to use skills for the good of society, to help people in need, to right a wrong, for spiritual development, to help the growth of others.

In applying this knowledge to the motivation of volunteers the needs are expressed in a series of concentric circles (ovals) rather than a hierarchy. This highlights the all-consuming nature of Maslow's basic needs. With the basic needs at the centre it is possible to see how totally self-occupying they are. When they are not met it is exceedingly difficult to reach out to other people, so volunteering is unlikely. As we get nearer the outside it becomes easier to reach out and meet the needs of others at the same time as the volunteer is meeting his or her own needs. Self-transcendence is right on the outside of the circle, free from impediments to reach beyond personal needs to the needs of others.

The human figures in the diagram express the ability of a person to reach out to help others. It is very difficult to do this when overwhelmed with basic needs, but as these needs are met the figure rises and reaches out further and further.

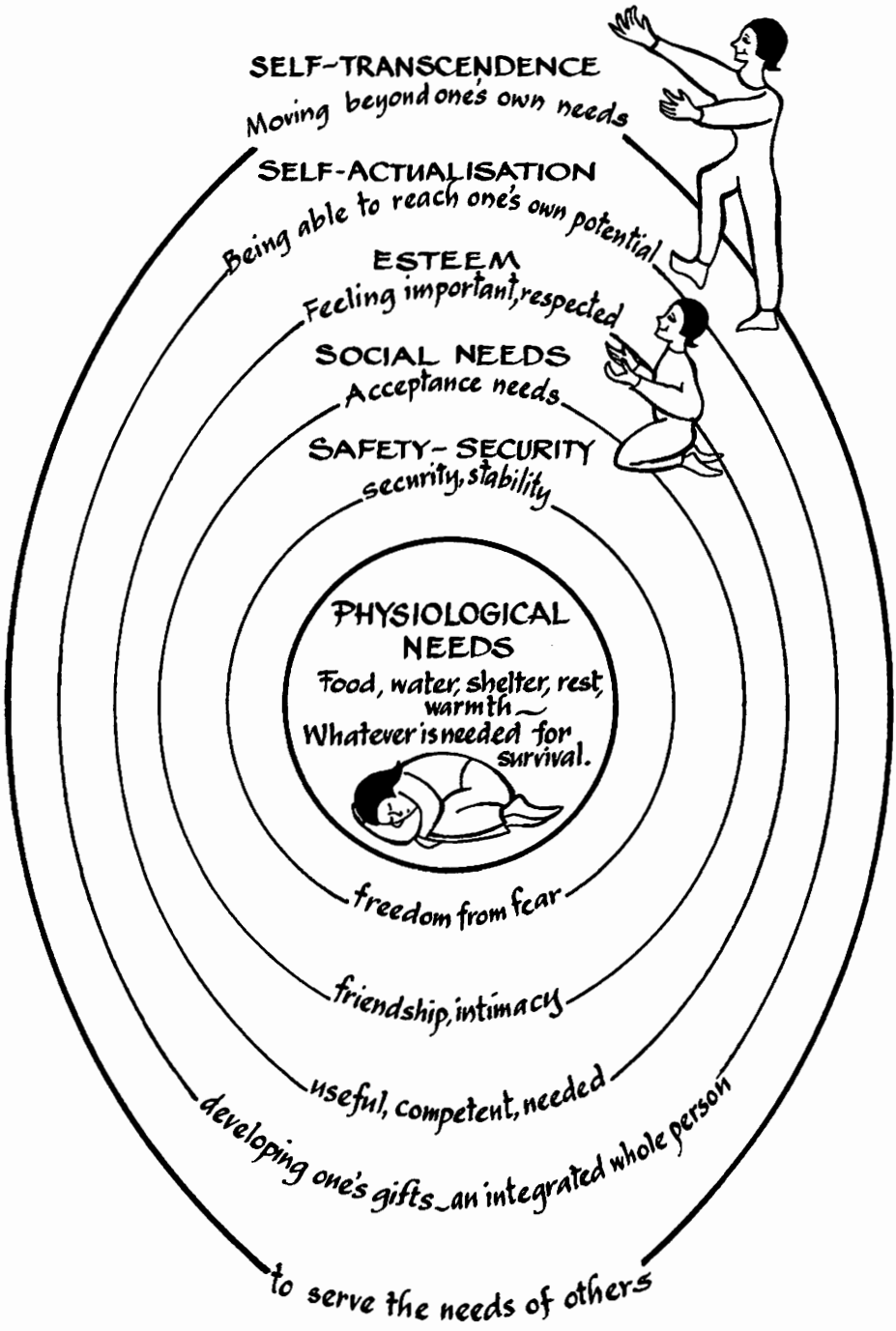
Needs are motivators only until they are met.

Maslow's theory says that these needs are motivators only until they are met. Once the need is met it no longer acts as a motivator as the person moves on to have the next set of needs met.

People can be motivated to continue to work in the same volunteer position if the opportunity for development exists. If such an opportunity does not exist, however, they will move on to another situation where their further needs can be met. This is important to understand for groups who want to retain their volunteers.

> Grace was new to the area. She had a two-month-old baby. She was lonely and felt she did not belong. She joined the Red Cross committee to make friends. She was welcomed and her need for friendship was soon met, but every time she offered to do anything to help the group her offer was refused. The 'kind' women on the committee did not want to worry her as she had a baby to look after. She was soon feeling dissatisfied as she was not being allowed to feel useful or important.

Expression of motivational needs and ability to reach out to others



She left and moved on to another group, who were prepared to allow her to have her self-esteem needs met.

Groups need to be aware of this process of progressive motivating needs. In some situations it will be possible to give volunteers opportunities to develop and thus keep them in the organisation. In others it may be a matter of acknowledging that the type of work required of the volunteer is such that volunteers will only be prepared to do it for a short time. In this case it is not failure on the part of the organisation if it does not retain its workers. Rather it is appropriate to acknowledge that this is in the nature of the particular work being done, and to plan for recruiting a continuing supply of workers.

Maslow's theory is a useful tool from which to gain general insights. No theory, however, will completely describe any individual person. Remember: we are all unique.

At what level have your needs been met?
Which needs are motivating you at this time?
How have your needs changed at different times of your life?

McClelland's Motivational Needs

Other researchers have also come up with theories about how people are motivated. Of particular relevance to volunteer activity is the work done by David McClelland.[5] According to McClelland there are three different motivational needs:

- The need for achievement
- The need for affiliation
- The need for power

People who are motivated by the need for **achievement** like to have goals to work towards. They think about how to overcome difficulties and solve problems. They like to get things done. They are organisers and like to succeed in what they are doing. Their reward is seeing a job well done so they need concrete feedback. They are great workers and can be relied on to carry a job through.

People who are motivated by the need for **affiliation** think about their own and other people's feelings. They enjoy friendship. They are sensitive,

caring, nurturing, verbal and hate conflict. They like to be in a one-to-one or small-group situation, where they can have lots of interaction with others. It is the relationships that matter to them. They can learn management but hate it. They like to work with someone as a leader-friend. These are the ones who will make it a good place to be.

People who are motivated by the need for **power** like to spend time thinking about influencing people and strategising. They think ahead and look at the long-range impact. These are the 'movers and shakers'. They make things happen.

The word power often gets a bad press. People who have experienced misuse of power run away from it under the illusion that all power is bad. This is certainly understandable. But the dictionary gives 18 possible meanings for power, including 'ability to do something' and 'a particular form of energy'.

McClelland addresses this issue by describing two sorts of power, which he calls personalised power (negative) and socialised power (positive).

People motivated by **personalised power** want power for themselves. They seek high visibility and operate using manipulation and intimidation. Prestige is important to them and they may insist on the use of such titles as 'director'. Their possessions exhibit this in their choice of an ostentatious car or office equipment. They see people as pawns and view conflict in win/lose terms so that conflict escalates. They suffer low self-esteem and are threatened by the success of subordinates. They view power as finite so to them giving power away means having less for themselves. They view information as power so they control information. They think in terms of authority and hierarchy.

Social power is sought by people who will use it to work for a mission or goal they believe in. They think of conflict in terms of win/win or are even prepared to sacrifice themselves for the cause. They work hard behind the scenes. They are enablers and can delegate to other people. They are secure in their own right and are not threatened by the success of other people. They have learned that power is infinite: the more they share the more they get.

We may all act in response to different motivations at different times. Most people find, however, that they are frequently driven by one motivator more strongly than the rest. This can change over time.

Without power we can do nothing. It is the misuse of power that is destructive.

This is not surprising when McClelland's theory is compared with Maslow's. It seems easy to equate McClelland's affiliation needs with Maslow's social needs and certainly many people look for achievement once their affiliation needs are met. The activities that meet the need for

achievement will often encourage self-esteem so this can be seen as movement up Maslow's hierarchy. Many people who are motivated by achievement needs and personal power needs, however, have low self-esteem and may not have had or want to have their social needs met. Social power people seem to be those who are prepared to put aside their own needs for others so they are probably moving from self-actualisation to self-transcendence.

It is simplistic to say that the two theories mirror each other. Both are helpful in helping to identify motivational needs and both highlight the necessity of allowing for movement from one motivator to another when a need is met. But more importantly, while McClelland is probably more useful for describing the motivations of people who do volunteer, Maslow's theory describes why some people are unable to volunteer successfully even though they may appear to have time on their hands. These are people whose basic needs have not been met. People promoting work-for-the-dole schemes seem to expect that work alone – whether voluntary or paid – will increase a person's self-esteem. Yet Maslow's theory says self-esteem comes only after more basic needs have been met, so work alone will not enhance self-esteem. In fact enforced work may well damage it further.

Spirituality as a Motivator

Maslow's level of self-transcendence can be seen as a spiritual motivation that transcends personal need and this is certainly true for many exceptional people. Mother Theresa of Calcutta, while wearing the habit of a Catholic nun, worked for the sick and dying regardless of their beliefs. Nelson Mandela talks of having a 'mission to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both'.[6] The Dalai Lama of Tibet transcends religious, national and political barriers as he tours the world promoting the concept of non-violence. In our history books we read of Mahatma Gandhi, whose spiritual beliefs led him to carry out strong political action for the oppressed people of his society in a totally non-violent way. And here in New Zealand, a generation before Gandhi, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi also called on their spiritual beliefs as they used non-violence in the face of attacks on their village, Parihaka, by the colonial army. These are exceptional people and their actions stand out. But there are also lots of ordinary folk who work from a spiritual base when they volunteer and many of these may not have reached a level of transcendence.

Our spiritual base drives us to seek spiritual well-being. After interviewing many people, Eileen Shamy produced the following definition: 'Spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and the environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness. It is the strong sense that I am 'kept' and 'held' by Someone greater than myself who 'keeps' the whole of creation, giving life meaning and purpose. It is the certain knowledge that I am part of that meaning and purpose.'[7]

In New Zealand Pakeha society, spiritual well-being is not generally talked about. This culture seems to be somewhat uncomfortable about acknowledging it. On the surface our society seems very tied to material goals. Maori culture is more open in its acknowledgment of the spiritual. Rangimarie Turuki Pere says: 'The physical realm is immersed and integrated with the spiritual realm. A powerful belief in spirituality governs and influences the way one interacts with other people, and relates to her or his environment.'[8] Body, mind and spirit are all interwoven in our being. These are all part of how and why we do things.

The source of energy and motivation for many volunteers is spiritual.

The whole concept of volunteering acknowledges the need of people to work for goals that are not material. For many volunteers their motivation and source of energy is spiritual and this operates alongside other motivators.

Some people with strong spiritual reasons for volunteering choose to do so within the church community or in the wider community in the name of their church. It is easy to identify a spiritual component in this work. The spirituality of volunteer work also exists, however, in the much wider context of work in the community. Many church people are committed to causes outside their church and this commitment has a spiritual base. Talking of people's volunteering being inspired by their spirituality is not talking about proselytising or trying to convert people. Many people who are not attached to a particular church and describe themselves as atheists will also claim a spiritual base for their volunteer work in the community.

These people volunteer for a cause. Their desire for spiritual well-being will be behind their choice of cause. 'Love of neighbour' will inspire people to volunteer in caring situations. A spirituality of connection to creation can be part of an environmental project. Many who work to right injustice have a spiritual force behind them. They will give their cause energy far and beyond what might seem 'reasonable'. This energy is often spiritual energy.

Spiritual energy comes from within and without. It is tied into our values and beliefs and yet is beyond them. It is part of the uniqueness of each

human person. When individuals were asked what they understood about the spirituality of volunteering, they came up with words like compassion, sharing pain, sharing joy, growth, sharing resources, interdependence, walking beside, connectedness, being rooted in time, place and personal story, rooted in history. It involves giving to and receiving from. It requires respect and reverence for people. It grows from a sense of wonder, honouring the gifts of life and creation.

Spirituality involves the recognition of a God beyond our humanity, or a higher power outside of ourselves, however we choose to describe that higher power. It is an acknowledgment of the part of ourselves that is not physical, intellectual or emotional. In Christian terms it is the spirit of God acting in our lives. The nurturing of spirituality needs time and sacred space.

Spirituality also influences and grows from how we relate to the people around us and how we view our participation in our community.

> Alan was a teacher. Every year he would spend a week helping a Buddhist community with maintenance jobs on their buildings. When asked if he was a Buddhist his reply was, 'No, but I like to spend time with those people because I appreciate their gentle philosophy.'

Spirituality conjures up a picture of a life-giving energy that goes beyond ordinary commitment. It goes beyond working for gain, even non-financial gain. It goes against the predominant culture of our society. But its acknowledgment is important in the universe of volunteer work because it is a significant motivator and source of energy for many volunteers. To deny the influence of a person's spiritual well-being on their lives is to deny part of themselves. Burn-out develops from such a denial.

How do you define spirituality?
How do you describe your spirituality?
What place does spirituality have in your volunteer work?

Motivation in Volunteer Groups

To function well any group needs a variety of motivational types. The people motivated by the need for achievement get the work done. Those motivated by the need for affiliation keep the group happy. The social power people lead, inspire and energise the group.

Obviously, if the needs of only one type are met, the others will be

frustrated and in most circumstances the group's goal will not be achieved as well as it might be. If the affiliators sit and chat all day, the achievers will be frustrated. If the achievers rush through the meeting without noticing how the affiliators are feeling, the affiliators will feel neglected. So the skill in any group is in recognising these differing motivational needs and finding a balance that takes note of them all.

To function well any group needs a variety of motivational types.

> Many years ago I remember coming new to an area and thinking that if I joined a particular group I would get to know people. The chairman and secretary, however, had a need to achieve. Their aim was to get through the meeting in an hour and go home. Cups of tea and sitting around talking were to them just a waste of valuable time. They had no knowledge of the needs for affiliation of people like me. I moved on fairly quickly to find other groups that did meet my need at that time. I heard afterwards that I was just another example of the 'lack of commitment young people have today'.

It is interesting to note that if the same thing happened to me now I would take it up with the group and discuss it, but at that stage I didn't know enough about what was happening to be able to identify anything other than that my need was not being met.

For the chairperson or facilitator of any group, the needs of the group members should have relevance in deciding the most effective way of running a particular meeting.

For many volunteers the predominant motivator is the need for affiliation. A chairperson or facilitator can help meet this need by taking time at the beginning of any gathering of a group to introduce people to one another, giving them an opportunity to share some personal detail. If they already know each other it can be a chance to catch up on something of significance to each person. This is appropriate whatever the purpose of the group.

These introductions can be done informally over a cup of tea or formally by using some form of 'warm-up' exercise. They need to be long enough to allow everyone to participate but short enough not to drive crazy the people with a need for achievement. Having thus satisfied the needs for affiliation at the beginning of the meeting, people are then usually prepared to work more happily and efficiently on the tasks for the rest of the meeting.

> I was conscious when running one meeting of shortage of time and the fact that the group had met together relatively recently, so I skipped the

warm-up and went straight into the business of the meeting. I noted that during that particular meeting we wasted much more time than usual because members wandered off the topic to share personal detail anyway.

Clearly if the chairperson does not set up a structure in which to meet needs for affiliation, the participants will take the opportunity to do so anyway unless actively discouraged.

The other purpose of a warm-up is to give each member an opportunity to speak to the whole group on an equal basis. This affirms them in their uniqueness and importance to the group and encourages their participation during the business of the meeting.

The needs of achievement-motivated people can be met by the group having defined goals and tasks and a structure to work under. Nothing frustrates an achiever like being a member of a group that can't make decisions. Or makes a decision but then doesn't organise anyone to carry it out. Or doesn't get or give feedback about tasks performed.

Social power people need to be listened to. They need to have their ideas heard and considered. They will not take kindly to being told that 'we tried that last year and it didn't work'.

As well as having their own motivational needs met, each group member needs to take the time to be patient in meeting the needs of the others.

As well as having their own motivational needs met, each group member needs to take the time to be patient in meeting the needs of the others. Only in this way will the group function successfully. After all, each type needs the others to produce a well-rounded service.

Diverse spiritual needs also have to be met in a way that is relevant to the needs of the individuals and to the focus of the group. This can be done with appropriate reflection, ritual or celebration. Making time to remember and acknowledge a member who has died can be an important spiritual ritual. Women's groups sometimes celebrate their links in the making of a quilt. Many members might participate in the making, and the quilt remains as a symbol of the group's service and connectedness.

Motivational differences operate in any group of people, but their significance is greater in voluntary groups. When someone is being paid money to do a job, they will often suppress some of their needs because of the money they need to meet their basic needs. But where there is no monetary recompense other motivational factors become more important. In fact many people do voluntary work because their higher motivational needs are not met in their paid work.

Motivation and the Placement of Volunteers

Motivational differences also have significance in where volunteers are best placed in an agency.

An achiever will be good at finding solutions. This may mean that she will not make a very good counsellor but will make an excellent secretary.

Someone with a need for affiliation will not be happy when asked to work alone to record data on a computer, but be very happy to make cups of tea for other volunteers.

Recognise the power people in your group. Are their aims in tune with the aims of the organisation? Are they being given the opportunity to develop their ideas or are they being hidebound by rigid rules? Do you need someone to plead on your group's behalf to the city council or your local MP? Power people will be good at this.

A good volunteer manager will take into account motivation when recruiting, placing and finding ways of retaining volunteers.

A good volunteer manager will take into account motivation when recruiting, placing and finding ways of retaining volunteers.

Go back now to the lists you made. What motivational need was fulfilled by each position?

What is your predominant motivational need? Most people will have a mixture. You may notice that different needs have predominated at different times of your life.

Take this one step further now and write down the reasons you left some organisations. Does this tell you more about your motivational needs?

You now have three lists:

- *The reasons why people volunteer*
- *The motivational needs of volunteers*
- *The reasons why volunteers leave*

If this exercise is done in a group and people are willing to share these lists, they are a goldmine of information that can give important insights useful in running any voluntary organisation. They have relevance in deciding how to recruit new volunteers and in how to retain existing volunteers.

Members of a group could designate three points in the room as being for people motivated by the need for achievement, affiliation and power. Go to the point that designates your most dominant need.

Look around now and see who is where and remember the sorts of things that those people need to be happy in their work.

Anyone in a position of making decisions relating to volunteers needs to understand these motivational differences. Volunteers do not work for money. They work to have these needs met and this is the clue to volunteer management.

Volunteer Motivation is Dynamic

It is interesting to look at the word 'motivation'. It has a sense of movement about it. It means 'that which induces a person to act' and comes from the Latin root *motivus*, meaning 'move'.

When people are growing and developing, what motivates them at one point will leave them cold at another. This is why Maslow's theory of movement up a scale of motivating needs is satisfying. It is common for people to say that they joined a group for one reason but they stay in it for a different reason.

Stay tuned to changes as volunteers meet their initial needs.

The implication of this understanding of changing motivation, for groups who use volunteers, is that as well as knowing people's initial motivation it is important to stay tuned to changes as workers meet their initial needs. This means that structures in which volunteers work need to be dynamic and flexible. They need to be able to respond to the differing needs of individual volunteers and they need to respond to volunteers' changing needs.

This knowledge cannot just be hindsight, or a remedy to be called on if you have time or when things go wrong. Responding to the dynamic needs of volunteers in such a way that they can work productively for an organisation requires skill and commitment. It is the science and art of volunteer management.

Part 2

Management of Volunteers

Chapter 3

What is Volunteer Management?

Introduction to the Management of Volunteers

As we saw in the first chapter, volunteers constitute a vast workforce. They carry out major areas of work, particularly in the areas of caring, art, education and sport. The work they do ranges from unskilled to highly skilled. No business would dream of leaving a workforce like this to bumble along on its own. They would require management by skilled managers. Yet the necessity to manage volunteers is only beginning to be recognised.

A good management plan maximises the benefits for the employer, the worker and the client.

Any paid workforce is managed, and a good management plan is one that maximises the benefits for the employer, the worker and the client. An unpaid workforce is only different insofar as the return to the worker is not monetary so the management plan has to include other sorts of compensation for time given. In some ways this can be more difficult than managing a paid workforce as it requires more flexibility and versatility.

The fundamentals of the management of volunteers are given in the answers to three basic questions[9] any organisation using volunteers should ask itself:

- What do we want volunteers to do?
- What will they need to do it well?
- How can we provide that?

When a group looks at what it wants volunteers to do, it needs to know why it is engaging volunteers, what their roles will be and what systems, procedures and contracts will be appropriate.

When looking to see what volunteers will need to do their jobs well, groups have to know themselves what standards they will expect, what practical preparation is needed and what cultural issues need to be attended to. They will have to find appropriate selection and training processes. They will need to look ahead to ensure the support, supervision and development of their volunteers. They will need to have ways of knowing if their goals have been met. Understanding that volunteers need rewards and expenses paid will

lead to more decisions. And for it all to work, communication channels and volunteer participation in decision-making need to be sorted out.

Provision of all this means designating responsibility and preparing a budget. Finally the group can start recruiting.

This process can be broken down into a further series of questions which can be used as a checklist. The answers should provide a recipe for good volunteer management.

WHAT DO WE WANT VOLUNTEERS TO DO?

1. Why are we engaging volunteers? .....
2. What will be their roles and tasks? .....
3. What systems and procedures are needed? .....
4. What contracts are needed? .....

WHAT WILL THEY NEED TO DO IT WELL?

5. What preparation do we need to do? .....
6. What cultural issues need to be attended to? .....
7. How will we select the volunteers? .....
8. How will they be trained? .....
9. What does it mean to do the job well? (standards) .....
10. How will their personal development be encouraged? .....
11. How will volunteers be supported and supervised? .....
12. How will review and appraisal of their work be organised? .....
13. What will be their rewards? .....
14. Who will pay what expenses? .....
15. How will volunteers be included in decision-making? .....
16. Communication channels .....

HOW CAN WE PROVIDE THIS?

17. Who will take responsibility for this? .....
18. How do we recruit volunteers? .....
19. What will be the budget? .....

We will look here at the first block of questions, and the following chapters will examine each of the others in detail.

What Do We Want Volunteers to Do?

Voluntary Work or Paid Work?

Why is the job worth doing? Volunteers need to know that the work they are doing is important.

There is often a tension between whether a task should be done by a paid worker or a volunteer.

What can a volunteer bring to the task that a paid worker cannot?

The question of what a volunteer can bring to a task that a paid worker cannot is important, as is the corresponding question of what a paid worker can bring to a task that a volunteer cannot. Answers are sometimes given in financial terms but often there are other important issues too, like the quality of caring that a volunteer can give, or the need to encourage and enable wider community participation in the project.

There are no foolproof ways of finding answers to these questions. Some agencies have guidelines that suit their situation; for example, in both Canada and Britain some volunteer coordinators saw it as exploitation of both paid workers and volunteers if a volunteer were put in a position recently held by a paid worker.

> A New Zealand group set up an organisation to provide voluntary support to mothers of young babies. This resulted in fear being expressed by paid Karitane nurses, whose job was to look after babies in people's homes. The Karitane nurses saw that volunteers might do for nothing jobs that they could be paid for. It took a lot of negotiation to demonstrate that the two groups were working in different markets and could complement each other. The people who were getting help free from the voluntary group were either not able to pay for help or were looking for some facets of help that Karitane nurses were unable to provide. A clear policy on why the agency was using volunteers helped resolve this.

Another group suggested that it was inappropriate to use a volunteer in a situation where a person's life was at stake if the service was not delivered. While there is some logic in this, it seems to have an underlying implication that paid workers are more reliable than volunteers and this denigrates the reliability of many volunteers.

> The volunteer coordinator in a large hospital saw it at a necessary part of her work to have open communication with the unions and be part of their discussions with the hospital employers. To her the interface

between paid and unpaid work was a continually moving boundary that needed constant attention.

There are no universal guidelines in answering the question: When is it appropriate to use volunteers and when is it appropriate to use paid workers? Nevertheless, this question needs to be explored seriously by any group that uses volunteers. It also needs to be explored repeatedly. The right answer at one point in time may be the wrong one at a later stage.

When is it appropriate to use volunteers and when is it appropriate to use paid workers? This question needs to be explored seriously and often.

One vital question that must be part of this exploration is: Is anybody being exploited if volunteers are used in this situation?

The exploration must also honour the belief that voluntary work has immense value in its own right to the volunteers and the organisation that uses them. It is not just unpaid labour.

When an agency has a policy on this then it should be clear to both the volunteers and the paid staff why volunteers are doing this job. This policy needs to be aired often enough for people to be conscious of it.

Voluntary work has immense value to the volunteers and the organisation that uses them.

A group used volunteers to answer the phone to the public. They also had a very competent paid worker who did secretarial work, coordinated the work of the agency and took the phone calls when no volunteer was available. Paid worker and volunteer shared a tiny office.

The agency was finding it really hard to get volunteers to answer the phones. Investigation showed that when the phone rang the paid worker had to stop typing and was distracted by the volunteers answering the telephone call. The volunteers felt that they were interrupting the work of the paid worker. Further, they thought the paid worker could have dealt with the phone calls more ably. They soon lost sight of their own contribution and opted to do other work for the group. Consequently the paid worker spent most of her time taking calls and was not able to do the other work that she was primarily employed to do.

The problem was solved when the paid worker suggested that the space be rearranged so that the phone was answered in a separate room. Now the volunteers were able to see much more clearly that their contribution was worthwhile.

In this case the agency had a policy on why it used volunteers but the work arrangement eclipsed it, so that even though it was clear to the committee

and paid worker, it was lost on the volunteer. This mattered because volunteers have a choice on whether they will work or not, and many work for self-esteem reasons. It is far more important to a volunteer to see the worth of the task they are doing than it is for a paid worker.

What are the particular qualities volunteers in your organisation bring to their work?
What are the particular qualities paid workers bring to your organisation?
What are the particular qualities volunteer executive members bring to their work?
Why are their jobs worth doing? How do they know that?
How do the volunteers themselves benefit by the work they do for your organisation?

Defining Roles and Tasks

Volunteers need to know what is expected of them, what their roles are and what tasks they are expected to perform.

Groups say they need more volunteers. They run a general recruiting campaign, get more volunteers who stay a while and then go again. The original group are left sitting there making judgments about the lack of willingness of people to volunteer today. What went wrong?

For people to be able to work effectively they need to know what they are expected to do and how they fit in with other members of the organisation. They need to know their task and their role. They need to know what they are responsible for and be allowed to carry out that responsibility. Before people are recruited, good management means that the organisation needs to be clear what positions they are recruiting for. The usual way this information is expressed is in a job description.

Questions that need to be asked include: What do we need more volunteers to do? To raise funds? To write newsletters? To listen to people's needs? To coach a sports team? Each of these tasks requires different skills and fulfils different needs. How many hours a week do we expect them to give? Is it at a specific time? Day or night? Is the job in school hours or outside school hours or can it be fitted in at any time? It is important to match volunteers to appropriate jobs.

All these details can become part of a simply worded job description, which also gives lines of accountability. The following is an outline that can be used for such a job description.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Date: .....

Job title: .....

General description or purpose of job: .....

Major duties: .....

Expected outcomes: .....

Person to report to: .....

Person providing supervision or support: .....

Time commitment: .....

Skills needed: .....

Training needed: .....

Resources provided by organisation: .....

Evaluation procedure: .....

Expected benefits and opportunities for volunteer: .....

If the management person and group are not clear about these things they will not be successful in their use of volunteers. Their new volunteers will leave because they are not clear about what they are supposed to be doing or because they have not got the skills for the job. The other side of this coin is that sometimes the organisation will lose its old faithful volunteers because the new ones, in their enthusiasm and ignorance, are crashing in on their roles and tasks.

Part of being clear about roles and tasks is also for the management, or existing group, to be clear about its own role and then allow the new volunteer to carry out theirs. This is often difficult as the new volunteer may not yet be as competent or efficient as the old one. But how can the new one learn if they are not allowed to do the job?

It is common in groups for older volunteers to say they want to give up, but then fail to let new volunteers do their task and so they lose them.

Every volunteer should have a job description.

Both the group and the volunteer need to be clear about their respective roles and tasks and the volunteers need to be allowed to carry theirs out. A job description is one of the tools that can help this happen.

As a volunteer do you have a clear idea of your role and task?
Are you clear about the roles and tasks of volunteers in your organisation?
How do you know that your volunteers are doing the job for which they are most suited?
Can you let volunteers make their own mistakes?

Systems and Procedures

Volunteers need to know how the organisation works and where they fit in.

For volunteers to work comfortably and effectively they need to know how the organisation works and where they fit in. Who gives them instructions? Do they wear a badge? Who do they report to? What can they do in the organisation's name? What can't they do? Where do they fit in with other workers? What records do they need to keep? What responsibilities do they have?

The aims and objects or the mission statement of the group should give volunteers a picture of the focus of the whole organisation. But they also need to be able to see clearly their own part in this. They need to understand the philosophy or ethos of the organisation and how they are expected to express this. An important question here for a volunteer is:

Is the mission and philosophy of the agency I volunteer for congruent with my own values?

Every volunteer needs to have telephone numbers for the appropriate people to contact when they need, if only so they have someone to tell if they are sick and unable to perform their duties. They also need to have a reasonable chance of being able to contact someone at that number when they need to. There is no use giving a daytime office number as a contact for a volunteer who works only at night.

Volunteers need to know what records are to be kept, where and how they are to be recorded.

For purposes of continuity of service, organisations often need to keep records. The volunteer needs to know what records are to be kept, where, and how. Are they confidential and if so who has the right to see them? How is the confidentiality ensured?

The bugbear for many a volunteer is statistics. Organisations need to keep statistics so they have some measure of the work they do. This is particularly important when seeking funding. Many volunteers do not like keeping statistics. There are philosophical and practical reasons for this. Many feel that because they are giving their voluntary work, they are somehow depreciating it if they count the hours involved. It arises from ideas of modesty and not wanting to be seen as blowing their own trumpet. For others it is just a crashing bore – they don't like recording figures.

If volunteers understand the reason for keeping statistics and are given explicit instructions about what statistics to keep, how often to hand them in and to whom, they are more likely to cooperate. Clear, well-laid-out forms with return address and dates on them can be of great assistance here.

Feedback also helps ensure volunteers' cooperation in this area. If they see how the information is being used, they are much more likely to

cooperate with giving it. This could be in the form of statistical summaries published in newsletters or put up regularly on a notice-board. They can also be fed back in the form of recognition certificates that record an individual volunteer's hours.

What are the systems and procedures of your organisation?
How do volunteers get to know these?
What particular procedures are needed to protect client confidentiality?
How do you feed back to your volunteers the information from the statistics you gather?

Contracts

When a person is accepted for a paid position it is normal for there to be a letter of appointment and an employment contract. There are strong reasons for having a similar confirmation of an agreement to commit oneself to doing unpaid work.

A letter, or contract, which includes a job description, is a good way of being sure that both parties understand what is expected of them. Both the volunteer and the agency for which they are volunteering know what they are agreeing to and what to expect. Teresa O'Connor and Pauline O'Regan talk about the importance of a contract in their book:

A contract ensures that both parties understand what is expected of them.

'It protects both parties: the agency knows clearly what services the volunteer has offered, and the volunteer can keep to those limits without feeling guilty... expectations are clarified on all sides with a minimum of fuss.'[10]

When the subject of written contracts for volunteers is broached, many people respond that they are far too legalistic, and anyway if there is no money changing hands they wouldn't stand up in a court of law. The purpose of a contract or written agreement with volunteers, however, is not to produce a legally binding document but rather to have a document to which both parties can refer that describes their commitment.

A contract must by definition be agreed to and signed by both parties. While this might seem to be quite a formal requirement it can be worded in an informal, friendly manner with headings such as:

'What can I expect when I work as a volunteer for...?' and

'What is expected of me when I work as a volunteer for...?'

A contract should contain the following detail.

- The time period for which the agreement will hold.
- A description of the job to be done: the overall aims, the goals, the specific tasks and the expected outcomes.
- The name and position of the person in the organisation to whom the volunteer is responsible.
- The time commitment: how often, how long.
- Any requirements for training and ongoing supervision.
- Contact numbers where the volunteer can expect to reach a person if they have to change an arrangement or need support in some way.
- Any special conditions that a particular volunteer job might require, e.g. client confidentiality.
- Accountability arrangements between the volunteer and the organisation.
- Costs the organisation will pay and how these can be claimed.
- How, where and how often records and statistics need to be kept.

In some situations it might be appropriate for the volunteer and the group they are working for to work out the contract together. The language needs to be simple and it will probably fit on one or two pages. It can save a lot of misunderstanding based on unrealistic expectations.

While the job description forms part of this agreement it is also part of a recruiting process. A contract can be used to make it quite clear to the volunteer that they have been selected to work for this organisation.

How do you know what is expected of you in the volunteer work you do?
How do you know what to expect from the organisation you volunteer for?

Contracts protect both volunteers and organisations.

Contracts protect both volunteers and organisations. A very important issue for volunteers is being able to keep to limits without feeling guilty. Burn-out results very often from volunteers taking on more and more work without appropriate support. If there is a contract then the volunteer's and the agency's responsibilities are clearly defined. The concept of a contract implies that if there is a change in the volunteer's responsibilities there is a corresponding change in the agency's. If more work is being negotiated there is a responsibility to put in more support. The volunteer is then free to decide whether they can cope with the increase rather than just getting sucked in. If not they don't have to feel guilty about saying NO.

A contract has benefit for the volunteer because it gives a clear statement

of what is expected. It gives the volunteer a vehicle for renegotiation when changes are needed. This protects a volunteer from having their workload creep up and up until it becomes unmanageable.

An organisation also stands to benefit from a contract because it defines for the volunteer the limits of their work. This protects the organisation if the volunteer behaves inappropriately by acting outside their job description or not participating in accountability procedures.

In the long run contracts or letters of agreement protect both parties morally if not legally.

Chapter 4

Preparation for Volunteers

Preparing to Take on Volunteers

Before volunteers are taken into an organisation it is really important that the group or agency concerned has done the appropriate preparation. Have job descriptions been written? Is the job one that anyone can do or does it require special skills or attributes? If it requires special skills how will those be acquired? Is training being offered or will they be expected to come already trained? If special attributes are needed is there an appropriate selection process in place? Are the ongoing support processes organised?

Planning and preparation take time.

Preparation requires a lot of careful and skilled planning. Many groups get frustrated at the time this can take and there is a great temptation to skip it and just get on and offer the service. After all, new services usually start in response to an expressed need and the people who are setting up the service are aware of the need and feel it pressing on them. If the need is real, however, it will still be there in a few months' time when the preparation has been done. If the time has been taken to think and plan and put in place appropriate processes the service has much more chance of success.

It can take 12–18 months to do the necessary preparatory work to offer a volunteer welfare service. But groups that take this time will be in a position to offer a quality service.

Obviously groups don't always take this long to get organised. It depends on the size and the nature of the programme. At all levels, however, this planning and preparation time is important.

Time also needs to be put into ensuring that when volunteers arrive, they are properly initiated into an organisation. They need to meet other members, to be made to feel welcome. This takes time and the cooperation of existing members but it is well worthwhile. Volunteers are often there because when they first began they liked being made to feel part of the group. Others have left because they came but nobody took much notice of them so they didn't bother coming back. Or nobody explained what they were there for so they didn't see the point.

If volunteers have come to do a specific task, somebody needs to spend time ensuring that the necessary materials are ready. Don't have them standing around waiting while you think what to do with them. Volunteers' time is precious too!

How do you ensure that proper preparation is made for volunteers to work in your organisation?
How do you welcome, initiate and orientate new volunteers?

Cultural Considerations

Many of the things people do and the way they do them arise from what they know to be culturally correct according to their race, nationality, upbringing or experience. To someone from another culture these things may seem strange, confusing or even offensive. More obvious cultural practices surround how people greet each other, how and what they eat, how they celebrate. These traditions are usually based on deeper, strongly held values that differ from culture to culture. It is because of these value differences that it is important to honour cultural differences in volunteer work.

New Zealand is a country where in the 19th century settlers came, predominantly from Britain and Europe, to settle in a land already occupied by Maori. The settlers brought their own cultures, customs and institutions, and by the end of the 20th century these were the cultures and customs that predominated.

The cost to the indigenous people of New Zealand has been high. Much of Maori culture was submerged by the settlers and their descendants. While recent times have seen a resurgence in the recognition of the importance of Maori culture and the settling of some Treaty of Waitangi claims, New Zealand is not yet a truly bicultural land with two equal partners. As major contributors to New Zealand society volunteers and voluntary organisations share in the responsibility for working towards a bicultural society.

Bicultural Issues

Biculturalism acknowledges the presence of two major cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand: the culture of the tangata whenua, the Maori people of the land, and the culture of the Pakeha descendants of British and European settlers. To live successfully side by side each needs to acknowledge the

Biculturalism addresses the relationship between Maori and Pakeha.

importance of the other. Aotearoa is the home of Maori and the only place where their culture and values exist. All who come here have a responsibility to respect and nurture this.

It is not simply a matter of having a list of cultural norms that will make a particular activity acceptable to Maori. This can be helpful but it can also be tokenism – making it look right without dealing with the underlying issues. Different cultural customs and rites can be learned in the head, but what is needed is an understanding in the heart, which leads to a journey shared with reverence.

What biculturalism requires of Pakeha, both individuals and organisations, is that they listen to Maori and learn to understand the sources of some of the differences. This requires a commitment to dialogue at a local level. There is not just one Maori viewpoint, but many from different parts of the country. Each iwi has its own perspective.

Understanding and communicating with another culture starts with a group being aware of its own culture and the effect its way of working may have on people of other cultures. This requires a process of learning and self-reflection. These should lead to dialogue, particularly about issues that might affect Maori volunteers or Maori service recipients.

In New Zealand, workshops to raise awareness are run for Pakeha by Network Waitangi. The process of these workshops is to get the participants to look at their own cultural history and to reflect on the history of the Maori people in whose land their ancestors settled. In particular it looks at the different perceptions of what was intended in the Treaty of Waitangi. This process can result in participants gaining insights into some of the differences in values that could be expected by the different racial groups.

Has your group participated in a Treaty of Waitangi workshop?
If not, when will it?
If so, what ongoing dialogue has resulted from such a workshop?

Volunteers who use this book can expand its scope by adding another question throughout:

How will Maori view this decision/action?

Of course the answer to this question can only be given by Maori.

Multicultural Issues

In many situations volunteers are also involved with other cultures, perhaps Pacific Island or Asian. Here the question may be simpler. It is again a matter of understanding and respecting different ways and different values, but it involves groups who have come as immigrants or descendants of immigrants and who have a homeland elsewhere where their culture and values are preserved. The question that needs always to be asked in relation to other cultures is:

Multiculturalism seeks to find ways of understanding and respecting different ways and different cultures.

How will this decision affect people of other cultures?

This question should lead thoughtful people to look further for ways of breaking down cultural barriers and learning to understand the needs of a different cultural group.

For many the answer will be 'I don't know'. If the group simply accepts this answer and takes no further action, it runs the risk of behaving in a way that is insensitive and possibly damaging to the basic needs of another group of people. If the answer is 'I don't know but I will try to find out' there is a basis for an expanded level of understanding and dialogue.

Crossing cultures is difficult because it involves deeply held beliefs and values. But we have to do this if all volunteers and the people they serve are to reach their potential.

Gender Issues

While equality of men and women is generally accepted in the field of paid work, there are still pockets in the volunteer world where sexist language can still be found. In the past people were happy to accept that 'men' really meant 'men and women'. By the end of the 20th century this is no longer true. Many women feel excluded by the use of male language.

This has implications for voluntary groups. It is worth taking the trouble to ensure that newsletters, documents and reports are written in gender-inclusive language if they refer to a mixed group. There seems to be a problem with the constitution of an organisation that provides a service for women by women and yet refers to all the office-bearers as 'he'.

Language shapes attitudes. Attitudes that exclude people from particular roles on the grounds of sex are destructive in volunteer work.

The Selection of Volunteers

Good selection places volunteers in positions where they can use their talents for the benefit of the clients, the agency and themselves.

The aim of a good selection process is to place volunteers in positions where they can use their talents for the benefit of the clients, the agency and themselves. In an earlier chapter the motivation of volunteers was discussed. This has implications here if there is to be a satisfactory volunteer placement. The volunteer's motivations and reasons for volunteering need to be met or the placement will be unsatisfactory.

From the agency's point of view a good selection process avoids the wastage of time and energy and often the hurt that results from inappropriate volunteer placements. It ensures that the job to be done will be done effectively.

There is a wide range of places where volunteers work and a wide variety of tasks that have to be done. Clearly the sort of selection process needed depends on the type of work being done.

Many groups raise funds by spending a night putting inserts into the newspaper. Clearly this is a case of 'all hands on deck'. The skills involved are such that almost anyone can do the job so a tight selection process is not needed. A similar task, however, might be addressing envelopes. Here some skill is needed – the volunteer needs to be able to write legibly.

The sort of selection process needed depends on the type of work being done.

People selling cakes or raffle tickets need to have a pleasant approach to the public, as do volunteer guides at a public building. Such a manner will become obvious on meeting the person. The former will also need an aptitude with money.

The St John's ambulance workers who attend sports events need to have had training in first aid (and certificates to show for it), while the workers who paint the sets at the local repertory theatre need artistic skills.

Workers on a conservation scheme building a forest track will need to be physically able to dig, hammer and carry loads of wood or stones. A practical test will show these up fairly easily.

People who teach to carry on a particular religious or cultural activity need a deep understanding of the religion or culture. Usually such people are known in their community and so can be easily recognised.

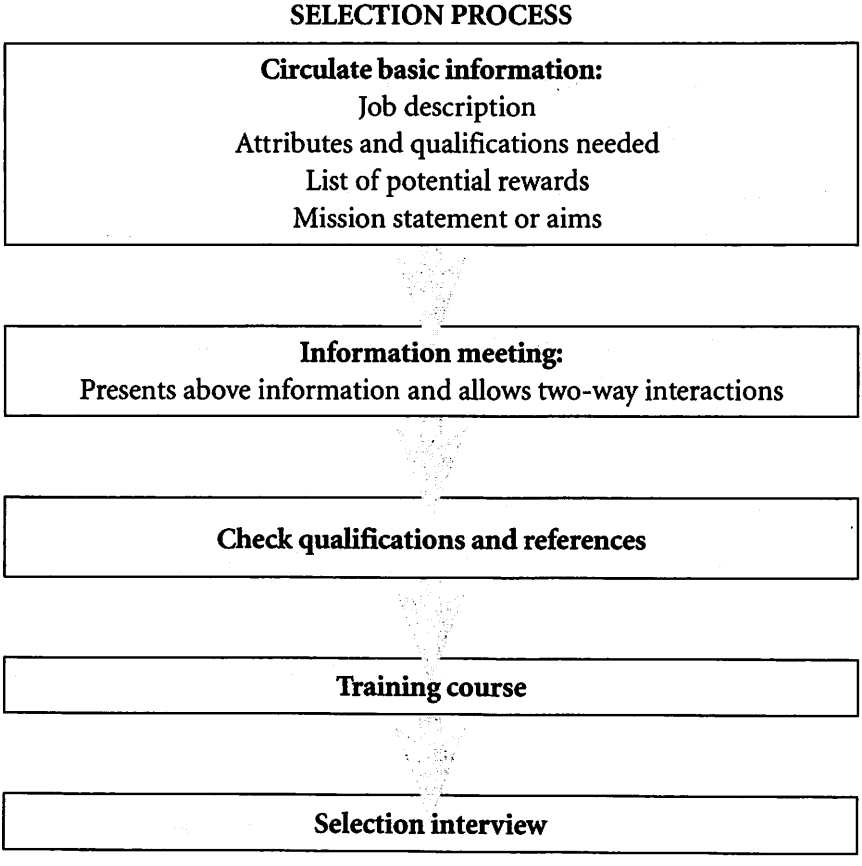
People who volunteer to work with groups of others need to have the

skills and personality to function well in that role. Past training and experience can be good indicators here.

The most serious responsibility of all comes when selecting volunteers to work in a caring capacity with people who are vulnerable. This is particularly important if they are working in a one-to-one situation. This is the hardest sort of selection for groups to make with confidence. Not every person who offers their services to a welfare group will make a good supporter of a person in need.

The Selection Process

The process of selection has five components (see diagram). While the first step, of giving the potential volunteer the basic information, is always needed, the other steps can be included, excluded or combined to suit the particular situation.



CIRCULATE BASIC INFORMATION

The starting point for good selection is a job description. This will give the prospective volunteer an accurate summary of what they will be expected to do and how much time it will take.

You also need a list of any special qualifications or characteristics that a volunteer would need for this position. Care needs to be taken in building such a list that the characteristics actually relate to the needs of the work to be done. It is not a place for personal biases to come forward. New Zealand human rights legislation forbids discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, religious or ethical belief, race or colour, ethnic or national origins, age, disability, political opinion, employment status, family status or sexual orientation. While there are some exceptions in particular circumstances, there is a challenge here to be sure that characteristics listed relate only to the skills and attributes needed for the job.

The third piece of information needed to start a selection process is a summary of the rewards that this position offers the volunteer. This might be the opportunity to work for a particular cause, or with a particular group of people. The job might offer training or work experience. The work environment – indoors or out, group or alone – is significant. All these give a prospective volunteer some idea of what they might expect.

The final document required is the mission statement or aims and objects of the organisation. This gives the prospective volunteer an opportunity to check whether the ethos of the group coincides with their own beliefs.

Given the basic documents many people can self-select into or out of a position.

This group of documents – mission statement or aims and objects, job description, job attributes, and potential rewards – together make up the first stage of a selection process. On reading these many people can self-select into or out of a position. They are able to tell from the information presented whether this is the volunteer position for them.

They may decide immediately on seeing an advertisement in a newspaper, a volunteer centre, or a community notice-board. They may decide after they have replied to an advertisement in response to the written material the agency sends them.

It is clear that the more reliable these documents are in presenting an accurate description of all aspects of the voluntary position available, the better job the potential volunteer will make of self-selection. This, of course, saves time all round. So attractive presentation and easily accessible information are important, but this is more difficult than it sounds. If the information presentation is too glowing inappropriate volunteers will be drawn in and if it is too forbidding potentially good volunteers will exclude themselves.

Self-selection at this level is the ideal. It leaves as much power as possible

in the hands of the volunteer to assess their own ability to do the job. It saves the agency unnecessary work in weeding out people who would have selected themselves out given enough information. But written documents are limited in what they can express, so often this is only the beginning.

INFORMATION MEETING

An appropriate next step is to hold an information day or evening where potential volunteers can come and receive basically the same information but in a different form. It will be presented in person and people will be available to answer questions. Good presenters will find creative ways of getting their ideas across by using pictures, charts, videos or role-plays. They may use discussions or group exercises. There is an opportunity here for two-way interactions and for any misunderstandings to be clarified. At this level again, self-selection is the ideal.

An information meeting gives an opportunity for two-way interactions and a chance for any misunderstandings to be clarified.

CHECK QUALIFICATIONS AND REFERENCES

Where the voluntary position requires special skills, or where there are vulnerable people involved as clients of the service, the process must continue. At this point it might be time to check certificates of qualification if any are needed.

If the volunteer is to be put in a position of responsibility it is helpful to ask them for character references or to name people who will act as referees. As well as being a useful checking point for the agency, this helps bring home to the volunteer the seriousness and importance being placed on this position. The person who contacts the referee needs to he familiar with the position the volunteer is applying for and to have to hand the list of attributes needed. Referees can be most helpful in assessing how a potential volunteer will perform in a given situation. It is important to know the relationship between that volunteer and the referee as that can give some indication of what sort of information the referee can be expected to give.

A referee will often not volunteer information against a person for whom they are acting as referee, so the person seeking the reference needs to be very specific in their questions. For instance if the volunteer is likely to be caring for children, ask them directly if they have seen the volunteer with children and how they performed. Referees can be a goldmine of information if they are respected and listened to carefully.

If the volunteer is to be put in a position of responsibility it is helpful to ask them to present evidence of qualifications and to name people to act as referees.

TRAINING COURSE

This might be an appropriate time for an assessment interview, or potential volunteers can go straight into a training situation on the understanding that the assessment process is continuing.

Training offers the volunteer and the organisation further opportunity to assess each other's suitability.

Training is a time for the volunteer to learn more about the skills needed for the job. Good training also offers the volunteer an opportunity to further assess their own needs. And it offers the person responsible for assessment an opportunity to observe the trainee in action.

The training programme gives another opportunity for people to self-select as they learn more about the skills and qualities needed for the work and their own personal skills. Most people are able to select themselves into or out of a programme appropriately.

We talk about training in detail later in this chapter.

SELECTION INTERVIEW

The most usual way of completing a selection process is by means of an interview. This interview is done usually by one or more people who are competent to interview. Both parties should be clear about the purpose of the interview. The interviewer should be familiar with the details of the position being interviewed for.

A selection interview should be carried out in a relaxed atmosphere in comfortable surroundings. It is important to put the person being interviewed at ease. A warm smile and an acknowledgment of obvious nervousness may help here. The time should be uninterrupted so that everyone's full attention goes into the interview.

The aim of the selection interview is to hear what the person being interviewed has to say.

The aim is to hear what the person being interviewed has to say so active listening skills are important. Their body language, tone of voice or attempts to move away from some subjects can give clues to difficult areas for them.

Open-ended questions encourage the interviewee to talk. Some suggestions are:

- What brings you to offer to work for this organisation? (motivation)
- What jobs have you held (paid or voluntary) that have given you most satisfaction? Why? (experience)
- Have you disliked any paid or voluntary positions you have held? Why? (attitudes)
- What do you consider the greatest challenges you have faced and how did you handle them? (capabilities)
- What are the most difficult decisions you have had to make? (capabilities and values)

- How do you cope with work, personal or professional pressures? (stress management)
- What do you think will be the satisfying aspects of this role? (rewards)
- Tell me about your family. (support networks)
- How do they feel about your involvement with this voluntary work? (support networks)
- Describe your temperament. What do you like best about yourself? What would you improve? (self-awareness)
- How much time do you have to offer? (availability)
- What does cultural awareness mean to you? (cultural sensitivity)
- What do you do for fun or leisure? (stress management)
- Tell me of an experience you have had dealing with a person like... (the vulnerable client of this agency, e.g. a child or a solo parent or a disabled person). (awareness of limits/motivation)
- How do you set limits in the sort of relationships you are likely to be involved in in this work? (setting appropriate limits)

Referring to the list of skills and attributes needed for the job can also be useful in a interview. By asking the prospective volunteer how they would demonstrate each of these, the interviewer can gain some insight into the interviewee's understanding of what is needed and their ability to produce that. This can be useful for the interviewee also.

The person being interviewed should have the opportunity to ask questions of their own. These need to be answered openly and honestly.

The interviewer may well have a 'gut reaction' to the person. It is important to listen to these reactions: they are valid sources of information. It is equally important, however, that they are checked out against other information given. Try asking questions that would disprove the 'gut reaction' and see if it withstands this test.

It is important to listen to 'gut reactions'. It is equally important that they are checked out against other information given.

When interviewing for paid workers the task is usually one of choosing the best person to fill one position from a number of applicants. It is accepted that all except one will be unsuccessful.

When interviewing for volunteers the situation is different. There are usually more positions available than applicants. It is very tempting on these occasions to accept all offers. Where the work requires particular skills, however, or involves one-to-one contact with vulnerable people, a volunteer who is not suited to the work can have a damaging effect on the client, the worker and the agency.

What is really important is that the processes used to make the selection are fair and open. They should be as objective as possible and do not in

Selection processes should be fair and open.

any way reflect an individual assessor's prejudices or biases. They should give the prospective volunteer every opportunity to show their potential. An ongoing process allows the volunteer to demonstrate his or her abilities in different ways. If two or more assessors are involved in the process they can check their perceptions against each other.

Peter Drucker's suggestion is to 'focus on strengths'. Find out what this person is good at, then use them in that role.[11]

Volunteers will perform well when they are in positions that suit their abilities.

If selection is carried out properly, volunteers will perform well because they are in positions that suit their abilities. This in turn improves their self-esteem and they will enjoy working in a position that suits them. Their previous experience and knowledge will be taken into account. There will be equal opportunity without any group feeling disadvantaged. Stress arising from an unsuitable placement will be reduced.

For the agency, the advantages of good selection are a quality service to clients and a reduction in problems arising from inappropriate behaviour on the part on volunteers. Volunteers placed in positions that make good use of their experience and skills are much less stressful to work with. Everybody will know they have been treated fairly. A good selection procedure will save the agency time and money if it maximises the possibilities for self-selection and takes responsibility for not allowing unsuitable people into the volunteer programme.

Enormous heartache and pain for staff, other volunteers and clients can be avoided when a selector has the courage to say to a potential volunteer that is unsuitable for this position, 'I'm sorry, but this is not the job for you.'

Where a selector has the foresight to see potential and allows a volunteer to develop that potential, the possibilities are enormous.

What were the selection procedures used for the volunteer positions you hold?
How are volunteers selected in this organisation?
Are they appropriate to the level of skill and responsibility required of the volunteer?

The focus of volunteer centres is different from that of the organisations they provide volunteers for. Voluntary organisations use volunteers to provide a service to another group, who are their primary focus and client. Their support for and management of volunteers is to enable the service to be delivered in the best possible way. In their selection, training and support they seek to provide the best volunteer for the job.

Volunteer centres, on the other hand, provide a service for volunteers.

They want to find the best job for the volunteer who approaches them. The approaches of these groups to selection will therefore be different.

Training Programmes

Volunteers need to be given the training necessary to do their work.

The training of volunteers has many facets. If volunteers are expected to do a job that requires particular skills then they need to be given the training necessary. It is unfair on the volunteer to ask them to do a skilled job without ensuring they have the training necessary, because it leaves them set up to fail. It is also unfair on the recipients of that work if an untrained person is trying to do it but not succeeding through lack of training.

One of the reasons volunteers give for offering their services is that they want to develop their skills. One way of attracting this sort of volunteer is to provide training. But then many volunteer coordinators say they offer training opportunities and their volunteers do not want to come. Clearly training of volunteers is not a simple topic.

One of the difficulties with training lies in the perception many volunteers have of what is involved. They may carry with them an image of education that results from an unsatisfactory school experience. So they see training as involving sitting down being bored while someone talks at them. Or worse still, they fear that they will be put in a position where they will have to expose their ignorance. People with low self-esteem are not prepared to risk either of these possibilities.

Good training does neither of these things.

People learn best when:

1. They feel respected and accepted.
2. They feel their prior knowledge is valued.
3. They can contribute to the learning process.
4. They are nurtured and encouraged to develop new skills.

Obviously the style and extent of training needs to be appropriate to the volunteer and the type of work being done. In some situations a short briefing session describing the work is all that is needed. But for others more extensive training is necessary.

A group using volunteers for a door-to-door collection may call its collectors together at the beginning of the day, give them brief instructions and allocate their collection areas. Or it may gather them together earlier

in the week and run a training session on how to approach strangers on doorsteps, let them do some role-plays to build up confidence, and discuss difficulties such as dogs or abusive householders. The first method might get the job done adequately; the second gives something to the volunteer in terms of confidence-building and will probably result in a more satisfactory outcome and a willing helper next year.

For more skilled work there are different ways of approaching training. A conservation volunteer may learn by working alongside an experienced worker in an 'apprenticeship' model. A volunteer carer might be expected to attend a training course for one night a week over a period of weeks. This might be done before any practical work is undertaken or alongside this work. Some organisations favour taking their trainees away for a whole weekend for a concentrated session.

Organisations vary in the ways they provide training. Some use their own members as trainers. National organisations may have a standardised training package. Others will set up their own training courses using specialist people from outside their group as trainers. Some will make use of courses available in their community at polytechnics or community colleges. They will do this by paying for or at least subsidising their volunteers to attend such a course. The right way is the way that best meets the needs of the particular organisation and the particular volunteers.

Adult Learning

Any training programme for adults needs to take into account how adults learn.

Adults remember things by considering them in the light of things they already know. The implication of this is that people's personal experience has a very important part in the learning process. The exercises that work best are those that involve people building on and drawing conclusions from their own experience.

It is important to note that while people might not always have knowledge or information to share, and so feel ignorant if asked for it, they always have some experience and nobody can argue with a person's experience. It is affirming for people to have their own life experience valued in this way.

Education is a process of the whole person.

Education is a process of the whole person. People absorb knowledge through all their senses. The implication of this is that everything that happens in the educational process matters. The smell of coffee and the flowers that greet them as they come tentatively into the room give a feeling

of welcome – 'This is going to be a good experience.'

Colour and shape imprint themselves on the memory and help with retaining information. Music is now recognised as a factor that facilitates learning.

The introductory exercise that encourages the contribution of each member in an unthreatening way affirms their inclusion as an equal participant. Many people feel that everyone else in the group is more important and knows far more about the subject than they do. When they are given the opportunity to share this they discover that everyone else in the room is feeling the same way. So offering equal rights of participation to every member is very important.

Adults are generally not used to sitting in the same place for a long period of time, so regular breaks are important: a chance to move around, change position, stretch, snatch a bit of fresh air and exercise helps to get more oxygen to the brain and fight off fatigue – particularly after lunch.

Studies have shown that while people remember some of what they hear and see, they remember more of what they do. So *doing* is a very important part of adult learning: practical experience with the chance of follow-up evaluation. It may be possible for this to be with real-life situations, or these may have to be simulated by means of case studies or role-plays. This will depend on the nature of what is being taught.

A good trainer knows that much learning happens in a group with participants 'teaching' each other. The role of the trainer then is to facilitate and monitor this process and keep it on track.

Much learning happens in a group with participants 'teaching' each other.

Learning should be fun. When people are relaxed and having fun there is a good climate for learning. When people are anxious and uptight their anxiety is likely to interfere with the learning process.

Whatever the style of the training, it is important that it is well planned. There must be clear aims and learning objectives and these must relate to the tasks or roles that the volunteer is expected to perform.

Learning should be fun.

If training is to be effective the presenters need to be competent trainers. Training is a skill in itself. Sometimes a group will invite an expert to talk about their subject and be disappointed because while this person has heaps of knowledge, they haven't learned how to transmit it to other people.

Many organisations try to save money by cutting back their training

courses and shortening the sessions. They will then expect a trainer to teach a topic in an unreasonably short time. A group that tries to learn, say, listening skills in a one-hour session is hardly going to be successful. Listening skills need at least eight hours and involve the group in lots of participation.

Everyone needs time to learn new skills and any group that is mean with its training time and budget is going to cost itself more in the long run.

Think about providing a certificate of participation at the end of the training course. Volunteers who see training as one of their rewards will value a certificate that records the learning they have done.

Dealing with unwilling participants requires sensitivity and lateral thinking.

Let us turn now to the vexed question of the volunteer who does not want to do any training. There are a number of ways of approaching this issue. None of them will solve it completely but some might help move it some way.

If your training is appropriate in style, then the problem here lies in the minds of the potential volunteers and their preconceived ideas based on their experience. Once these people have attended your interesting, affirming, fun training sessions they will be dying to come back because their perceptions will have changed! So the problem is to get them there in the beginning.

The following ideas may help:

- Invite them to a gathering to 'find out what is involved'.
- Make training compulsory.
- Invite them to a 'coffee morning' where training is delivered in a very informal atmosphere.
- Invite them to come and share their wisdom and experience with others. (Make sure they are given the opportunity to do this.)
- Invite 'old hands' to come and help evaluate the training process.
- Ask the volunteer to describe the sort of learning they think they need and then deliver that to them. (This can always be a base to start from.)
- Ask them what sort of sessions they would like to attend.
- Ask them what they dislike about training and reassure them.

Volunteers come with gifts and talents and needs. They need lots of nurturing. If they perceive their training and their volunteer work as areas where they are nurtured and some of their needs are met, they will come.

What are your training needs as a volunteer?
Do you have a record of all the training you have done?
What are the training arrangements for the different sorts of volunteers in this organisation?
Is the style of training used in this organisation appropriate to the needs of the work and the volunteers?

Chapter 5

Helping Volunteers to Keep Doing Their Job Well

Preparation, selection and training are what the volunteer needs to get them ready to do their job well. The next task is to look at what is needed to keep them doing their job well.

Standards for Volunteer Work

High standards of work can and should be required of volunteer workers.

The underlying assumption of this book is that volunteer work is worth doing and that it can be done well. It is important to understand that high standards of work can and should be required of volunteer workers. Sometimes people say, 'Well, you can't expect too much of volunteers.' It is an insult to a volunteer to expect that they will give less than a high standard of service because they are not being paid money for it.

Think of the situations in which you volunteer. What quality of service do you give? Why?

Volunteers have to put limits on the work they do unpaid. This is necessary for their survival. Limits are usually related to the amount of time to be spent or the nature of work to be done unpaid. Very few volunteers will reduce the *quality* of their work because of lack of payment. Many people give very high-quality work as volunteers in counselling, caring, educating adults and children, keeping accounts, administrating, refereeing, coaching and running voluntary agencies. They do not say, 'I'm not being paid for this so I won't do such a good job.' Usually a person who thinks that way does not volunteer.

Every fortnight Bill, a retired accountant and volunteer board member, pays the wages of a staff of 12. He sends out pay slips in the beautiful handwriting that is typical of accountants of his pre-computer era. He

would be highly insulted if anyone suggested that he would do a sloppy job.

Leaders and managers can encourage high standards from their volunteers by expecting high standards of them. As Peter Drucker says, 'You don't treat them as "volunteers" but as staff members. The only difference is that they are part-time and are not being paid. But when it comes to performance, performance is performance.'[12]

Many volunteers get their satisfaction from knowing that a high standard is being expected of them and that they are being supported and trained to give that high standard. This chapter looks at what is needed to help the volunteer provide a high standard of work.

Encouraging Personal Development

In order to give their best, volunteers need to be working in an environment where they can develop. Look back at many of the reasons a person volunteers. A number of them involve personal development. Many women gain self-confidence through volunteer work and it is often for them a step on the way from full-time motherhood to the paid workforce. They need a supportive environment that allows them to develop their talents.

A supportive environment allows volunteers to develop their talents.

But what is this supportive environment? Various images come to mind of some groups where the volunteers grow and of other groups where they feel stunted. Concepts such as welcome and encouragement, friendship and nurture, respect and affirmation all contribute to this environment. Words such as blame and injustice, dishonesty and deception, hierarchy and oppression all work against it. But none of these capture the whole.

An environment that encourages personal development is one in which a person feels safe to make a mistake and learn from it. Perfection is not expected; reality is accepted. It is acceptable to take a risk in the knowledge that sometimes the volunteer will get it wrong. But if they do they can acknowledge that wrong, be forgiven and start again. Depending on the situation they may well have to take remedial action. They would expect honest feedback so that if they are not performing to the organisation's expectation they will know that and be in a position to make changes.

Personal development is encouraged when a volunteer feels safe to make a mistake and learn from it.

An environment that encourages personal development is also one in which a volunteer is accepted as a whole person – body, mind and spirit. Their physical needs will be of importance – food, drink, warmth and

equipment that does not damage them physically. They can expect that their thoughts and feelings related to work will be valued. They can expect that their spiritual values will be respected.

Volunteers need to be allowed to be themselves. You may not necessarily agree with them but at least they will feel that their perspective has been heard. Differing points of view can be accepted and where conflict arises it is sorted out, not allowed to fester. An environment in which people can develop is one that acknowledges and values the uniqueness of each person and encourages respect for difference. Many of the management practices in this book will contribute to this environment.

Personal development grows from the volunteer being encouraged and supported to stretch their skills beyond existing limits.

Personal development also involves growth. It involves opportunity to take responsibility and accept challenge. It involves encouragement to stretch the volunteer's skills beyond existing limits.

A number of today's leaders in the community acknowledge that their first experience of community work was in Playcentre. This New Zealand cooperative preschool movement run by parent volunteers offers training opportunities and experience in preschool work and in committee work. It has set many of our country's leaders on their path to competence.

> As I look back over my own life I am conscious of my experience and learning as a result of involvement as a volunteer. I learned to be a secretary because a group I was part of was desperate for a secretary. I learned group leadership skills because I was elected as a president. I learned counselling skills as a result of the training and supervision I received as a volunteer. I became a more confident public speaker because of the opportunities given me as a volunteer. I learned about adult education as I was called on to train volunteers. I travelled around the world as a direct result of my experience as and with volunteers.

The capacity for human beings to develop themselves seems to be infinite. Volunteer work should be an area where development is possible. For this to happen volunteers need to be given opportunities to carry out new roles, try different ways of doing things and encouraged to take responsibility.

In Chapter 2 we considered the reasons people do volunteer work. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one finds that people may begin voluntary work as a means of meeting their social and self-esteem needs: they want friends and they want to feel important and respected. Once these needs have been met, however, they no longer motivate, so people will be looking towards self-actualisation and self-transcendence: they will want to develop further their potential and many will move beyond their own needs.

Personal development happens when volunteers take responsibility.

Some development can be a result of training provided by the group but is much more likely to occur when volunteers take responsibility. They need to be encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their involvement in the group. Some people don't turn up for a committee meeting because nobody reminded them. Nobody should have to remind them. Part of being on a committee is taking responsibility for knowing when the meetings are and showing up. A secretary who rings and reminds them is taking this responsibility from them.

Volunteers also develop through being given opportunities to take responsibility for the development of the group. Some groups will care for their volunteers really well in terms of management practices such as defined roles and rewards, but they will not allow their volunteers to take responsibility. One can imagine these volunteers as all being filed away in boxes ready to be used. When the coordinator goes to the box, however, the volunteer has often crawled out the back door. Being confined to a box does not allow for growth and most volunteers find it too limiting for any length of time. Good volunteers want to grow and good volunteer management encourages this.

What do you require to be able to develop personally?
Which of Maslow's needs is your strongest motivator at this time? What do you need to move on from this position?
What are the ways in which your organisation provides a supportive environment for volunteers to work in?
How are volunteers encouraged and supported to develop their talents?
What responsibilities are the volunteers in your organisation given?

Encouraging Volunteers' Spiritual Well-being

Recognition of spirituality helps personal development.

Many people's personal development will be encouraged if they feel their spirituality is being recognised. If the organisation is a religious one, then the religious practices of the group will probably dictate how spirituality is acknowledged. But secular groups can also create a climate that encourages the spiritual well-being of its members. It can do this in various ways.

The most basic is in recognising the importance and uniqueness of each volunteer. Time is given to recognise people. Significant events are celebrated or commiserated upon. Individual volunteers' needs are acknowledged.

Surroundings are important too. It is not just the decor that matters. Flowers, candles, symbols, photos, pictures that relate to the spirit and

purpose of the group create an atmosphere that enhances spiritual development. Members are likely to want to make their own contributions to this, such as flowers from their own gardens or pieces of their own artwork or a joint effort such as a collage or a quilt. Occasional activities at an outside venue that allows enjoyment of nature can also nurture spirits.

Time given to reflection on the vision, the history, the context, the purpose and the work of the organisation all help acknowledge what is spiritual in volunteers.

A volunteer coordinator in a museum held a gathering of her volunteers. She invited each of them to choose an artefact that they felt had some spiritual significance for them. They each told the rest of the group why they had chosen that artefact. As the museum housed some of the treasures of that community, this activity allowed the participants to connect their chosen volunteer work with their personal lives, spiritually and historically.

A group of hospital volunteers gathered on a regular basis to reflect on a reading chosen by one of them.

Christians in this situation often reach for the Bible but there is a wealth of other reflective material available. Joy Cowley's *Aotearoa Psalms* give a local flavour to reflection. Michael Leunig's cartoons from across the Tasman also contain much food for thought. In fact a good cartoonist can often give insights that lead to reflection on many serious matters. The important aspect of this activity is not so much the content of the reflection, but the acknowledgment of the worth of each participant's contribution.

In situations where volunteers are dealing with difficult realities, it is their spiritual motivation that gives them the strength to continue. This is nurtured by sharing with others.

Where does your spiritual strength come from?
How is it nurtured?
How does your group create ways of acknowledging the spirituality of its members?

Volunteers need to know if they are doing the right thing.

Support and Supervision

Volunteers need a system of support and supervision that allows them to check out and gain feedback about their work. 'Am I doing the right thing?'

They need a safe person to go to if they strike difficulties. It is through regular support and supervision that standards of service are maintained, volunteers develop and burn-out is avoided.

The type of supervision will differ according to the nature of volunteer work being done. The understanding people have of supervision also depends on their experience. In this context a supervisor is the person through whom accountability is effected. A supervisor is the person who knows how the job should be done. The role of the supervisor is to help the volunteer do the best possible job they are capable of.

Many people carry an image of a supervisor as a person who sits on your shoulder and notes when you do things wrong. They see this as quite a threatening position. So often work has to be done to remove this threatening feeling.

Supervision should be encouraging and empowering for the volunteer.

Where the volunteer task is purely practical, the role of supervisor may well be close to this. The supervisor may be present when the work is being carried out and be the person who can show the volunteer what to do and how to do it. The role may also include checking the quality of the work done. But such a supervisor should deal with volunteers in an encouraging and empowering manner.

Where the volunteer is working in a caring capacity the concept of supervision is based on the role of a casework supervisor used in social work. Here supervision is a regular meeting between a supervisor and one volunteer or a group of volunteers. The focus of this meeting is the work the volunteers have done with clients of the organisation. The supervisor and the volunteers review the volunteers' work with the clients, how they went about doing things, their successes and failures. They also look at the volunteers' personal responses to the situation and focus on the development of the volunteers' skills.

Supervision deals with the volunteer's work, responses to that work and development of skills. It is a safe place to share pain and frustration.

Many volunteers acknowledge that they could not have continued without the support of excellent supervisors who believed in them, supported them, challenged them, listened to them but on no occasion took over their work. Supervisors are volunteers' greatest support.

It's a funny word, 'support'. Its meanings are wide and varied and include concepts like carry, enable to last out, keep from falling, encourage, give strength to, supply with necessities, speak in favour of. All these give some clue to how volunteers can be supported; but what is supportive in one situation can be a burden in others. The whole underpinning of volunteer management is to be able to provide appropriate support for volunteers. Any organisation that has volunteers working for it has to take their support very seriously if it is to be successful.

Support is responding to the needs of each particular group of volunteers.

Volunteers also receive support from each other. This happens when they come together in groups to work or to train. Occasional social gatherings also make the volunteer feel part of the organisation, although too many can feel burdensome and counter-productive.

Newsletters and information sheets keep volunteers informed of the group's activities and so keep them in touch. If the volunteer reads of their own contribution in a newsletter they are likely to feel supported.

Providing support means that an organisation does those things that make it easy for the volunteers to do their work and values their contribution. The various parts of volunteer management all contribute to the support of volunteers.

What sort of supervision do you have for your voluntary work?
What other sorts of support do you get?
How does a worker in your organisation know whether he/she is doing 'the right thing'?
How is volunteers' work supervised?
What support is provided for volunteers in this organisation, including executive members?

Review and Appraisal

Review and appraisal help answer the question: 'To what extent have we succeeded?'

Review and appraisal are means of assessing the effectiveness of an individual person's work and also the degree of success of a particular project. They are an important factor in helping a volunteer and the organisation decide the worth of the work they are doing and the appropriate time and way to make changes.

Any project needs to be evaluated on a regular basis to be sure that it is achieving its goals or desired outcomes. Major studies have been done on ways of doing this and clearly the type of project will to some degree dictate the type of review or evaluation process needed. Basically an evaluation tries to answer the question: 'To what extent have we succeeded?' Often such an exercise will also give some information about why some things were successful and others not and what changes should be made to improve matters in the future.

The starting points for evaluation are the mission statement, aims and objectives and specific goals. If we know what we are setting out to do we have some way of knowing whether we have been successful.

The project might be that we need to raise $1000. If we raise $1001 we

have clearly been successful. If we raised $800 we have been partially successful but not completely. If we lost $100 we failed! Where the outcomes can be measured in numbers such as dollars or kilometres of track laid or numbers of people who received a service, measuring success or failure is easy.

Other situations are not so simple. Clear goals, however, do help. For example, an organisation set up a group to help deal with the isolation of young women with babies. The evaluation revealed that after four months of attending the group, many of these women were contacting and meeting each other outside the meeting time. Clearly this was helping break down isolation.

The degree of formality involved in evaluation and review processes will vary according to the nature of the work being done and the group doing it. An evaluation can be done by an outside professional person setting up questionnaires, interviewing people and writing a report or it can be done in a facilitated group situation. Whatever the form of the evaluation it is a waste of time unless the information that results from it is fed back to the people who have the power and responsibility for making changes. In some cases this will be the individual volunteers, in others it will be the management of the project.

A simple formula to use when evaluating a project is:

- What's going well?
- What's not working?
- What should we change?

This can be applied equally to a one-off training session and to a major project. If these questions are asked of both providers and consumers of the service they give a framework for getting both positive and negative feedback.

> In a church congregation the organising team meets at the end of each year with the participants of the various groups. The purpose of these meetings is to evaluate and celebrate. Everybody who is involved is invited – the participants (with their parents if it is a children's programme), the organisers and the presenters. Usually there is food and drink. The leaders are thanked and given some token of appreciation for their work. The year is reviewed and changes for the next year suggested. It is a very constructive process because the successful parts of the programmes are acknowledged alongside the things that need changing.

Project evaluation and individual appraisal should focus on the successes as well as the failures.

Many attempts to evaluate and bring about change fail because they focus on what is unsuccessful and forget about what has been successful.

It is also important for the work of individual volunteers to be appraised from time to time. This is particularly true when they are involved in long-term work. People like to know whether they are succeeding and the agency needs to know that its volunteers are performing successfully.

Again the process needs to focus on the positive as well as the negative aspects of the volunteer's work. It needs to be done in a supportive atmosphere so that any changes can be dealt with constructively.

> One group uses volunteers to do counselling-type work. The volunteers attend supervision sessions fortnightly and every year they have a review interview with the coordinator of volunteers and their supervisor. This provides a forum to look at their work and also to look at any changes they might want to make in their role. From the volunteer's point of view it provides a recognised forum for exploring possible changes and an opportunity for feedback. From the agency's point of view it provides a chance to review each volunteer without people feeling they have been singled out.

One of the most significant aspects of evaluation and review processes is that they are catalysts for change long before their results are presented. The simple fact of getting people to look at their work and answer questions about it causes them to start doing their own evaluation, and often they isolate unsatisfactory elements and make changes themselves.

How is your voluntary work evaluated?
How is each individual worker's work evaluated in your organisation? Who by? How often? Who is this fed back to?
How is the effectiveness of your project measured? Who by? How often? Who is this fed back to?

Ensuring Rewards

Volunteer rewards arise from their motivation.

The fact that volunteers work for reasons other than money means that they gain their rewards in other ways. Consequently, the way in which volunteers have their efforts recognised is of great importance. It can be as simple as asking how the job's going or saying thank you.

So often the first time a volunteer gets thanked is when they resign. It is

really sad when a person has to leave in order to have their contribution recognised. After all, the best volunteers are the ones we still have working for us.

The key to knowing what rewards your volunteers respond to lies in the sections on motivation. If you know what motivates your volunteers you will know what rewards they are seeking. The best way to find this out is to ask them. That is why the question 'Why do you want to volunteer for this organisation?' is a significant one in an initial interview.

One of the difficulties of working effectively with volunteers is that different people are working for different reasons. What is a suitable reward for one person might have no significance at all for another. For some people being given a book token is a welcome way of recognising that the work done took time and energy, but someone else might view that as a waste of the group's hard-earned funds. Most people, however, do at least appreciate having their work acknowledged.

For some the rewards are training opportunities and certificates. Volunteers appreciate the opportunity to develop their skills. They get satisfaction from knowing they do a good job because they have learned how it should be done. If they are moving towards paid work, volunteers value opportunities to receive training and have certificates to put in their CV.

They also appreciate the chance to attend conferences and meet with other volunteers in the same field. The decision to send a volunteer to a conference affirms their value, as it recognises the significance of their contribution. Meeting and comparing notes with other volunteers in the same field can be very energising.

> Bella was concerned about the cost of an annual conference of volunteers working in an organisation that was always short of money. Before the conference she was seriously questioning the worth of bringing all those people from all over the country together for a weekend. She was a bit tired, and also genuinely concerned about the cost. After it was over her perspective was quite different. She had been strengthened by meeting with other women from different towns who shared the same vision. She had heard of new ideas and different ways of working. She had learned of how others had dealt with situations she had found difficult. She had been inspired by the speakers. She came away stimulated, encouraged and full of energy to keep going.

One creative organisation that has both paid and voluntary staff issues each person with a pay cheque each week. For the paid staff it is money

and for the voluntary staff it is a record of the hours they have put in and a thank-you letter. This is a way of saying to them that even though they are not paid with money, their contributions are still valued.

Many people do not need specific gifts if they can see a positive effect from their work and have the support of key people. Some will respond to a gift of flowers. Volunteers, however, can actually go quite a long time working for a cause they believe in without too much thanks or acknowledgment, particularly in a situation where the results of their work are evident to them, so long as they have one or two significant people whose support they can count on. One of these will usually be their supervisor. But they soon start being uncooperative if they hear someone else taking responsibility for or ownership of work they have done.

Celebration is important in volunteer recognition.

Celebration is an important part of volunteer recognition. It can be spontaneous or planned. Every group should stop from time to time to celebrate what they have achieved so far. It is so easy to focus on the enormous list of things that always need to be done and lose sight of what already has been done. Yet the simplest successes can be an excuse for a celebration.

A celebration can be a big affair like a dinner or a party, but it doesn't have to be. Someone turning up with muffins for morning tea or bringing a bottle of wine for the end of the day might be enough. Even bringing a bunch of flowers to the workplace can lighten the spirits of the people there. Free tickets to a theatre or sporting event can inspire others.

Some groups respond to awards or recognition parties. Awards can be given for so many hours of work or a particular achievement of a volunteer.

These have two potential pitfalls. One is when everyone receives the same 'individual' thank-you. This has to be done very carefully so as to avoid a devaluing effect.

> In order to save stamps a group decided to present any person who made a donation with a thank-you letter on the spot. The person receiving the gift took from a pile a pre-printed letter thanking them for their generosity and handed it to them.

This seems a meaningless act as it happens regardless of who the donor is or what the gift is.

Valuing the contributions of volunteers calls for sensitivity and creativity.

The other pitfall is another side of this same coin. That is the risk of valuing the contributions of the 'big' contributors and ignoring the 'small' ones. The biblical story of the widow's mite highlights the situation in which the small contribution that costs a person a great effort is overlooked in favour of the large contribution easily given.

Valuing the contributions of volunteers is not easy. It needs sensitivity and creativity.

> An agency who had a team of volunteers to run an educational programme organised a meal out for them as a thank-you. The feedback indicated that they really enjoyed the opportunity to relax together after having worked together all year.

In general, small teams get more out of their rewards if they are shared with fellow team members. And sharing a meal has a bonding effect on a team.

Whatever the method used, it should be clear that the object is to reward volunteers. Don't organise a thank-you party and then charge the people being thanked because someone thinks of it as a fundraiser as well!

The art of rewarding volunteers is to find the appropriate way for each one at that particular time, bearing in mind that in a good organisation volunteers are always developing.

Do you know what rewards you respond to in your voluntary work?
How do you find out what rewards the individual volunteers in your organisation will respond to?
Who takes responsibility for rewarding individual volunteers?
Who takes responsibility for organising group celebrations?
Do you record the hours put in by individual volunteers so that this information is available when a reference is sought?

Suggestions of Ways to Support and Recognise Volunteers

- smile
- ask volunteers how their work is going
- reimburse out-of-pocket expenses that volunteers incur as part of their volunteer work
- provide good orientation and on-the-job training
- provide childcare facilities to enable parents of young children to volunteer
- encourage volunteers to take responsibility
- include volunteers in decision-making
- take time to talk with volunteers and show you appreciate their efforts
- send birthday, anniversary, Christmas or congratulations cards
- provide funds to enable volunteers to participate in training and continuing education activities
- say thank you
- create pleasant surroundings for their work and meetings

- write newsworthy items about the work of volunteers for local newspapers
- show appreciation of volunteers to their friends and families
- celebrate successes
- write thank you notes
- form volunteers' support groups for sharing joys and concerns
- keep challenging volunteers to extend themselves
- provide good resources and equipment
- give an occasional gift of appreciation, e.g. a book, music token, flowering plant
- share with volunteers positive comments you hear about them and their work

- give positive feedback and constructive criticism
- keep an accurate record of their training and work, and record this on a certificate
- be prepared to provide a reference if asked
- provide opportunities for volunteers to assess their satisfactions, needs, learning and development in their work
- have a picnic or barbecue for volunteers
- publicise information about recognition that volunteers have received for their volunteer work in other parts of the community
- arrange with a local theatre to use their unsold seats one night for a thank you to volunteers and a night out for client families
- propose volunteers for awards in their local community
- keep personal contact
- let volunteers know it is okay to arrange to take time out when needed
- organise support for volunteers in times of illness and bereavement
- be interested in what they are doing
- pass on any feedback from recipients of service
- say thank you again

Paying Volunteers' Expenses

Volunteers inevitably incur costs in their work.

Audrey went to town today to participate in a meeting with a voluntary group. She was happy to volunteer her time, energy and expertise. In the course of doing this she drove eight kilometres and paid $5 in parking costs. Using public-service mileage rates this was effectively a donation of $9 over and above her time.

Volunteers give their time and effort. They should not be expected to cover their financial costs as well. Volunteers can incur many costs. Petrol, parking, telephone calls, paper, wear and tear on equipment such as computers all cost money.

If the circumstances are such that the organisation is not able to pay these costs, then be clear about that at the time of engaging the volunteers. If mileage cannot be paid, then at least measure it and acknowledge it as a donation.

Some volunteers are willing and able to donate their costs, but the decision to do this should rest with the volunteer. Others may decide that they want to contribute their time in lieu of money to a particular cause. People who are on low incomes simply cannot afford to volunteer if it is going to increase their family's costs. Yet these are people who have much to offer and much to gain from volunteer experience.

Groups that use volunteers are often quite unrealistic about expenses because they have not taken the trouble to measure the costs involved for the volunteer. This can be compounded when the people in the decision-making positions can afford to donate their costs and forget that others are unable to.

A major obstacle for a volunteer can be training costs. Yet groups can be reluctant to offer initial training courses free of charge because they find that people sometimes come for the training and don't then stay to do the organisation's work. This can be dealt with in a number of ways. It can be written off as good public relations. A small fee can be charged to reduce the costs. A fee can be charged which could be refunded after a specified amount of work. Whatever is done, however, it is important not to lose sight of the potential volunteer who simply cannot afford to pay and yet has a worthwhile contribution to make.

> On one such occasion a training organiser accepted a bone carving from a participant in lieu of a fee and this became the symbol of the group on special occasions.

Somewhere between the headings of rewards and expenses comes the heading of food costs. A group may expect volunteers to bring their own food on all occasions. But they will feel much more nurtured if they have access to free tea and coffee and even the occasional free lunch.

A free lunch helps volunteers to feel more nurtured.

One group of volunteers that has regular training sessions provided its trainees with free lunch on those days. When needing to cut back the budget they decided to retain the free lunch because of the nurturing effect it had on the participants. They were all busy mothers and being able to rush out of the house in the morning and not think about lunch was a real bonus.

How do you find out what costs your volunteers are incurring?
How do you reimburse your volunteers for their costs?

Including Volunteers in Decision-making

People are committed to decisions they have made themselves.

Making them part of the decision-making in relation to their volunteer work is essential in order to produce happy volunteers. Not only will they be committed to their work, they will bring a perspective that is essential for an integrated service.

People in general are committed to decisions they have made themselves. To make a decision it is necessary to seek background information and become well informed on the issue. The people who make the decision get to understand why it is being made and what the alternatives are. They can see their own part in the decision and its implementation. Their involvement in this process leads to commitment to carrying it out. Volunteer work is dependent on the commitment of the volunteers to carry out their work.

Involving volunteers in the decision-making process is also a way of honouring their contribution. It shows that the decision-makers respect the opinions of those who are carrying out the work. It also encourages the volunteer to take responsibility.

Volunteers bring their own perspective to decision-making. Their experience as volunteers gives them insights that could otherwise be overlooked.

Group leaders often fall into the trap of assuming that their busy volunteers will not have time to come to the extra meetings to contribute to making decisions. Yet the volunteers would welcome the opportunity to come and voice their concerns.

One of the difficulties of including volunteers in decision-making is finding the appropriate forum. Because volunteers usually work part-time, often at odd hours and on rosters, it can be quite difficult to get them together for consultation or any other purpose.

Where the volunteers are also the members, the annual general meeting can seem like a point where volunteers can be involved in decision-making. But in reality this is frequently not the case. The formality of such meetings inhibits many people from making a contribution.

Some groups will have a volunteer representative on their management group. This can be effective if this person is in frequent close communication with the volunteers and accepted by them as a representative. There are two major pitfalls in this method, however, which are opposite poles of the same problem. One is that the volunteer representative becomes so much part of the management group that their volunteer perspective is forgotten. The other is that the volunteer representative is isolated by the rest of the management group and their viewpoint not taken seriously. This polarisation can be reduced if there is more than one volunteer representative on the management body.

An effective way of involving volunteers in decision-making is in a facilitated meeting with management and possibly paid staff. Small groups can be used and feedback given to the whole meeting. People who would be daunted by the possibility of speaking out in a large group have an opportunity to give their input in such small groups. Such a meeting needs to be well facilitated to ensure that all volunteers have the opportunity to have their say.

Volunteers can contribute to decision-making at a facilitated meeting with management and paid staff.

> One group organises a weekend away together for volunteer committee, paid staff and volunteer staff early each year. They use this time for setting goals, planning, maybe a small amount of training. The aim for this time is for all the groups to have the opportunity to work together on the major plans and commitments for the next year. They also play together, getting to know each other better, having fun and forming a closer bond, which helps them through the next year. And if you are imagining them all holed up in a smart hotel somewhere burning up the agency's funds, forget it. They hire an old house in the country for a minimal rent, everybody brings food to share and other essential equipment like wine, gin, playing-cards and walking shoes.

When everybody is busy it can be really hard to get people to commit themselves to an exercise like this but such weekends give the group energy to carry on.

For some a weekend away is an impossibility. So it is important also to hold similar events during a morning or an evening to give everyone a chance to have their input at some stage. Even then all volunteers will not

participate, but at least they will all have been offered a realistic opportunity to do so.

Are volunteers involved in the decision-making of your group?
How can other volunteers be included, particularly in issues that affect them directly?
How do you participate in the decision-making of the group you volunteer for?

Ensuring Effective Communication Channels

A key part of good management is good communication.

Knowing what to do when managing volunteers is only part of the story. Carrying it out effectively is also necessary. A key part of carrying out good management is communication.

Job descriptions that live in filing cabinets unread by the people they refer to are no use to anyone. Board decisions that are not communicated to the people who must implement them change nothing. Volunteers who have difficulties in their work and have no way of communicating these to someone who can help them are liable to leave.

Communication is the process of getting a message from one person to another accurately. People interpret messages according to the information they already have.

Communication is the process of getting a message from one person to another accurately. Most messages from one human being to another will have an information content and also an 'emotional' content, or a feeling. This makes communication a hazardous business.

In my early days as a trainer I was often disturbed when I heard volunteers say, 'Nobody ever told me that' and yet I knew I had: it was written in my speech notes. Clearly I had given a message but it had not been received. I know now that people forget most of the information given on the first day of a training course. At that stage what is being absorbed is atmosphere and an overall impression. If I want people to retain information I need to reinforce it later using other ways.

Most of us interpret the messages we receive according to the information we already have. This can include the context in which the message is given and our emotional state at the time. A paid worker who fears redundancy is likely to interpret the start of a new volunteer programme in a very different light to an overworked employee secure in their job.

Can you remember a time when you misunderstood a message because of the emotional state you were in?
Think also of times when your message was misunderstood. What was the reason?

In some situations people will receive a message or some information but not apply it to themselves.

> Paul tried to recruit volunteers to revitalise a parish programme that had folded. His first attempt was to advertise a meeting in the church newsletter – two people turned up. He then arranged for a previous participant to talk about the programme at the Sunday church service and announce another meeting. Twenty people attended this meeting. Clearly people were much readier to respond to a verbal request than a general written one. It's not that people don't read newsletters. They read them but they either don't retain the information or they don't apply it to themselves.

People seem to have a hierarchy of degrees of commitment to information they receive. At the bottom of this hierarchy are general newsletters. These fulfil useful purposes in confirming information already known. They can generate interest, but on their own they seldom motivate people to take an action.

Further up the hierarchy comes a personally addressed letter. People are more likely to feel that the information is meant for them if they have been addressed personally. A verbal statement to a group seems to bring a better response, particularly if backed by a written statement of any factual details. But ideally if you want someone to respond to you, the most effective way is through a personal request. And again this can be confirmed in writing.

The basis of good communication is respect for each person in the group. Each person should be listened to and have the opportunity to have their views heard and taken seriously. They may not be able to be acted on as they may be incompatible with the needs of other group members or with the mission or resources of the group, but each person needs to at least feel heard. If organisers want someone to hear their message they will have a better chance of success if they listen first.

Clearly face-to-face dialogue between two people maximises the possibility of good communication. In this scenario the context and the body language can be taken into consideration. It is possible to check out any misunderstandings so the chances of misinterpretation are minimised. Written messages can be used to back up and confirm verbal ones but they seldom carry as much information as a direct verbal message.

Dialogue between two people maximises the possibility of good communication.

And here's a tip for people who write reports and minutes that will be read by others who were not present at the meeting or event. Think about

how your words will be interpreted by someone who was not part of the original discussion. People can be upset by reading an incomplete report that is entirely devoid of context.

Much is written elsewhere about how to communicate. Good communication is taught through practice rather than reading about it in a book. But some basic guidelines are important:

1. Respect the person you are trying to communicate with.
2. One to one is best.
3. Listen before you speak – someone whose mind is totally absorbed with another issue is unlikely to hear and remember what you tell them.
4. Make communication as direct as possible – every person a message goes through adds to or subtracts from the meaning.
5. Check out second-hand messages.
6. Use written material to confirm verbal information, but remember that most of us can't put all we want to say into a written message and the rest of us would be too lazy to read it if we could!

In an organisation where volunteers come and go, one of the biggest issues is how to ensure that everybody gets the information they need when they need it. Groups use logbooks, message books, answerphones and even little pockets with each volunteer's name on them. For any of these systems to work both the giver and the receivers of the messages have to be committed to using them. Telephone trees, where a group of volunteers each undertake to ring two others, are great so long as each member carries through on their responsibility to make those calls.

If the communication is bad, volunteers can end up doing what they think is right rather than what is actually required. Misunderstanding and hurt thrive. Sometimes communication breaks down for the simplest of reasons. One is intending to deliver letters personally to save postage and then forgetting to do so. The cost of postage is a small price to pay to ensure that everyone gets their information.

While the ideal channel of communication is to enable direct participation in decision-making processes, this is not always practical for all volunteers. So other channels of communication become extremely important.

One of the pitfalls is not allowing enough time for communication. Good communication takes time: time for discussion with each person, time to write and think about the implications of what is written. Communicating by phone is an important aspect of work.

Good systems need good communication to be able to work well. Systems can be static but it is the dynamism of communication that brings them to life.

What are the communication channels for volunteers in your organisation?
What are your difficulties in communication?
How can communication be improved?
How do you check that the message you intended to give is the one that was actually received? And the message you received was the one that was intended?
How do you encourage your volunteers to improve their communication skills?
How much time do you allow for communication?

Chapter 6

Different Management Systems

Methods of Volunteer Recruitment

It might seem strange that the subject of recruitment has been left until this point given that the first question asked when talking about volunteers is usually, 'How do we get more?' This has been done for two reasons.

First is the fact that many groups rush into recruiting before they have thought through all the ongoing management issues. They obtain their volunteers and then have to turn around and start getting into the other aspects of management; meantime their volunteers have become tired of waiting and gone elsewhere.

The other reason is that organisations often think in terms of getting more new volunteers without nurturing the ones they have. So this is why it is best not to look at recruitment until all the other aspects of management have been addressed.

Recruiting volunteers is a marketing exercise.

Recruiting is essentially a marketing exercise. Your organisation has a 'product' that it wants to 'sell'. The 'product' is the opportunity to volunteer to do a job that has certain non-monetary rewards: fulfilment of motivational needs, training, recognition, etc.

In return for this you want the volunteers to pay a 'price'.

The 'price' is their gift of time, energy and skills to the organisation.

The 'market' is the group of people who are potential volunteers.

The skill in recruitment is the skill of marketing, which is finding the type of promotion that will reach this group of potential volunteers.

How would you describe your organisation's 'product'?
What is the 'price' you expect from your volunteers?
Who are your 'market'?

First *listen* to the needs of potential volunteers.

Good marketing happens when the seller *listens* to the needs of the market (the potential volunteers), and promotes the product in such a way that it will appeal to those needs. An important part of this is using the language of and the media of the potential volunteers.

Good recruiters will be community people who are listening to what people willing to volunteer their energies are seeking in return. The staff of volunteer centres, who are listening to the needs of potential volunteers every day, should be a good source of this information. Listening, however, should start with existing volunteers who can tell of their needs and motivations.

Have a job description.

Before the process can begin the recruiter first has to know the product. What is the job that needs to be done? The starting point for recruitment is one we have already visited: what do we want this person to do? So the first piece of information we need is a job description. The more clearly a job is described, the better chance there is that it will be filled successfully. Success in this situation will be a satisfactory placement for the organisation and for the new recruit.

Next we need to know the attributes of the person who will do this job well. Do they need to bring their skills with them or will they be trained? What time of day is the work done? In school hours or outside? Does the work require a level of physical fitness? The list of attributes needed for selection is used also for recruitment.

Know what volunteer needs this job will meet.

The third thing we need to know about the job is which of the volunteer's needs will be met by it. Is it a job that needs someone who can come in, get the job done and go home when it is finished? This would suit someone motivated by achievement. Someone motivated by affiliation might be more appropriate for a group task.

A mission statement, logo and other brief information about the organisation will help build the picture of whom the potential recruit is volunteering to help.

The task of recruitment is finding the right person for this job and matching their skills and needs to what the volunteer position requires and can provide. In general people are more inclined to volunteer to help someone rather than something. People usually want to help people.

New recruits use lots of the organisation's energy.

New recruits use lots of the organisation's energy when they first arrive before they can start doing useful work. It pays to be ready for this. The following checklist may be helpful:

1. Who will respond to new applicants?
2. Who will interview new applicants? When?
3. How many new recruits can this group cope with at once?
4. How will unsuccessful applicants be dealt with? Who will do this?
5. Who will organise the training of these new recruits? When?

(continued overleaf)

6. Who will supervise the new recruits? When will this begin?
7. How and when will they begin to do the work they are volunteering to do?
8. How will the new recruits meet the rest of the members and begin to feel part of the organisation?

Once these questions have been answered, a recruitment plan can be made.

How were you recruited to the various volunteer positions you hold?

The One-to-One Method

Most people say they came to a particular volunteer position because somebody asked them. The 'somebody' might have been another volunteer, a trainer, a member of the board, or someone in their community who recognises their skills. This shows that the best recruiting is done one-to-one. Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard say, 'The world's best recruiters are satisfied volunteers' and 'If you don't ask, people can't say yes.'[13]

A training course for volunteer community workers was about to start. Applicants were being interviewed. There were seven enthusiastic applicants but at least ten participants were needed to make the course viable. As they interviewed each one, the coordinators put to them the situation and asked if they knew of anyone else who would be interested. These keen people recruited well and the course started a week later with eleven participants.

So often groups think of wider and more expensive ways of recruiting and forget the most effective method that is right under their noses – that of asking their friends and acquaintances.

The 'Warm Body' Approach

Outside the one-to-one approach, volunteers can be recruited by a recruitment campaign. There are two possible approaches to a recruitment campaign – a targeted recruitment or what McCurley and Vineyard call the 'warm body' approach. Both have their place.

If volunteers are needed to participate in a clean-up of broken glass on a beach then the 'warm body' approach is appropriate. Place an advertisement in the local newspaper, radio or TV and appeal to whoever is prepared to come. If you want to encourage them, run a competition for the most

rubbish collected or the zaniest outfit worn or simply have a lucky number. The aim here is to get as many people as possible out on that beach collecting.

The appeal of a 'warm body' campaign can be enhanced by gaining the support of a celebrity, possibly from a TV programme, who will grab the attention of large groups of people.

All the skills of the advertising agencies can come into play for this sort of campaign. It can be as good as you are prepared to pay for. Some basic skills are:

- Keep it simple – people will not retain complicated messages.
- Use more than one medium. Print will complement what is heard on radio and TV.
- Many radio stations offer voluntary organisations free time on their community notice-boards.

Targeted Recruitment

The most efficient way of recruiting is to try to target the group of people most likely to be suitable for the position to be filled. If the requirements are clearly expressed people can make their own judgments about whether they are suited to the position before they apply. This avoids wasting the volunteer's time and the organisation's time in interviewing applicants who, if they had more information, would have recognised that they were unsuitable for this position.

Targeted recruitment tries to target the group of people most likely to be suitable for the position offering.

The components of targeted recruitment are:

1. Clearly describe the job.
2. Clearly describe the attributes of the person needed.
3. Decide which particular group(s) of people are likely to possess these attributes.
4. Decide what sort of people the organisation needs to complement the existing membership.
5. Focus advertising where these people would be found.

For example, if a group needed a treasurer it might approach a service club or an accountancy course. If it needed carers who were used to dealing with young children, a kindergarten or primary school parents' newsletter might be the place to go. Sometimes the need might be for grandparents, in which case an approach could be made to an aged people's group.

Requests for volunteers should be worded to appeal to motivational needs.

An appeal can be designed in such a way that it appeals to different motivations. An appeal for carers may focus on the needs of the people to be cared for. It may also focus on the companionship to be received by the carer from the group they work for. An appeal for board members may focus on the possibility of being able to bring about change in people's lives through this service. An appeal for people to plant trees may focus on the sense of achievement they will get from seeing the trees grow.

With some thought it should be possible to work out the most likely motivational needs any voluntary job will meet and then word the request to connect with that need.

Stereotyping limits opportunities for volunteers and for organisations.

Before beginning to advertise, the person responsible needs to have a clear picture of the job and the attributes and motivations of the person who might fill it. It is, however, also important to beware of stereotyping. The volunteer who has these attributes may come from an unexpected quarter in terms of their age, culture, sex or disability and the organisation needs to be open to the creativity that is possible in a group encompassing a wide range of people.

Recruitment Strategies

Having decided what the job is, what will be done with the applicants, and who the likely target group is, the next step is to reach them. How this is done depends on the resources available – people, skills and money. Some possibilities are:

1. Look among your existing members and supporters – do any of them have the skills you need and want to use them in a different capacity?
2. Talk to your friends, neighbours, the other people at church, school, kindy, aerobics, netball, bridge or wherever else people gather. Would some of them make good workers for your organisation?
3. Are there any likely volunteers among people who have been recipients of your service?
4. Organise an information day in a mall or shopping centre.
5. Approach a volunteer centre if there is one in your community.
6. Offer a speaker to a meeting where your target group are likely to be.
7. Community radio will give free advertising to voluntary groups. Newspapers also sometimes have a column where community groups can give notice of their activities, including the need for volunteers.
8. Write or get someone to write a news story about your organisation's need for workers and its work in the community.
9. Seek an interview on local radio or TV. Having an existing worker talk about the satisfaction they get out of the work they do for your

organisation or the skills they have developed is a very successful way of appealing to prospective volunteers. If this person already has a high profile, that is better still.
10. Put posters in supermarkets, libraries, churches, Plunket rooms, clubrooms, etc.
11. Offer posters or speakers to community studies courses where people may be seeking to put their training to practical use.
12. If all else fails, pay for an advertisement.

Brainstorming with a group can produce other creative ways of recruiting.

It is important to assess the relevance of each idea in relation to the actual needs of the organisation. Some groups have found putting advertisements in the Situations Vacant columns an effective way of getting volunteers. This will be very effective for short-term work but it has to be remembered that people who read these columns are basically looking for paid work so don't be surprised if they move on fairly quickly.

To sum up: in mounting a recruitment campaign it is important to remember:

1. Keep focused on the attributes and motivations of the target group when preparing material.
2. People receive a one-to-one message best.
3. People receive wide messages best if backed up by another medium, e.g. a radio message will attract their attention but this is reinforced by a visual message in, say, a newspaper that includes information about who to contact.

What are the most effective recruitment methods you have been involved in? What are the lessons you have learned from unsuccessful recruiting?

Management Structures

We have already looked at the tasks of management of volunteers. The next question we have to address is who does it.

Volunteer management tasks are diverse.

The tasks involved are diverse. There is administration such as systems, procedures, job descriptions, contracts, budgeting and communication. There are personnel tasks such as recruitment, selection, training, support, supervision, rewards and communication. There is the role of encouraging the development of volunteers, which requires belief in their potential and

the ability to communicate and foster this. These three require different sets of skills and it would be very rare to find them all in one person. Even if they are all present in one person I believe that managing a group of volunteers is not a responsibility that can be carried out effectively by one person alone. Of its nature it needs the cooperation of other members of the organisation. Yet many groups appoint a coordinator of volunteers and feel that is all that is needed.

There are different models of volunteer management.

The management of the volunteers may be done in any number of ways. There may be a paid staff member with this as their sole responsibility. There may be a staff member who has this responsibility as part of their job. There may be a voluntary committee or executive or board who manage paid staff and volunteers. They may be a small group of volunteers who have a flat management structure so that they effectively manage themselves. They may be a collective. However they do it, and whatever the labels they do or don't wear, the task they perform is the complex one of management.

Who manages the volunteers in your organisation?

When an agency is employing a person to manage its volunteers, some difficult questions arise. If the person is to do this work alongside other work, how will the time be allocated so that the volunteer management time is not swallowed up by the other work? This becomes a dilemma particularly for people in social work positions, whose 'other work' is often more demanding and more immediate. If the manager of volunteers is a separate position, how do this worker and the volunteers remain an integral part of the agency? It is very easy for a volunteer manager who is not involved in the 'work' of the agency to set up a separate disconnected group that does not feel part of the real agency.

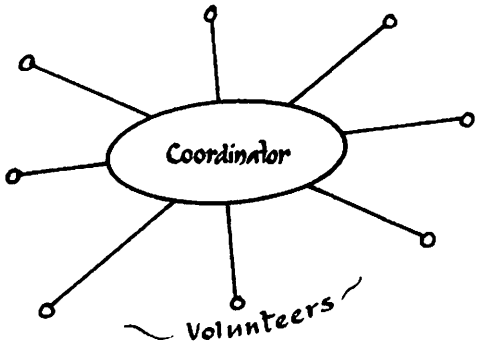
There are different models of volunteer management, all of which have advantages and disadvantages. The successful ones value the contribution of volunteer staff equally with the paid staff and foster integration and the development of all staff. In describing the models I have used the words manager and coordinator to mean the same position.

Dandelion Model

In the dandelion model, the manager may have a large number of volunteers who might be on a regular roster for, say, serving in a charity shop or delivering meals to people who are housebound.

The coordinator would have responsibility for job descriptions and contracts, selection and organising the training of volunteers, setting up

rosters and keeping them going, and organising some sort of recognition event once or twice a year. This person might also organise an occasional review of the work the volunteers perform but probably this would be done by someone outside. Supervision of volunteers is done by other staff members in the course of their work. The model would look like this:



All communication with the volunteers goes through the coordinator and volunteers may have minimal contact with one another.

To see the implications of this model we need to look back at the three major motivators of volunteers: achievement, affiliation and power. This model will work well for achievement-motivated volunteers. They will be able to get their job done efficiently and go home. In the course of their contact with the client or the other staff they should receive feedback that tells them they have done a good job.

This model does not work well for volunteers who are motivated by needs for affiliation or power. It does not encourage the personal development of these people.

The fact that the coordinator is the only source of communication makes it difficult for a power-motivated volunteer to develop their skills to change the world for the better in whatever way fits the context. So these volunteers will soon move on to another situation that is likely to make use of their leadership skills.

The fact that the coordinator is the only source of communication also creates difficulties for the affiliation-motivated volunteer. This volunteer will want to take time to be with people. If the number of volunteers is small the coordinator may have the time to give this sort of support, but often the coordinator is responsible for a large number of volunteers and so has to deal with them efficiently on the phone and there is no time for the sort of chat that is needed to support an affiliation-motivated person. This volunteer may well feel that their needs are not met in this sort of system.

When the organisation has a system that does not meet the needs of its volunteers they often turn to the client to meet these needs. This may or may not be appropriate. Have you ever rushed into a shop for something in a hurry and been held up by an assistant who had a great need to talk?

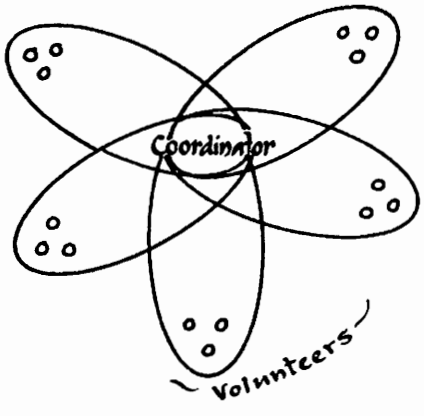
The dandelion model is good for some aspects of managing volunteers but it has its limitations. It places the bulk of the responsibility on one person, the coordinator, and this can actually discourage the personal development of the volunteers.

Blossom Model

In the blossom model the coordinator takes responsibility for the administrative tasks of management but the volunteers themselves actively participate in meeting their own developmental needs.

In this model the coordinator will still have contact with each volunteer at an administrative level for such things as selection, orientation and ongoing rostering but will otherwise be communicating with groups of volunteers rather than individuals. Volunteers will meet in small groups for such things as training, support and supervision. These meetings can have a sufficiently relaxed atmosphere for the participants to have the time it takes to meet their affiliation needs. The power people will have the opportunity to use their leadership skills in these groups and as a result maybe move on to management roles.

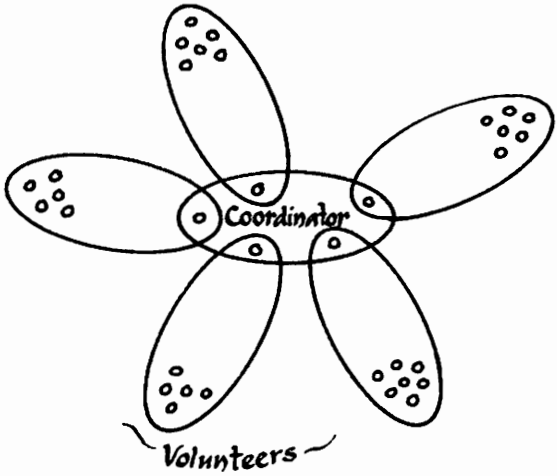
There are two possible ways of organising this model. One has the coordinator attending all small-group meetings and would look like this:



In the other blossom system the coordinator would not attend all the small-group meetings but may visit occasionally. Other communication could be through a person elected by the group as their communicator. This

may not necessarily be the natural leader of the small group, but needs to be someone who is a good and accurate recorder of information.

In this model the coordinator may have regular meetings with the group of communicators. She would keep contact with other volunteers through these communicators and with newsletters. She may need to have contact with them about their work but the main task of supporting volunteers will be done mutually within the groups. This model looks like this:



For either of these models to be successful in the personal development of the volunteers, the leadership and organisation of meetings needs to come from the volunteer group. The role of the coordinator here is difficult and requires skill and sensitivity. If the coordinator provides the leadership, she deprives volunteers of their development opportunities, as group members can be inhibited if they see her as leader and so fail to take the role themselves. This is an opportunity for volunteers to be part of the decision-making. It is from groups such as these that future committee or board members will come.

The role of the coordinator might be to organise opportunities for the facilitators of these groups to be trained in group leadership skills so that they are gaining new skills for themselves and creating an environment where other group members can also develop.

What is the model of volunteer management used in your organisation? Whose needs does it suit best?

A good volunteer manager needs to bear in mind the different types of motivators and the fact that people will move from one to the other. It

also takes into account people's movement and development as described by Maslow.

Good volunteer management designs its structure to allow for different volunteer motivations.

Volunteers come into work with varying levels of the needs categorised by Maslow: social, self-esteem, self-actualisation and self-transcendence. Each therefore requires very different treatment. Volunteers with social needs will want to be picked up and taken to meetings and nurtured along. For them taking responsibility is scary. Those with self-esteem needs will want to be acknowledged and can well move into the role of nurturing the others. Movement towards self-actualisation involves taking responsibility and developing skills, and people with this need will feel restricted if not allowed to do so.

On the other hand, if we confine and coddle those who are at the outer edge wanting to take responsibility, they will feel restricted and eventually go. If we leave those with social and self-esteem needs to their own devices they will find the situation too scary and not show up.

Good volunteer management takes into account changes in people's needs. Its structures encourage volunteers to move into positions where they take responsibility as they develop.

In reality the organisation's overall management has the responsibility for the management of volunteers. Some, but not all, of this can be delegated to a coordinator of volunteers, often an employee. Some of the management is best done by the volunteers themselves if their own and the organisation's personal development needs are to met.

The Management Budget

It costs money to provide a service using volunteers.

While volunteers work without receiving money, it still costs money to manage volunteers. There will be costs for such things as training, recognition events, travel, newsletters and other communication, food and perks for volunteers where appropriate. All these need to be budgeted for over and above the cost of employing any staff needed to manage volunteers.

It is a strange yet common logic that lets an organisation spend thousands of dollars advertising a service provided by volunteers and yet be miserly over providing funds necessary to support these volunteers. Equally common is the mistaken belief that if the work is done by volunteers it won't cost anything.

It can be helpful for committees to analyse their volunteer expenses in such a way that they connect with the end result for the client. For instance it might cost $80 for a volunteer to attend a training session, but the skills

acquired at the course may result in the volunteer giving 100 hours of improved service to clients. At 80 cents per hour the improved service suddenly starts to seem very cheap. Treasurers often look at the numbers on the page and see the volunteer as the recipient of the money spent. In reality the volunteer is the means by which the organisation gives the client an improved service that is still very cheap.

Often the people making the financial decisions are not aware of the end result of their spending. This highlights the need for volunteers to record the hours they spend and what they spend them on and to feed this information back to the decision-makers. Before committees cut back on their spending for volunteers they could find it a useful exercise to compare their costs with the expense of providing the same service with paid workers.

The bottom line is that it costs money to deliver a service where volunteers do the work. Therefore to do their work effectively anyone with responsibility for managing volunteers needs a realistic budget.

What are the costs of the volunteer service in your organisation?
What is the cost per hour of service delivered?
What is your budget for volunteer-related expenses?
How do you fund this budget?

Managing a volunteer workforce is a complex task. Any group of volunteers is the same as any other group of people – various and difficult to manage. The result of good volunteer management should be happy, competent workers who are developing psychologically, socially and spiritually. They should be producing a high standard of work for whatever group is the recipient of their service.

So what are the implications for your organisation?

Part 3

Common Problems in Volunteer Work

Chapter 7

Volunteers with Difficult Behaviours

Relationships

Good volunteer management practices are necessary for effective management of volunteers. Even with good management practices, however, things can go wrong. The process of management involves interactions and relationships between people. Each person brings to the relationship their own way of relating and behaving, which is shaped by many things, including their history and experiences as well as their unique personality.

When a group is functioning well, members will trust one another and respect one another's person and abilities.

When a group is functioning well, members will trust each other and respect one another's person and abilities. There will be give and take and open, honest communication. The group values the contribution of each of its members. It is open and realistic in its expectations. But this is not the situation in all groups all of the time. Some people have healthy ways of relating and behaving, some have unhealthy. Most of us are somewhere in between.

What behaviours do you recognise as helping relationships in your group?

Not all behaviours in groups are helpful.

> Karen is really dedicated to her voluntary work, but she causes havoc among the rest of the group because of her perfectionism. She is never satisfied with what she produces herself or what other people produce. People who work alongside her are often left with feelings of failure.

The obvious solution may seem to be to get rid of such a person, and yet when that person moves on other difficult behaviours emerge in someone else. So it is important to look at behaviours that create difficulties in voluntary groups and find ways of working with them.

Difficult Behaviours

Unhealthy behaviour can have a damaging effect on other volunteers.

The old joke says: 'I used to be conceited but now I'm perfect'. In reality no one is perfect. People bring to their work a range of behaviours that can be good or bad in different situations. They have 'off days' when they perform less than adequately. But there are some behaviours which if experienced consistently can have a damaging effect on an organisation and the people working in it.

Ways of relating that destroy trust between people and make unrealistic expectations of others have the power to damage the good functioning of a group. We will meet some people whose behaviours are unhealthy.

The first group appear always to meet the needs of others so that they themselves will be loved.

> Caretaking Catherine comes to the training group early because she can't be sure that James will remember that it is his job to organise morning tea.

Caretakers think and feel responsible for other people and they often rescue them rather than let them run the risk of making their own mistakes. They cover up for the mistakes of others. Their unspoken attitude is: 'I'll take care of you because you are incompetent and I can do it better than you.' The corollary of this is that they also prevent others from having the opportunity to achieve their own successes.

It is important to clarify the difference between being a caretaker, which means taking responsibility for another person's behaviour and so disempowering them, and being a carer, which means caring for the other person but leaving them responsible for their own behaviour, and thus empowering them.

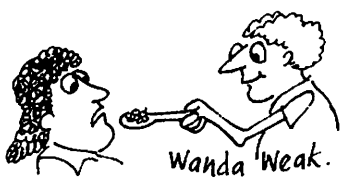
> Mac the Martyr has been organising this competition for years. Each year he complains: 'Nobody else will help me, I've got to do all this on my own' but he won't let anyone else help. His self-esteem is so tied up in other people *not* helping that he delivers subtle messages that discourage newcomers from helping.

Some volunteers are 'martyrs'. These people are always doing things for other people but cannot actually ask for what they need for themselves. They are forever expecting someone else to deliver what they need and forever being let down because other people don't meet these expectations, often because

those other people don't know about the martyr's needs or expectations. Martyrs often don't feel happy, content or peaceful with themselves, so they expect other people to provide them with peace and happiness – a tall order for fellow volunteers.

Peter Pleaser offers himself whenever volunteers are being sought. He likes people to feel happy and feels uncomfortable if a request is left unfilled. He is often unrealistic, however, about what he is capable of doing and ends up letting people down.

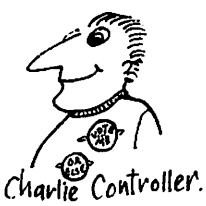
Some people want to please others all the time. This is of course unrealistic. As volunteers, they will tell you what you want to hear rather than the truth. This is a way of avoiding conflict. They are often very generous to the extent of damaging themselves. They have difficulty saying no, so will accept assignments they then can't deliver on. While initially this behaviour might produce 'warm fuzzies' for the recipient, eventually the falseness shows through and respect is lost. Frequently their lack of ability to care for themselves leads to burn-out.



Wanda Weak volunteers to take 85-year-old Betty shopping. Then she ends up staying with Betty all day, cooking Betty's dinner and introducing her to a new diet.

Some volunteers have difficulty recognising the limits of their commitment. They may not be able to recognise the difference between their role as a volunteer and the role of a friend. Clarifying boundaries can be far more difficult for volunteers than paid workers as the volunteer's hours and place of work are often less clearly defined. Where boundaries are unclear, the volunteer is in danger of acting inappropriately for the role. At best this produces annoyance for those around them, who either find their work done for them or are left in the lurch. In the extreme this behaviour can bring hurt to the client, the volunteer and the organisation.

A second group of behaviours are overtly aimed at dominating other people.



Charley Controller threatens to block Peg's nomination to the board if she doesn't vote for his remit.

Milly Manipulator will stand and talk at length after the meeting and then become distressed that she has missed her bus. Inevitably someone gives her a ride home.

Manipulators and controllers try to control people and events through helplessness, guilt, coercion, threats, giving advice, manipulating or dominating. Often in caring organisations there are lots of people who are there because they think they know better. 'If only the young women today treated their babies better' or 'didn't use plastic naps'. They are always ready to tell someone else how to do it, but are often a bit forgetful about how it was for them.

Lying Lily tells the group how she sorted out difficulties that Jane was having with Peter. Only Jane and Peter were not having difficulties with each other. It was just Lily's way of stealing the limelight.

For constructive communication, truth is essential and it can be very disconcerting when we are dealing with someone who does not respect truth. They play one group or person off against another by reporting events or messages untruthfully or incompletely. They report that they have done work when in reality it remains undone. This behaviour destroys any chance of real communication and trust.

Paul Perfect works long hours ensuring the library books are in their right places on the shelves. He gets very upset with Daisy when she takes a book out to check some information and fails to put it back in the correct place.

Some volunteers, like Paul and Karen earlier, are perfectionists. They are obsessed with themselves and those around them producing perfect work. They are intolerant of their own and other people's imperfections. They are self-critical and experience a sense of failure when perfection is inevitably not achieved. Those who work with perfectionists also feel continual failure as their best is never considered good enough.

A controlling person has great difficulty working as a member of a team. A good team worker has to listen to other team members and themselves and be able to contribute to judgments that lead to healthy change. A controlling worker finds change very difficult so will try and keep control regardless of the needs of the rest of the group.

A third group maintain their sense of self by withdrawing from the realities of the group.

Kit has written to Danny Denial, chairperson of the board, to complain about the lack of support for volunteers. Danny decides Kit is making a 'mountain out of a molehill' and things will settle down so he will deal with this himself rather than bring it to the board. He then does nothing and things get worse.

Some volunteers are in denial. They ignore problems. This can be an effective strategy when dealing with issues that are likely to fix themselves after a time. But when something really is going wrong and they just pretend it's not, the problem escalates. It is denial to tell the world that everything is fine when really it's not. People do this when they pretend that a reality they don't want to accept does not exist. They want to look good and keep things running harmoniously, so don't report problems until they reach crisis proportions. This behaviour leaves other volunteers feeling powerless to have their concerns heard.

Rosie Repressor found her car had been burgled while she was waiting to pick up meals for delivery. She just shrugged and carried on. Andy was slow to come to the door when she knocked so she dumped his meal on the step and drove off.

Some volunteers repress their feelings. Sometimes they are out of touch with their own feelings, because they are too scared to allow themselves to feel. Anger, resentment and bitterness often ferment inside people who have lived for years without having their needs met. But on the other hand they are afraid of their own anger. They are afraid to let it loose. They are afraid to express it so they hold it down. They are also afraid of other people's anger. They may exhibit any of the above behaviours (control, caretaker, martyr, etc.) to avoid conflict and confrontation and having to deal with the anger that might arise from it. The difficulty with not acknowledging and expressing feelings is that feelings often simmer below the surface and produce a moodiness that is vague but real and difficult for others to work with.

While the behaviours described here might belong to a single person in the group they all impact on other workers. They destroy trust and mutual respect. They are unhealthy ways of relating to other people. They all involve

unconsciously behaving in a way that is aimed at controlling the other person they are relating to.

We might all exhibit some of these behaviours from time to time without creating too much havoc; however, if a volunteer demonstrates a cluster of them consistently the outcome can be destructive to the whole group. Unhealthy behaviours make teamwork incredibly difficult because such volunteers are consciously or unconsciously focused on their own agenda rather than the mission of the group.

All people can be difficult from time to time but if a volunteer demonstrates a cluster of unhealthy behaviours consistently the outcome can be destructive to the whole group.

Do you recognise any degree of these behaviours in yourself?

'Healthy' and 'Unhealthy' Self-image

Essential to understanding the behaviour is to understand how these people view themselves and the reasons for this self-view. Insights into this come from much that has been written about codependency. We can think of a 'healthy' person as one who can accept their own faults and failings but knows that they are essentially good.

A healthy person sees themself and others as having an essentially good core. Around the edge of that core they see an assortment of faults and shortcomings that can at times make them cranky, uncooperative and difficult. They get disappointed in themselves when they fail to deliver on promises made with unreasonable optimism. They often make mistakes and they learn from them. But even at their lowest ebb they still believe they are essentially good. They have this same perception of other people, who they expect are also basically good even though they see the world through different lenses and so come to different conclusions. Sometimes they make mistakes too. But this does not change their inherent goodness. They expect that what they see of another person is consistent with the real person – gifts, faults, feelings, ideas, body, mind and spirit.

A healthy person sees themself and others as having a core that is essentially good despite their faults and shortcomings.

A healthy person's self-image is expressed like this:

An unhealthy person, on the other hand, is unaware of their own good core. They have built around it a layer that is described as their false self. This false self has low self-esteem, poor boundaries, and the conflicting fears of being abandoned or overwhelmed. It believes it is not good.

Unhealthy people have lost sight of their inherent goodness.

Some people's life experiences have taught them to see themselves as essentially bad. They have lost sight of their inherent goodness.

To understand why this might be it is useful to look at an example:

Sally's father drinks. He can be very charming when sober but becomes violent when drunk. After the drinking bout is over he is always sorry for what he has done. Sally has learned certain ways of surviving in this situation.

From a very early age Sally has learned to do everything in her power not to upset her father when he is drunk. She fears that she will be overwhelmed by her powerful, out-of-control father. So she learns to avoid and manoeuvre her way around a situation rather than deal with it openly.

She has also learned that though her father will promise the earth, it is seldom delivered. So Sally learns not to trust adults or anybody. She fears abandonment.

Addiction means that the most important thing for her father is to keep his line of supply of alcohol open. This will be more important to

him than the needs of, or relationships with, his partner and children. As a child growing up in this situation Sally learned she is of less worth than the booze. As the butt of ill-treatment she learned she is essentially worthless.

A person who has grown up in this sort of situation will have learned to behave unhealthily as a means of survival. They regard this as normal because they have had no opportunity to learn a healthier way of relating. Because of the way they have been treated as a child, an unhealthy person believes themself to be bad or unworthy of love. Because their experience of what is 'normal' is dysfunctional, they reinforce this belief by repeatedly putting themself in situations where they will be mistreated. They put themselves in the role of victim and use this role to manipulate people. They have learned to survive as a victim so will continue to form relationships that are self-victimising.

Ben's father was a senior executive in an expanding company. He worked long hours and was seldom at home in the evening when his children were awake. At weekends he was often called in to work or else needed to relax so spent most of his time on the golf course. Ben longed to do things with his father but there was never time. Because his father didn't have time for him, Ben grew up feeling worthless.

Sometimes the situation at home will be less extreme than the ones described above but unhealthy behaviour has been reinforced by institutions such as school, church or workplace.

It is important to acknowledge that unhealthy behaviours described above have arisen as a means of survival, are unconscious and are common in volunteers in varying degrees.

The Masks of Unhealthy Behaviour

An unhealthy person presents to the rest of the world a mask; not their real self.

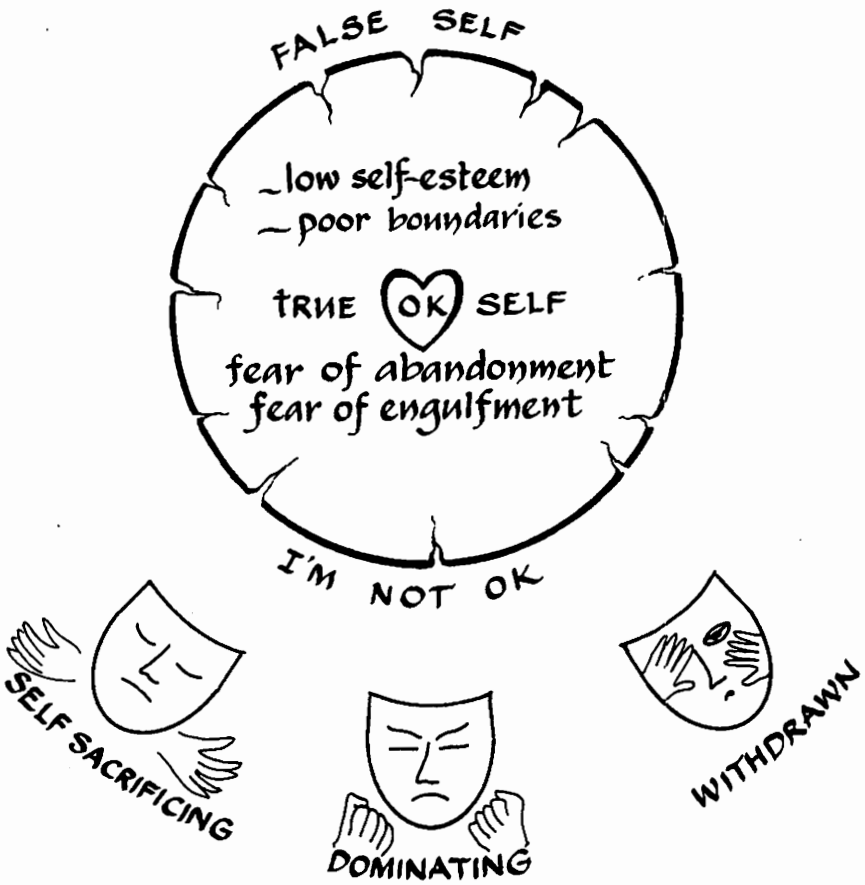
People like Sally and Ben can no longer see their own goodness. They have covered it with a layer that they see as bad, and this is what they see as their own core. So when these people look into their own self, the person they see there is bad. This is scary, so the natural response is to hide this core from the world by covering it with some sort of mask. So what an unhealthy person presents to the rest of the world is not their real self, but a mask. The mask is used to hide their false self, which they see as unworthy. This

false self covers their good real self so completely that they themselves have lost sight of it.

This layer-upon-layer description gives a clue to why it is so difficult to work effectively with such a person. The mask is used to control or manipulate other people and keep them from seeing behind it, lest they either overwhelm or abandon the person they see there. In *Codependency in the Work Place* Seth Allcorn[14] names three masks: self-sacrifice, domination and withdrawal.

Whereas the healthy person is not afraid to show their real self to the world because they believe that even with their shortcomings they are basically good, the unhealthy person fears that if the world sees them as they really are they will be unacceptable so they try to keep their real self and feelings covered up.

This drawing represents the masks and the layers they are designed to hide:



The self-sacrificial person looks after others but fails to care for themselves.

The self-sacrificial mask is probably the most well known. This person cares for others at their own expense but doesn't look after themselves. They do this as a way of controlling the other person in order to receive love in return. They need to feel loved. The irony of the situation is that the person they choose to lavish their love and care on is often unable to make them feel loved so the feeling of unworthiness is reinforced. This person is unaware of their controlling actions. This is a self-effacing mask.

The dominating person overtly controls other people.

The second mask is a mask of domination. For this person the controlling of others is more overt. They perceive themselves as being unworthy of love so don't worry about the fact that the person they are controlling will not like them. This person is avoiding their own denied feelings of powerlessness and ineffectiveness. They can be perfectionist, arrogant and totally self-centred.

The mask of withdrawal avoids relationships.

The third mask is that of withdrawal. This person keeps their relationships under control by avoiding becoming involved with people. They keep their distance and don't interact with other people any more than they can help. They are resigned to what is happening around them.

These three masks are how we experience people whose behaviour is unhealthy. While in any person one mask usually dominates, moving from mask to mask is common. This can create great confusion for people dealing with them when they seem to exhibit out-of-character behaviour. A normally mild, helpful and submissive person may suddenly become bossy and overtly controlling.

Usually what we see of an unhealthy person is the mask, and while masks may be self-damaging they can at times be used quite constructively in a group. We all appreciate the attention of a caring person around us but can often be unaware of any self-damaging aspects of a carer. In crisis we need the leadership of someone who is able to take control. It is also helpful at times to have someone who can withdraw and get the work done without being distracted by what is going on around them, but sooner or later we may be frustrated by the lack of relationship. The masks become destructive if people allow themselves to be controlled by them.

What we don't see behind the mask is the low self-esteem, and the fears that lie inside the 'false self'. Some people's value of themselves is so low that they really can't trust themselves to be themselves. But they cover this really well, they wear masks – a mask of competence. You will find them well dressed, looking competent, presenting the image that they really know what they are doing, but in some areas of functioning this will just be a way of covering or a way of compensating. Inside they may be feeling very anxious that someone might uncover their mask.

Do you recognise yourself as wearing any of these masks?

The masks are very fragile, and while they cope beautifully on top, they crack easily. Difficulties arise as an unhealthy person withdraws into the false self when feeling anxiety. This happens when they are faced with behaviour that reminds them of their dysfunctional parent or family situation. It can happen when a workmate, supervisor or person in authority gives them instructions or asks them to account for work or behaviour. If the person doing this reminds them of their family situation their response is likely to be out of proportion to the issue involved. This can leave the authority or supervising person confused and even hurt.

In the helping situation, demands from the person being helped can invoke that fear of being engulfed and again result in inappropriate behaviour such as withdrawing help completely.

For an unhealthy person there is a lack of trust as they have grown up with someone who has let them down again and again and again. It is not unreasonable that they don't trust other people but then again they don't trust themselves either.

Clearly unhealthy behaviour creates situations that are difficult to deal with. Together the characteristics build a picture of the behaviours that are likely to cause problems in organisations where people volunteer. It is important, however, to note that in reality it is likely that in any group there will be some very unhealthy people but also many more who can recognise some unhealthy behaviours in themselves but are well away from the extreme end of the scale.

What unhealthy characteristics do you recognise in yourself?
Who can help you make your behaviour healthier?

If a reader wants to pursue ways of identifying and recovering from unhealthy behaviour patterns, help can be obtained by reading about codependency or by approaching a counsellor or any of the myriad self-help groups that exist in this area.

We must find a way to work that encourages people to contribute their best skills and behaviours.

Our challenge is to find out how we can work in a way that encourages people to contribute their best skills and behaviours and not revert to their damaging false self. Understanding the behaviour is a way of doing this. It will be a bonus if we can also create a situation in which people are able to identify their need to seek help and healing and are encouraged to do so.

Management Role

Each volunteer or paid staff member can contribute to encouraging healthy behaviour in a group but special responsibility rests on a supervisor. This is the person who is working with the volunteer to help them develop good work skills and who holds them accountable. It will be a different person in different organisations. Whether this person is a case-work supervisor, in the social work sense, or a manager, their task will be the same: to encourage behaviour that maintains the health of all the volunteers in the group. This will reduce the likelihood of an unhealthy person encountering behaviour that reminds them of their damaging childhood experience. But some unhealthy behaviour will happen and volunteers will need to be supported through it.

Unhealthy people will feel anxious when power and authority are exercised over them that reflect the behaviour of their parents. They will also feel anxious in each stage as they are faced with change. People in positions of authority need to understand this and take it into account. Authority needs to be exercised in such a way that the volunteer feels respected. They also need to remember that an unhealthy volunteer's response may be 'over the top' and allow them time to settle down before proceeding to work through the problem. Timing is important. Don't leave them stewing over something all weekend.

Guidelines for the Supervisor

1. Acknowledge and empathise with the person's feelings about themself.
2. Continue to believe in the person's good true self.
3. Encourage the volunteer to reflect on their own behaviour.
4. Resist the temptation to intervene and rescue the volunteer from situations where they are not performing well.
5. It is more effective to demonstrate to the volunteer the disempowering effect of perfectionism on others than to directly challenge it in the volunteer himself or herself.
6. If the volunteer is complaining about not being appreciated, suggest stopping the self-sacrificial behaviour.
7. If the person identifies themself as codependent encourage them to seek appropriate help.
8. Keep up support for your own self-esteem.
9. Don't give up too easily but recognise that people can only change themselves.

Let's look at these guidelines one by one:

1. First it is important to acknowledge and empathise with the volunteer's feelings about themself. These feelings come from the false self and may seem absurd to the supervisor, but they are the reality of the volunteer's perception. To not accept them or to argue about them adds to an unhealthy person's knowledge of their own lack of self-worth. This is something that is really hard for a supervisor who holds the belief that all people are basically good in their true self. The supervisor must not abandon this belief but must accept the unhealthy volunteer's view of self as being true for them. As soon as an unhealthy volunteer seems open to the idea, it is important to help them find professional help. Do not try to play at therapy yourself.

2. Continue to believe in the volunteer's good true self. While empathising with their feelings, it is possible to act as a mirror and feed back to the volunteer examples of their behaviour when they acted in a healthy way. It is also important to feed back to them examples of when they are acting in an unhealthy way so that they are able to see the difference. Care must be taken in assigning duties, as the mask can lead the manager to expect a level of competency that may be beyond the volunteer's true self.

3. Encourage the volunteer to reflect on their own behaviour and make their own interpretations about it. Some will of course resist this, as denial is an essential part of their condition. They will need lots of support as the false self and low self-esteem make self-reflection a very difficult task. It may be necessary to put forward an alternative interpretation at times.

Because an unhealthy person is focused on controlling those outside themselves, they have difficulty in accepting negative feedback. They tend to want to blame everyone but themselves. If a job is not being done well it is really important to feed back that responsibility to the person concerned. This must be done, however, in such a way that the person's self-esteem is not reduced even further. It is important to try to separate an unsatisfactory action from the person doing it. It is equally important for the supervisor not to take on the anxiety from the volunteer's defensive response.

4. Unless there is danger to other people, resist the temptation to intervene and rescue the volunteer from situations where they are not performing well. They may well mess it up, but from doing so they will see the

implications of their behaviour and that can lead to growth from the experience.

5. Perfectionism can have a disempowering effect on other volunteers. It is more effective to demonstrate this disempowering effect on others than to directly challenge the perfectionism. Directly challenging perfectionism has the effect of encouraging it.

6. If a volunteer is acting in a self-sacrificial way and then complaining about not being appreciated, it is helpful to suggest stopping the self-sacrificial behaviour. This focuses the volunteer on the source of the problem – the self-sacrificing behaviour – rather than the lack of appreciation shown by other people. If the volunteer stops performing the service it then will become clear whether the recipients really want it or not. Sometimes, but not always, lack of appreciation is an indicator that a service is not needed.

7. If the person is able to identify their own need, encourage them to seek appropriate help by giving information about helping groups and counsellors. Therapy is work for professionals and groups with that particular focus.

8. Keep up support for your own self-esteem. Unhealthy volunteers whose anxiety has driven them into their false self can become very angry and aggressive. They can also transfer these characteristics onto the supervisor by accusing them of being angry, aggressive and unfair. This is particularly likely to happen to someone in a supervisory position if the volunteer sees them in a parental role. If you experience these accusations, check it out. If this is not how people normally find you, then it is likely that you are dealing with the volunteer's transferred feelings. It can be quite disconcerting and shake the supervisor's confidence. It is reasonable to return responsibility for these feelings to the volunteer by telling them that their perception of you is different from other people's so you are not accepting it as fact.

9. Don't give up too easily. It is important that the unhealthy person learns that you value them for their own self and not just for the work they do or because they like you. Keep your sights on their good true self, which you know about, even if they have not found it yet. But recognise that people can only change themselves and then only when they see the need. Change is the task of the therapist. The supervisor can support change by behaving in a healthy manner and not buying into unhealthy behaviour.

Supervising people who behave in an unhealthy way is hard work. The supervisor will often come out feeling quite confused. However, with understanding, acceptance and an occasional challenge on the part of the supervisor, a healthier atmosphere can be created in the group, everyone can make their contribution and there may be a possibility of growth and recovery for the unhealthy volunteer.

How have you been supported by a supervisor?

Chapter 8

Organisational Climate

What is Organisational Climate?

Organisations have unwritten rules and accepted ways of behaving that are not expressed explicitly but they have an impact on every person who is part of it. These are the accepted ways of relating and communicating. They are often felt rather than spoken about. They make up the organisational climate or atmosphere of the group.

In some organisations people are encouraged to be creative in their ideas and in their surroundings.

> As a member of one group I would often feel prompted to say, 'I've had an idea.' The rest of the group would give a light-hearted groan because I was always having hare-brained ideas, but they would listen to my idea, take it seriously and make a decision on whether or not to act on it.

People in this group were encouraged to think, and everyone's ideas were worthy of consideration, even if they were not always practical. This group has had great times and hard times, but never has it died. It has been able to adapt to meet needs in a rapidly changing world.

In other groups the ideas are expected to come only from management so workers become very passive. They act according to the rules, work within strict guidelines and can become apathetic.

Some groups exude a sense of the equality of all members, even though some may hold what are traditionally seen as 'higher' positions. You get a feel of this when the president is seen doing a turn washing the dishes or making coffee. In others the group's hierarchy is more important and junior members are expected to meet the needs of senior. The 'pecking order' is well defined.

Groups that are focused on working efficiently

sometimes see social needs as being totally outside their realm. They may value the equipment and the decor more than the people. Other groups are very welcoming to staff, clients and visitors, both in the way they are greeted and in the spaces they provide for them.

In some organisations it is accepted that differing opinions can be expressed; in fact difference is something to be celebrated. In others alternative views are suppressed because the climate is one of conflict avoidance. Anyone who tries to express a different way of thinking is seen as disruptive. In some groups communication is open and honest. In others there is deception and secrets. 'We won't tell about this.' In some groups laughter is encouraged; in others it doesn't happen very often.

All of these are examples of organisational climate. It will influence who meets with whom and how they run their meeting. It influences how people feel about themselves as members, and whether they feel valued or not. It is shown by how they express hospitality. It affects the expectations that people have of one another in the organisation. It is demonstrated by what it is acceptable to spend money on.

The motivational styles of achievement, affiliation and power discussed earlier can be reflected in and encouraged by the organisational climate. Achievers will be attracted to an efficient organisation. People motivated by affiliation will respond to an organisation that offers friendliness and support. Those seeking power may seek structures, rules and clear lines of authority.

The organisational climate influences how it feels to work in a group. It is liable to impact greatly on volunteers. It is how they know whether or not they are valued.

A healthy group attracts a wide range of people and values difference. An unhealthy group has a tendency to select people who will reinforce the particular style of the group, creating an increasing imbalance. A healthy climate respects and rejoices in each person it encounters – volunteers, paid staff, management and clients.

What is the organisational climate of organisations you volunteer for?
How do you recognise this?
What is the organisational climate you perform best in?
What organisational climate do you find unhealthy?

An Unhealthy Organisational Climate

In *The Addictive Organisation* Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel[15] have proposed that an unhealthy organisation can behave in a way that forms a damaging relationship with its members. They talk about people being in a codependent relationship with the organisations they work for. These authors use a set of unwritten rules operating in an addictive family or organisation to describe a destructive organisational climate.

Schaef and Fassel's unwritten rules that operate in an **unhealthy organisation** are:

1. It is not okay to talk about problems.
2. Feelings should not be expressed openly.
3. Communication is best if indirect, with one person acting as the messenger between two others.
4. Be strong, good, right, perfect.
5. Make us proud.
6. Don't be selfish.
7. Do as I say, not as I do.
8. It is not okay to play or be playful.
9. Don't rock the boat.

These rules are certainly experienced in many groups and institutions. Some people see them as being the desirable way to keep an organisation under control. But is this desirable for the organisation? These rules define a closed, controlled system that discourages the healthy functioning of its members.

Volunteers are unhappy when these rules operate.

The effect of these rules is to create an atmosphere where volunteers are unhappy, and anger and resentment fester and eventually erupt. There is a hidden agenda, and nothing is ever what it seems. There is no cooperation. They will lose good volunteers and not attract new ones. The consumer is shaped to fit the needs of the organisation or its members. Organisational Charades is a phrase that can be used to describe the sense that nothing is ever what it seems to be.

Have you experienced any of these rules in an organisation?

Creating a Healthy Organisational Climate

What if we reversed the rules? The system would open up and become more creative. A new set of rules would emerge:

A healthy organisation:

1. Encourages the early sharing of problems.
2. Acknowledges and encourages the expression of feelings by all members of the group.
3. Encourages communication to be as direct as possible and decision-making to be as open as possible.
4. Accepts that sometimes people make mistakes and ensures that there will be someone to help pick up the pieces when they do.
5. Deals with difficult issues honestly.
6. Encourages its volunteers to set reasonable boundaries and then respects those boundaries.
7. Tries to keep its actions consistent with its words, and acts with integrity.
8. Takes seriously the responsibility to have fun.
9. Welcomes the opportunity to look at and respond to change.

Let's look at the effect of these positive rules in more detail:

Problems are part of the human condition.

1. A healthy organisation encourages the early sharing of problems. Problems are part of the human condition. Whenever people come together, their uniqueness inevitably means they are not always going to see things the same way. Plans can be made but for all sorts of reasons they are not always carried out as expected. There are external forces that the group cannot control: the grants may be smaller this year, the secretary may have a car accident and be unable to continue, the key volunteer may have found that her paid work takes more energy than she expected, the client numbers may have doubled, the group may not have the skills needed to do the job ... the list is endless, but the reality is that problems are inevitable.

It is not uncommon for a group to try to avoid talking about problems. The chairperson may heave a sigh of relief at the end of a meeting that a certain issue didn't rear its ugly head. But experience shows that the issue does not go away and it is far more difficult to deal with it effectively outside the structure of the meeting.

If it is not acceptable to talk about problems, what happens? Problems that are not talked about are still problems. They do not go away. In fact they simmer and grow. Problems compound and go downwards, bringing about resentment and discord. The old adage 'a problem shared is a

problem halved' can have a counterpart that says 'a problem not shared soon becomes a problem doubled'. For most problems the beginning of a solution is talking about the problem.

Problems that are not talked about simmer and grow, bringing about resentment and discord.

If problems can't be talked about, people very quickly experience a sense of unreality and untruth. This in itself becomes a further problem because people sense that their experience does not tie up with what is being said or not said. They don't know who to trust. Not talking about problems does not mean that people don't know they are there. The traditional children's story of the emperor's new clothes demonstrates this.

When problems cannot be talked about and people feel unable to raise issues of concern, frustration develops. People feel powerless as their concerns are unheard. Powerlessness produces anger.

A healthy system provides a safe forum for the early sharing of problems.

A healthy system encourages the early sharing of problems. It creates a safe forum for doing this. The process used for talking about problems is important. It has to be safe.

What is the forum for talking about problems in your organisation? Who can do this? How? When? Where?
What process is used?
How can the workers be assured that it is safe to raise problems?

2. A healthy organisation acknowledges and encourages the expression of feelings by all members of the group.

Feelings are an inherent part of our humanity. Descartes said, 'I think therefore I am'. Rousseau said, 'I feel therefore I am.' Maybe it is equally true to say, 'I am therefore I feel.' Our feelings well up inside us in response to various circumstances. They are physiological responses to a given situation. Our feelings are our own and they are our truth. No one else can say what we should or should not feel.

Feelings are our indicators of things that for us are very wrong or very right.

Feelings are our indicators of things that for us are very wrong or very right. Fear alerts us to danger and gives us the energy for fight or flight. Anger is often the trigger for action that improves an unsatisfactory situation. Excitement gives energy for a desired course of action. Love produces caring for the recipient of a service and for fellow workers.

If we are able to acknowledge and express our own feelings we are then able to acknowledge and accept the feelings of others. This does not mean that we have to accept the actions that gave rise to the feelings, but a person's feelings are always their truth so cannot be denied by anybody else.

People often become angry because they have misunderstood another person's action or intention. If this anger can be expressed then there is a chance for clarification and correction. If the anger is not expressed, however, the misunderstanding continues and the submerged anger simmers and often increases the level of misunderstanding.

Sometimes people fear change. If they can express their fear they are better able to deal with the change or have allowance made for what was feared. If they can't express it, their suppressed fear often causes them to undermine change.

Some groups have a culture of not expressing appreciation. One of the ways a volunteer knows whether they have done a good job or not is the positive or negative responses of those around them. If the organisational climate says feelings cannot be expressed they are denied an important source of feedback.

Suppressed feelings can block creativity and stultify the thinking of a group. If members can't express their feelings they don't find out what is causing them, thus they lose the opportunity to explore issues from all angles.

Some people have difficulty expressing feelings because they do not know what their feelings are. Other people don't express their feelings because they fear criticism. They don't trust the group so they don't feel safe about expressing how they feel. Another reason that people in the group may feel unhappy about expressing their feelings is because they feel uncomfortable with conflict. Good conflict management practices will encourage the true expression of feelings.

A healthy group acknowledges, encourages the expression of, and respects the feelings of all members of the group.

A healthy group acknowledges, encourages the expression of, and respects the feelings of all members of the group.

What do the members of this group need to feel free to express their feelings?
How is conflict in the group dealt with?
Are feelings respected as a valid source of information?
How does the group express feedback?

3. A healthy organisation encourages communication to be as direct as possible and decision-making to be as open as possible.

Whenever we receive any communication from another person we interpret it according to our own perspective and experience. Even when communication is direct, messages can be misunderstood.

I remember once having recently arrived in Canada, where our New Zealand accents were considered 'so quaint'. My husband was using our

landlady's telephone negotiating to buy a car. She heard the conversation and became quite concerned about where he was going to keep this cow he was buying.

Differing accents are one way that information can be misunderstood but they are not the only way. Have you ever played the game of 'Chinese whispers', where the first player whispers a message to the second who repeats it to the third and so on? By the time the message gets to the last player it usually bears little resemblance to the original.

Indirect communication can often lead to confusion. Each person who receives the message may put their own interpretation on it before handing it on. They may add to the original or edit parts of it out. Indirect communication can lead to only some people being heard and not others. There is room for manipulation between the giver and the receiver of the message. The back and forth of indirect communication can mean that it takes too long to resolve issues.

Indirect communication leads to confusion.

If information is being transmitted about a third party it pays to check it out, particularly if it has an emotional content. The emotional state of the person receiving the message can often cause the content to be confused. The business of getting information accurately to another person can be hazardous enough if it is direct, so imagine how much harder it is to get an accurate message across indirectly.

Communication is not just words. It is also facial expression, tone of voice, body language, context. As each person in a chain of communication takes a message, they add their own interpretation even if they received the original message accurately.

A habit that often results in confusion or worse is that of trying to second-guess what a volunteer wants. This could be about the amount of work that a volunteer wants to undertake or it could be about the type of recognition that the person appreciates. The solution is simple: 'If you don't know, ask!' And when you ask, ask the person concerned, not their friends or workmates. Misunderstandings often happen because information is received third or fourth hand, by which time the message has been distorted.

If indirect communication is all that is possible because of large numbers of people involved, care must be taken to minimise misunderstanding.

The processes for making decisions in a group and the means by which they are communicated to members are important factors in how a group

Decision-making practices that value the input of all will benefit the whole organisation.

functions. In an organisation there are large numbers of people to relate to. The natural approach for some of them will be to set up controlling relationships and at the same time try to avoid being controlled. Top-down decisions, bad communication and secrets encourage this.

Open communication encourages members to feel included, valued and secure. The more input a worker has into a decision that affects them the more secure they will feel. Decision-making practices that value the input of all will benefit the whole organisation.

Closed decision-making processes can make a person who is excluded from the process feel really anxious. They can give rise to fear and threat. They can allow someone to reconstruct the information to fit in with their own world view. If the decision-making processes are open and volunteers have input into them, they will feel much safer and anxiety will be reduced.

The more open and direct decision-making and communication are, the less chance there is of people being able to manipulate one another.

How are the decisions made in your organisation? Who has input?
How does communication happen? How direct is it?
What gets in the way of direct communication? How can it be improved?

4. A healthy organisation accepts that sometimes people make mistakes and ensures that there will be someone to help pick up the pieces when they do.

Being human, we have times of weakness, we make mistakes and we sometimes get things wrong.

Sometimes we are strong, good and right. We may even have fleeting moments of perfection. The truth of being human, however, is that we also have times of weakness, we make mistakes and we sometimes get things wrong.

If we accept demands to be strong, good, right and perfect (in opposition to our reality), we are setting ourselves up for failure. We are trying to be something that is not humanly possible. The inevitable failure lowers volunteers' self-esteem.

Healthy humans know they will make mistakes. In fact the most powerful source of learning is from our mistakes. When we have done it wrong we are able to look and see what changes we can make to get it better next time.

In a group where only perfection is acceptable people will limit their contribution to what they know they can succeed at. Risks cannot be run. Rigid boundaries will be put around new ideas and stagnation will ensue.

The continuous sense of failure that comes from trying to meet these unrealistic expectations leads to burn-out in volunteers. Some will feel guilty because they have 'failed'. This has a destructive effect on the volunteer and usually sees them lost to the organisation.

A healthy organisation accepts its volunteers' weakness, mistakes and imperfections as part of being human. It provides support and supervision structures whereby its volunteers can be supported to learn from these experiences.

This does not mean that standards of service cannot be met. Standards need to be set so that the client who receives the service is treated appropriately. But standards have to be realistic; they cannot be unattainable. And alongside the standards must be the necessary training, support and supervision to enable the volunteers to perform to the standard.

One of the beauties of working as a volunteer in an organisation rather than on your own is that the strength of the group will be behind you and there will always be someone else to help out if on any day you cannot perform your role.

The strength of being a volunteer in a group is that there will be someone else to help out if on any day you cannot perform your role.

How are expectations kept realistic in your organisation?
How are standards set?
How are volunteers trained to do their job?
What support systems are there for volunteers?

5. A healthy organisation deals with difficult issues honestly.

An organisation can make unreasonable demands on its volunteers to protect its public image. This can be a way of keeping members from dealing with problems openly by saying that it is bad for the organisation.

The organisation acts as a pressure on individual volunteers to sacrifice their own needs for the image of the organisation. The need for the organisation to look good is imposed at the expense of all the people involved – volunteers, paid staff and clients. This gives the organisation an unrealistic importance in its own right. It will of course be destructive to the volunteers and at best fail to deliver an adequate service to clients; at worst it will be damaging to clients.

The organisation can act as a pressure on individual volunteers to sacrifice their own needs for the image of the organisation.

The organisation's reference point for its self-image is outside of itself rather than inside, so its image in the world becomes more important than the well-being of its members. There is a particular danger of this happening in an organisation set up to fight some issue or group. Here not being seen as vulnerable to the 'enemy' can become far more important than the needs of the group's own members.

A healthy organisation will be proud of the individual volunteers who work to deliver its service and through that, project its good image in the community. It will be prepared to deal with issues and misdemeanours as they arise, regardless of whether they risk tarnishing the public image. In

A healthy organisation will be proud of the individual volunteers who work to deliver its service and project its good image in the community.

the long term dealing with difficult issues openly and promptly will create a better image in the thinking public's eye than trying to cover up.

How does your organisation deal with important issues that may put it in a bad light in the public's eye?
How does it make the volunteers proud of their contribution to the work and image of the organisation?

6. A healthy organisation encourages its volunteers to set reasonable boundaries and then respects those boundaries.

The words 'don't be selfish' are often used as a way to 'guilt' volunteers to put the organisation's needs before their own. Women in our society have been socialised to think that it is selfish to look after their own needs. But there is a difference between being selfish and caring for one's self.

Healthy adults have a responsibility to care for their own needs if they are to stay healthy physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. They also have a responsibility to care for others. The issue of selfishness only comes in if the person goes beyond their own needs to fulfilling their wants at the expense of others. Of course there has to be give and take and there will be times when a person chooses to put their own needs aside to help others. But this is the individual's choice and it is not reasonable for an organisation to put on them the guilt-bearing label of 'selfish' if they choose not to do this.

Boundaries define where the volunteers belong and where they don't. Some people's boundaries are very poor so they need clear organisational boundaries to make them feel secure. This can be as simple as having a defined office space or desk to call their own and put their own things on – pictures, pens, etc. Good role and job descriptions, orientation and initial training for new workers all contribute to having clear boundaries. The organisation's goals also need to be clear so that a member feels safe with them.

A healthy organisation accepts that volunteers have to be able to put limits on their helping and encourages them to say 'no' when they need to.

How does your organisation encourage its members to set boundaries?
How does it ensure those boundaries are respected?
How are your volunteers encouraged to care for themselves?
What physical space can the volunteer call their own?
Are the mission statement and goals prominently displayed?

7. A healthy organisation tries to keep its actions consistent with its words and acts with integrity.

In any situation people quickly lose respect for a leader or leadership group who says one thing and does another; who has the attitude that the rules apply to everyone else but not to them. It is hypocrisy. If a person in authority flouts the rules, other members will do the same. Words have no meaning unless they are affirmed by action. As we noted above there will always be times of failure. These can be accepted and understood. But consistent flouting of the organisation's rules is a different matter.

If a person in authority flouts the rules, other members will do the same.

In order for us to be able to act with integrity, our words and our actions have to be congruous. It is no use executives trying to get members to attend a training programme if they are not prepared to go themselves. A group that talks of empowering its clients must also empower its volunteers or they are doomed to fail.

How does your organisation ensure that its actions match its words?

8. A healthy organisation takes seriously the responsibility to have fun.

Laughter is a great releaser of tensions. Any child (or adult) who has got the giggles on a formal occasion will know it can also be uncontrollable at times.

Learning and problem-solving can be far more effective if they are fun. The creative mind has difficulty functioning in the tension of seriousness. At a deeper level play allows us to acknowledge the needs of the child inside us. It often gives us a different perspective on issues. Laughter and fun relax the mind and allow the creative elements to perform. Seeing the funny side often provides another point of view.

People perform better in an atmosphere where they are encouraged to play and have fun. (This has to be healthy fun, not fun at the expense of other people.) If fun is not allowed there is a seriousness and tension that cause people to become anxious and consequently perform badly. Burnout is sure to follow.

If fun is not allowed there is a seriousness and tension that cause people to become anxious and consequently perform badly.

The international conference started with a formal opening but this was soon followed by a comedy act that had the participants in gales of laughter. People from all over the world relaxed in an atmosphere of shared humour and the stage was set for a weekend of excellent communication.

How does your group play?
Do your volunteers have fun together?
Who keeps up the supply of cartoons for the office wall? The newsletter?

9. A healthy organisation welcomes the opportunity to look at and respond to change.

'Don't rock the boat' is an expression that exhibits control with an undercurrent of fear. It stops people questioning the status quo. It also implies a position of calmness not far from stagnation. It has a sense of denial with its facade that 'everything is fine'. It is used along with, 'It's not ladylike to make a fuss' and, 'He's just a troublemaker' to dismiss the valid questions that people might want to ask.

To rock the boat is to be prepared to run a risk in the hope of making progress. Often the 'boat-rocker' fears that by questioning and raising issues they will lose their position. Sometimes the fear is of the conflict that might ensue. Any group, however, that is trying to function effectively in a changing world will have continual points of conflict. If the conflict is dealt with appropriately, the outcome should be a better situation.

A basic law of physics, 'There is no movement without friction', also applies to volunteer work.

Keeping calm and ignoring problems does not make them go away. The healthy position is to recognise and deal with problems as soon as possible.

A volunteer coordinator in a big hospital in Canada said, 'When things seem calm I go out and beat the bushes, that way I get to know the problems before they get too big to handle.'

The healthy group will listen to and respect their prophets who rock the boat and tell them of hidden snags. They will not label them as troublemakers. They will put in place forums to explore the implications of their complaints and not be frightened of change if change is indicated.

How does your group deal with change?
How is conflict dealt with within the group? How can you go outside the group to get assistance in mediation?
Do you think of the people who raise the issues as prophets or troublemakers?
Where do you as a volunteer get support from when you feel frightened about raising a contentious issue?

The healthy group will listen to and respect their prophets who rock the boat and tell them of hidden snags.

A Healthy Organisation

A useful exercise for a group is to take the negative rules, look at the impact they would have on their group and turn them into a positive set that suits their situation.

What positive rules would your group come up with?
What action do you need to take to ensure the rules are respected?
How can they be reviewed?

Particular responsibility for organisational climate rests with the leadership. A leader can encourage or discourage a healthy organisational climate, but one person cannot change a group on their own. They need the cooperation of other members. Groups that operate democratically need to ensure that they elect leaders who will work positively with them towards a healthy organisational climate.

Changing an unhealthy organisational climate is not easy because its unhealthy functioning reinforces itself. Taking time for the group to reflect on its own functioning is an important starting point. Then there has to be some commitment of participants to making change. There has to be acceptance that change will mean saying goodbye to old ways. In some cases some personnel may find they would prefer to leave rather than work in a changed environment. This can be painful and there will be a strong pull to stay with the old ways.

Just as an individual changing an unhealthy life pattern may need the help of a counsellor, so a group may need the help of an outside facilitator.

How can you improve the health of the groups you participate in?
Who could work with you on this?

Part 4

Volunteers in Different Contexts

Chapter 9

Volunteer Committees and Boards

Many years ago when I was a student of economics I was asked in an exam to comment on the economic implications of the Duchess's comment to Alice: 'O 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round.'[16] I argued for this case and got an E for my pains.

Now 35 years later I remember this quote because it appears to encapsulate the essential difference between the voluntary and the business sectors of society – one working for love and the other for money. But is this completely true?

The voluntary sector is made up of organisations formed voluntarily by groups of people who had a 'love' for a particular cause or a particular group of people. Their primary aim is to promote their cause or meet the needs of this group of people. Love is a strong motivator. They certainly do subscribe to the concept of love making the world go round. Voluntary organisations, however, need to have funds to carry on their work, regardless of whether their staff are paid or voluntary. The volunteers who make up the boards of voluntary organisations can be handling considerable financial budgets.

On the other hand, in the business sector the bottom line is to make money. But that is not cut and dried either, for we are increasingly seeing in New Zealand businesses that donate some of their profits to voluntary causes in welfare, conservation, education, the arts or sport. Often this is widely vilified as a sly means of building a corporate image, but this is not always the case. In the future we will see businesses following their counterparts in the US and Britain and actively supporting their staff in their volunteer work and donating staff time to voluntary causes.

To divide the two sectors into love-driven and profit-driven is to be too simplistic. The reality for most voluntary agencies is that they have to live with the tension of sustaining a balance. The place this tension most often shows itself is in the relationship between paid staff and the board.

One of the most difficult interfaces in work is the interface between paid work and volunteer work. Many tales of woe derive from problems in this area. Difficulties often seem to arise between paid workers and a

voluntary committee or board.

One scenario to explore is where a volunteer committee or board has the responsibility for an agency and employs paid staff to carry out some of the work. Many voluntary agencies operate on this model. Whether the membership of the board is chosen by election or by appointment does not seem to affect the issues that arise.

The interface between paid and unpaid work is often difficult.

Partnership between Volunteer Boards and Paid Workers

A voluntary agency can most effectively carry out its task if the staff and the board see their relationship as one of a partnership committed to carrying out the mission of the organisation.

Peter Drucker, a man long-experienced in both business and in voluntary organisations in the US, is highly respected in both communities and has written many books on management. In *Managing the Non-profit Organization* he records conversations with many people successful in American non-profit organisations. One of these, David Hubbard, talks of 'partnership between board and professional staff' where 'the board owns the organisation for the sake of the mission which that organisation is to perform. They don't own it as though they were stockholders ... they own it because they care ... they own it in partnership.'[17]

A partnership values the contribution of each partner equally.

A partnership implies that each partner has a contribution to make that is equal in value although it may be very different in nature and quantity. A partnership is not a hierarchy. A partnership does not value the contribution of one party more than another. A partnership needs respect and trust among all partners to be able to work properly.

A partnership is an attainable ideal, but it requires hard work from all parties. A successful partnership will achieve far more than just the sum of what the individual partners alone can achieve. And yet in reality there is often a struggle between the volunteer board and their paid staff that uses up energy and actually gets in the way of carrying out the mission. Why?

The major problems that contribute to this struggle are role confusion and power. These are fuelled by confusion over values, money, the dissemination of information, and failure to recognise one another's motivations and needs.

Role Confusion as a Barrier to Partnership

As David Hubbard says above, the board of a voluntary agency are in one sense its owners. They carry the responsibility for ensuring its viability. But the concept of ownership here is not one of having absolute power. They do not have the right to buy and sell the agency as one might a company. This ownership is shared with others who have a vested interest. These others are the paid staff, the volunteers, other members and the recipients of the service and often the community in which the organisation exists. They are accountable to all these people. Some boards seem to behave as though they alone own and have the right to make decisions for a voluntary organisation.

Some boards see their main role as controllers of the staff. Some boards see their main role as protectors of the funds and so refuse to spend them. Some board members see their position on the board as giving them power without recognising the responsibility that goes with it. Other board members see their position on the board as a reward for previous contributions rather than a commitment to a different type of work.

Some people come onto a board with the expectation that their role is one of maximising profit as it would be in the business world. They also expect to have the level of control over money and staff that often exists in the business world. This is not to say that volunteer boards should not have good management practice but they have to remember that their bottom line is the organisation's mission statement, not gaining larger profits. This is a dilemma for some groups.

> One organisation found their elected board was full of people who were dedicated to the cause but lacked expertise in management and administration skills. They decided to recruit from business to get these skills into the group. They found this was not as successful as they had hoped because the new members were very skilled but came from a different value base than the original group.

Is it any wonder that boards have difficulty when so many members do not know their role?

Role Definition

There are some difficulties in defining the role of a board in a voluntary agency because the details of the role definition will vary. Some boards

have a purely governance role related to policy and mission. Others find they are also involved in the tasks of management. There are, however, some general principles.

The role of the board can be described as being that part of the partnership that takes the final responsibility for ensuring that the mission of the organisation is carried out. This would include:

The board has the final responsibility for ensuring that the mission of the organisation is carried out.

- Guaranteeing the availability of sufficient funds to meet an agreed budget
- Setting the standards of service
- Setting policy in the light of the organisation's aims
- Employing staff to facilitate the carrying out of the mission

The board takes responsibility for ensuring that these things happen, although in reality they may delegate some of the work involved to paid or volunteer staff. For example, they might ensure funding by employing a person to do fundraising, but they will still retain responsibility to support such efforts and contribute to their success. They may employ a manager who in turn has responsibility for employing other staff. If the roles are being delegated this has to be done realistically so that there is a reasonable probability of success in carrying out the mission.

In a successful partnership each partner is clear about their role and is prepared to carry out the responsibilities of that role.

For the partnership to work effectively each partner needs to be clear about their role and be prepared to carry out the responsibilities of that role. The board therefore needs a role description that spells out its job, its responsibilities, its limits and its points of interaction with paid and volunteer staff. Communication lines need to be described and include opportunities for dialogue.

Individual board members need a job description that describes their particular role and responsibilities as a board member. For their own self-esteem and for the effective functioning of the board, each member must be clear about the particular contribution the board expects from them.

The paid staff also need clear job descriptions that include how they make their contribution to the partnership and channels of communication.

One of the roles of the board needs to be to support the paid staff in performing the work of the organisation, and one of the roles of the paid staff needs to be to support the board in ensuring the mission of the organisation is carried out. Each group needs to actively value and support the contribution of the other. Continuing dialogue will promote this.

Are you clear about your role in your organisation?
Are you clear about the roles of others you need to relate to?
What kind of dialogue do you have with your partners in the organisation?

The Use and Abuse of Power

The other major issue that can interfere with the board/paid staff partnership is power.

Power is an essential part of any voluntary board. Boards need power to carry out their mission, but people who seek power for themselves and want power over others can create serious problems. Such people are sometimes to be found on voluntary boards.

Healthy conflict is part of any group of people. In fact it is the most common source of constructive change. Conflict only becomes unhealthy when it is ignored or badly managed. Management of conflict involves the balancing of power between the protagonists, so it is useful to look at the sorts of power that are present in the board/staff partnership of a voluntary organisation.

The power of a board lies in the authority vested in them to take responsibility for the organisation.

The power of the board lies in the authority vested in them to take responsibility for the organisation. This power is given to them by those who elect or appoint them. They also have the power to control the funds. They have the power to set policy that affects all partners and the service provided to clients. Most boards also have some power over who is hired and fired, even if it is only the senior staff member. Board members bring with them individual skills, which are sources of power, and there is power in their commitment to the mission.

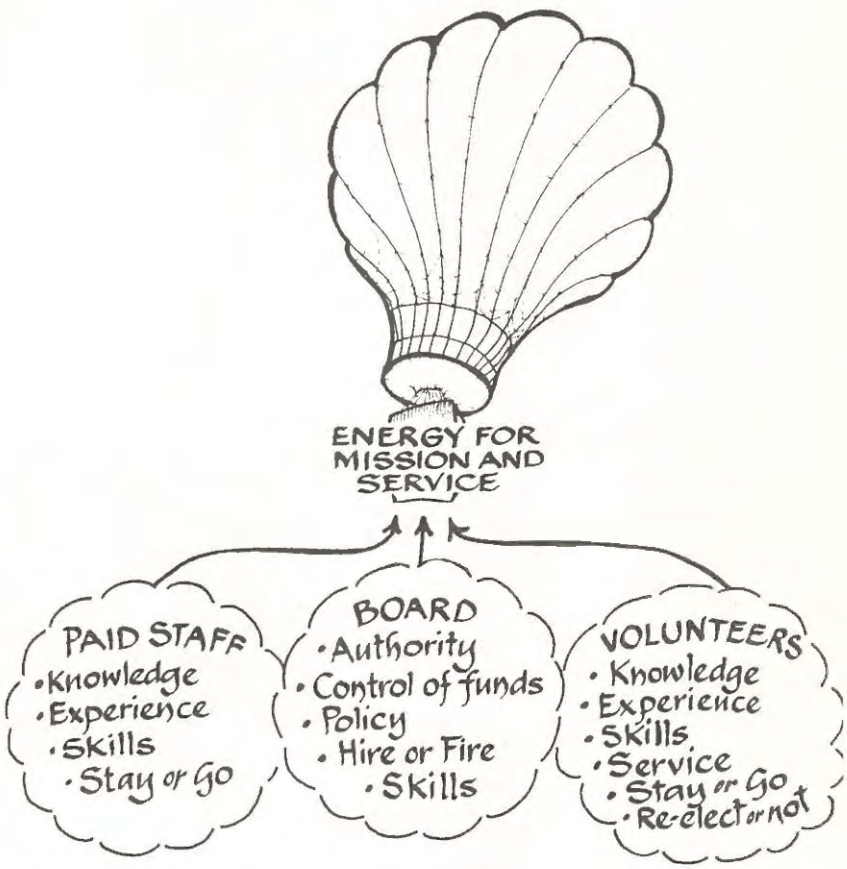
Paid workers have power. As the people more closely involved in the organisation's work they have the power of knowledge and experience. They have the skills that their work needs. If they are good at their work they often have the power of support from the people they network within the community. They have the power of having time available solely for the organisation's work.

Volunteers too have power. If they are 'coalface' workers they have the knowledge and experience that this brings. They have the power of their skills and service, which they are free to give or withdraw. In many cases they have the power to re-elect or replace the board.

What power do you have in the voluntary organisations you are part of?

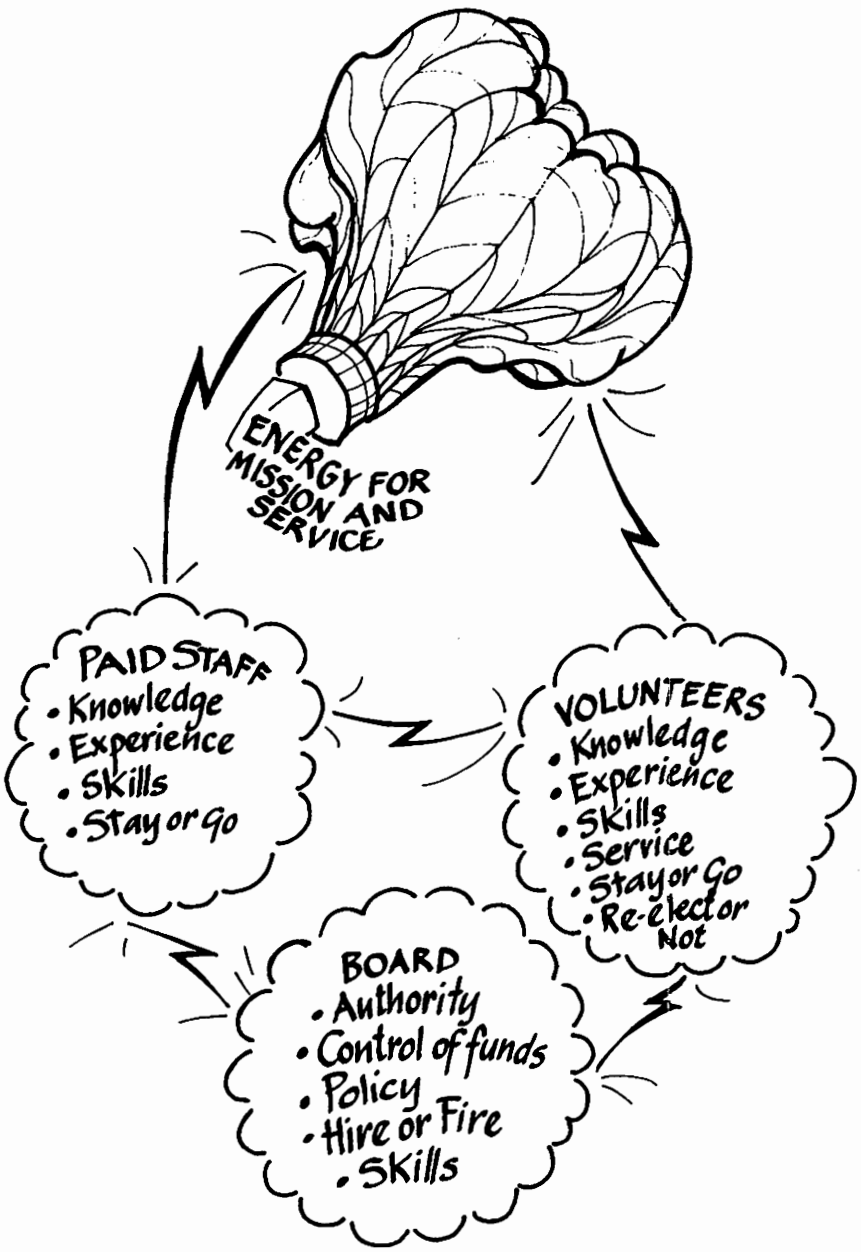
Each group has their own power. In a partnership that is working together for the mission of the organisation all the power combines for this purpose. Each power source needs the other to produce the energy required to carry out the work effectively. Their combined power is far greater than the individual parts.

The power of partnership



It is often the case, however, that the power of the separate groups is not combined for the carrying out of the mission, but dissipated through one group trying to exert control over the other. The energy of all groups goes into this struggle at the expense of the organisation's work. In this case everyone is a loser – board, staff, volunteers and potential and existing clients. Sadly this happens far too often.

Energy dissipated by battle for control



People who use their power on a board to control others can cause havoc in an organisation. These people, however, are often able to do this only because other board members fail to use the power they have and thereby allow the destruction to happen. If each member on a board knows their

own area of responsibility and is not frightened to exercise it, destructive personal power behaviour will be less likely to go unchecked.

The most destructive situation of all is the one where the personnel of a voluntary board have been chosen by a parent body or leader for the purpose of changing the focus of an agency and replacing existing staff who are committed to the current mission. If a change of focus has to happen, ideally it should be done by open discussion so that people are free to choose whether they want to be part of the new mission. But people who operate in an authoritarian model are rarely open about their intentions. Such a move performed in a clandestine and destructive way can result in most of the agency's energy going into ongoing 'warfare' with the board over a long period and the eventual abandonment of the traditional service. The personal cost to dedicated staff can be high, as can the cost to the client group, who lose a valuable service.

When the board and staff reach a state of open warfare there has been much hurt in the relationship. At this stage it is usually too late to do anything more constructive than get out. Such a situation might have been avoided if at an earlier stage all parties were able to recognise the power they had in the partnership and used it constructively.

How do you use your power?
Who do you use your power for?

Values and Mission

One of the keys of working well together is for everybody to be clear about and committed to the mission of the organisation. The mission is expressed in a brief statement that says:

To work well together, people need to be clear about and committed to the mission of the organisation.

- What the organisation is set up to do
- What its purpose is
- What it values
- Who it is for

A mission statement will reflect the past and point to the future. It should carry the distinctive features of this group and inspire both volunteers and paid workers at all levels. It is a yardstick for making decisions.

The mission statement should reflect the aims and objectives of the organisation's constitution.

For a mission statement to be effective every member should be able to 'own' it and be proud of it. This will happen if they have all had input into its development. New members can become involved in its reassessment as described later.

What is the mission of your organisation?

A board also needs to know the context in which it is working. Its role is to carry out the mission within the context of the rules of the organisation, its history, its place in the community, its part in a national organisation if any, and the existing service. This context is where the group has been and where it is now – the place it steps off from. But it should not be a strait-jacket. Some board members will not make any change because 'that wasn't how we did it in the past', and some board members want to rush in and change everything regardless of the past. Neither approach is helpful.

One of the strange things some boards do is make a decision and then set unrealistic limits that make it impossible to implement. They might decide that their volunteers need to be well trained but then set a financial limit on the amount to be paid to trainers that is far below the market rate. This decision can be driven by such reasoning as 'teachers shouldn't expect to be paid that much', 'we are the policymakers so we can make policy how we like', 'we have to look after the money and if we spend it we won't have it', 'we made a decision last time so we should stick to it regardless', 'we give our time voluntarily to this cause so why should *they* expect to be paid?' These people are all keen to see the mission carried out, but their own deeper values, or maybe their self-destructive instincts, are interfering with their ability to connect their decisions to the implementation.

This gives rise to an important issue for boards.

The values of the mission statement must be the values of the board.

The values implied by the mission statement must be the values of the board and take precedence over personal values in any decision made by the board. I suspect that value clashes are major contributors to conflict. Regular review of the mission statement creates a framework in which board members and others can check how their own values fit in with those expressed by the organisation.

What are the values implied by your organisation's mission statement? How do these values fit in with your own personal values?

Money Issues

Money is one area where paid staff are different from volunteers.

Voluntary boards are often very good at resolving lots of really difficult issues but they consistently get into difficulties over decisions about money. This is also, of course, one area where the paid staff are different from volunteers, so conflict over money issues seems inevitable.

It does not seem to make much difference whether it is because there is too much money or not enough: the problem seems to stem from the same place. Some boards are faced with having a regular salary bill but no money reserves in the bank. Many voluntary agencies live a hand-to-mouth existence from grant to grant hoping, but having no real guarantee, that the money will come in. This is scary for people who like life to be secure.

But having a large amount of money can be equally difficult to deal with. Board members can find themselves in a position of having to make decisions about sums of money that may not be large in business terms but are far bigger than they have ever handled in their own household. Some become paralysed by the responsibility and cannot act.

Attitudes to money are part of each person's value system.

Our attitude to money is part of the value system that we have developed during our lives. It has much to do with the attitudes and circumstances of the family we grew up in and can be very ingrained. Some will want to spend all they have and are labelled spendthrift. Others will want to save it all for the future and live a miserly existence. Most are somewhere in between.

Our society seems to ascribe an importance to money that leaves other rewards and contributions undervalued, so it is not surprising that much of the strife on voluntary boards results from arguments about money.

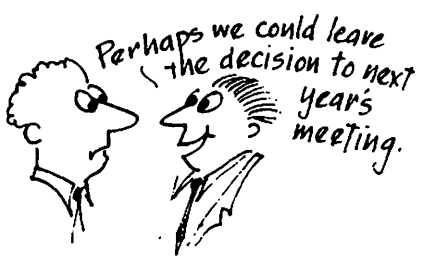
How do you personally make 'money' decisions?
How are money decisions made in your group?

Time Perspectives

One of the difficulties for voluntary boards is that they have long gaps between meetings. The paid staff, on the other hand, are on the spot and are up to date with what is happening on a day-to-day basis. This means that the staff are far better informed about the running of the organisation than the board. And so it should be, as this is the nature of their respective roles. But this does cause some difficulties.

The major problem is that board members can get to a meeting and be presented with and have to vote on an issue that has arisen since the last meeting. They may have no prior knowledge of the matter and so are not in a position to make a well-informed decision. This is a problem that can result in inappropriate resolutions being made because board members did not wholly understand the issue.

If you are a board member how do you ensure that you have all the information you need? How do you ensure that you have time to read it?
If you are a paid staff member how do you ensure that all members of your board have the information they need to make sound decisions?



The effect of these differing timeframes can be quite dramatic. The board may consider a matter to be of great urgency and put it on the top of the agenda for the next meeting – in a month's time. The staff, on the other hand, who are dealing with the issue day to day can feel that that is 'forever' away. This is one of the many areas where each group needs to understand and consider the perspective of the other. The situation can be even more dramatic if the board is a national one that meets only, say, twice a year.

Communication

Both parts of the partnership need to be in continuous dialogue with each other.

Simply having clearly defined roles and understanding the different sources of power is not enough. Both parts of the partnership need to be in continuous dialogue with each other to prevent problems arising. They need to be listening to each other and sharing information, responses and feelings.

The manager or other staff member has a role to give board members all the relevant information before the meeting. One of the powers of the staff is to take the initiative of keeping all board members well informed. This is a time-consuming task as it may involve time on the telephone or preparing briefing papers. But it is time well spent because bad decisions and decisions based on misinformation waste much more time in being rectified.

If board members are to give a considered response to an issue, they need time to assimilate the information. Most people find it difficult to do

this during a meeting so it is better to send information out a few days before the meeting to give members the opportunity to come prepared.

Some workers make the mistake of briefing only those who they think will support them and thus lose the opportunity to explain their point of view and possibly widen the understanding of those who are likely to put up opposition.

Who do you discuss the issues of your organisation with?
Who do you choose not to inform about issues coming up? Why?

In a state of war depriving the enemy of information is a strategic necessity, but a state of war is destructive for any voluntary organisation. In a partnership sharing all the information is a way of encouraging trust and creating a climate where maximum cooperation is possible. To feel safe to do this each member has to believe in the good intentions of all the others in their use of information. This is not always easy.

It can be tempting to try to control and manipulate the group by withholding information, particularly from some members. But information is power – it needs to be shared among the whole group for maximum benefit. To deprive the group of the benefit of having all its members well informed is to deprive it of potential energy.

Information is power – it needs to be shared among the whole group.

Paid executives may go to their board meeting with a report that speaks of all the positive aspects of the organisation's work, glossing over or excluding anything that might be controversial or difficult. This sort of behaviour renders the board powerless. If they are not told of the difficulties they have no way of using their combined skills and talents to find creative solutions. Workers who cover over problems show great disrespect for board members as they deny them the truth and the opportunity to do their work effectively.

But boards that deal only with the positive issues have a habit of disintegrating very quickly. They become ineffective because their staff do not allow them to be effective. They become ineffective because they do not allow themselves to be effective. While the paid executive might seem to have control in the short term, long term they will find themselves without an employer.

It can be particularly tempting to keep information away from board members who meddle in the paid worker's job. This can be very difficult to deal with. It is more constructive, however, to look for ways of using the energy of the board member who wants to get involved by directing it to an area where it can be productive.

Effective communication involves dialogue.

The responsibility for communication does not rest solely on the paid worker. For communication to be effective there must be dialogue. The board members must be prepared to listen to and respond to information brought to them by their paid staff. There can be nothing more frustrating for a worker than to put many hours into preparing a report then to present it at a meeting and have no response from the board – they simply move to the next item on the agenda. Anybody who puts time and energy into preparing a report for a meeting deserves to have it listened to. Listening involves taking in information and responding to it, and letting the person know that their message has been heard and understood. If this does not happen there is no incentive for the worker – paid or unpaid – to continue to give useful reports.

Often board members will refrain from questioning for fear of exposing their own ignorance.

> I was at a meeting once where I heard the word 'fiducial' being used repeatedly by a speaker. I was unsure of the meaning and when I checked with a number of other people none of them could give me an accurate definition. Yet we all sat there and pretended we understood when we didn't.

This was not effective communication because the members failed to ask for an explanation of a word they did not understand. And because they did not understand the word they lost the sense of the speaker's message.

Failure to respond in itself can have a negative effect on the flow of information, but even more destructive is the board that blames the worker for the difficulties reported. This is the ancient game of 'Shoot the messenger'. Boards that do this are themselves closing off access to information that is essential if they are to carry out their role effectively.

Communication takes time and costs money.

An obstacle to the distribution of information within an organisation is the fact that communication uses time and money and this is not planned for. A person whose work time, whether paid or volunteer, is already full doing their 'proper work' is likely to feel resentful about having to spend an extra two hours on the phone or writing letters. We looked at this more closely in Chapter 5, but suffice here to say that communication should be clearly defined as the work of paid staff and boards. There should be allowance for it when allocating resources, particularly time and money.

In *Managing the Non-profit Organization* Peter Drucker says: 'The non-

profit must be information based ... This flow of information is essential because a non-profit organization has to be a learning organization.'[18]

How do you respond to reports presented at meetings?
How do you deal with a worker who brings you 'bad news'?
How do you acknowledge time spent in communication – on the phone, writing letters – as valid work?

Who Initiates Business?

Even the best role definition cannot cover every situation, so one of the other questions that often comes up in the relationship between volunteer boards and their paid staff is, 'Who asks who to do what?' Many an important issue gets lost because the board members have not thought of it and the paid staff don't see it as their job to raise it.

Any partner can initiate business.

If the partnership is working well both groups should feel free to initiate business. If the relationship is seen as a partnership the staff should feel free to tap into the board's commitment to the mission and the skills of its members. One quite difficult hurdle presenting itself here is that paid workers sometimes find it difficult to ask volunteers to do work. This can be helped by spending time and listening to each other and for the paid workers to understand the reasons and motivations for the volunteers' work. If they do this they will know they are free to make requests of board members without feeling guilty. This is a common and tricky issue and needs airing often.

Board members in their turn can assume that volunteers bring commitment and caring but should not forget that the paid workers who choose to work for a voluntary agency do so because they also have commitment and caring to offer. In fact paid workers in voluntary agencies have often started out as volunteers for that cause.

Another tricky issue that can arise for a paid administrator employed by a volunteer board is: 'Who do I get my instructions from?' The board needs to work out which of its members acts as its representative as employer, or the administrator can be run ragged receiving competing instructions from 10 different people.

When difficulties do arise, as is inevitable when human beings work together, it is most important

to deal with them before the discord itself starts doing too much damage. The most helpful base to start from is to look at the common mission and goals that the group is working from. There are many people in our communities who are skilled in mediation work and a wise group uses them if they are unable to resolve their own issues.

How do you bring information and issues to your group?
How are contentious issues dealt with in your group?

Board Members as Volunteers

Volunteer board members are motivated by achievement, affiliation and power, and these needs have to be met.

There is no reason to believe that people who volunteer as board members are any different from other people who volunteer. Volunteer board members are motivated by the same things – achievement, affiliation and power. If they are to continue to work productively these needs have to be met.

One of the difficulties that arises for board members is the question: 'Whose responsibility is it to meet these needs?' For other volunteers the management or volunteer coordinator sees that these needs are met. But who does it for the board? Often the board members' motivational needs are neglected because nobody has a clear responsibility to meet them.

If any board is going to continue to function in a healthy manner it is really important that it sees as part of its role the responsibility for meeting the motivational needs of its members. This is not greed or selfishness. It is valuing the contribution of the volunteers who give their time and energy to work on this board and enabling them to continue to work effectively.

Just as volunteer management requires that a budget be set aside for volunteer recognition, so should any board have a budget for the purpose of meeting the motivational needs of its members. Valid uses for such funds would be:

- To pay for the group to go out to dinner together to celebrate their year's work;
- To buy flowers for a board member who is in hospital or having a special event in their lives;
- To pay for board members to receive training for their role;
- To buy food for board members for a meeting that spans a meal hour.

Many other activities that recognise the contribution of volunteers can be a valid use of the organisation's funds. The validity comes from the fact that it is through this sort of recognition that the volunteer board members'

motivational needs are met so that they are happy to continue to work on the board. It is as a result of their work that the organisation's service to the community is delivered. This sort of spending is as valid as paying the salary of a paid worker.

Volunteer board members need training and supervision.

Volunteer board members have the same needs for training and supervision as other volunteers if they are to carry out their roles effectively.

Individual members may need training for the particular role they have undertaken. The whole board may need training in how to carry out its role. Boards of voluntary agencies need to understand legislation surrounding the service they offer, particularly if they employ paid staff. If the staff are volunteers, boards need training in the management of volunteers.

Every person who is chairperson of a voluntary board should have a supervisor who understands that role and the purpose of the agency. This is an excellent safeguard against inappropriate behaviour and burn-out. Other board members need supervision according to the nature of their role.

Good Employment Practices

Voluntary boards need good employment practices for paid workers.

One of the biggest mistakes volunteers make is to assume that paid workers work only for money. Like volunteers, paid workers are motivated by factors other than their pay packet. Many choose to earn their living in a voluntary organisation because they too are committed to its mission. They will sacrifice the opportunity to earn higher wages elsewhere to do this. This does not justify, however, voluntary agencies underpaying their staff. Rather it highlights the paid staff's need for the same support, feedback and recognition as volunteers in addition to an adequate salary.

A good place for a board to start researching employment practices for paid workers is the New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations publication *Personnel Practices in Voluntary Agencies: Paid Workers.* This same organisation also runs workshops from time to time in different centres, as does the Department of Internal Affairs. This is an area in which a voluntary board needs to educate itself and keep up to date.

Paid workers are motivated by the same needs as volunteers.

What can be of concern are the beliefs and attitudes that volunteers may have about the motivation of paid workers (see Chapter 2). It is obvious that money will help meet the more basic needs – for food, safety and security – in fact we all need some source of income to be able to think beyond these needs. But as we move to motivation by higher needs – social, self-esteem, self-actualisation and self-transcendence – money is not the issue.

Paid workers are motivated by these other needs just as volunteers are. Whatever has been said about volunteer motivation applies also to paid workers and a wise board will take this into account when providing support for all its workers – paid and voluntary.

Making the Partnership Work

Mutual trust and dialogue are the keys to a good partnership.

People who are really committed to making a partnership work believe in the good intentions of all parties, listen to each other, talk to each other and value each other's contribution. The dialogue of true and honest communication, and plenty of it, is the key to a good partnership, whether it is marriage or a voluntary organisation.

A group that is newly formed usually does this well as all are focused on the mission and fired with enthusiasm. This is the honeymoon period. Over time, however, some of the enthusiasm fades, individual shortcomings start to show and difficulties start to emerge. At this stage some people are getting tired, others haven't received the accolades they thought they were entitled to, some get anxious and it is hard to maintain good relationships. The self-esteem of the board begins to fade and this can affect the self-image of the whole organisation. If there is no remedial action this can be the beginning of a downward spiral.

Every group needs a regular process of renewal.

Every group needs a regular process of renewal. A time when people can be together, bringing newcomers into the picture and forming a mutual bond so that trust will develop in the group.

For an infant the process of spending time with its mother, feeding, being nurtured, each learning about the other and sharing dreams, creates an ongoing bond of mutual trust. So too will a group of adults who take time together to get to know one another, share meals, remember their common history and their common mission, and set goals together, trusting one another to work together to meet those goals.

Weekends away are an ideal method. The programme needs to include some work and some play. Many businesses and government departments subscribe to this thinking with what they call retreats. The importance of the play and slack time cannot be overestimated. It is here that much of the key bonding work is done. Yet there is a great temptation to pack the programme tightly because 'people are busy and their time is precious'. Their time is precious and spending it in bonding is one of the most valuable ways of using it.

RENEWAL PROCESS

The programme for such a weekend might be planned under the four headings:

Who are we?
Where have we come from?
Where are we now?
Where are we going?

WHO ARE WE?

The individual participants are the most significant factor in any group so it is important to spend some time in getting to know a little about each other. There are hundreds of creative fun ways of doing this. Probably the simplest is to ask each person who they are and why they are here.

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

There needs to be some expression of the group's history, including their reasons for starting the group and may be the initial mission statement. This could be done by building a time-line on which each participant can show where they entered the history and their own part in it, thereby reinforcing their sense of belonging.

Also important is a demonstration of the high points and low points in the last year or since the group last met like this. It is this recent history that is likely to have the greatest impact on their decision-making.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

This is a time for presentation of internal facts and figures – mission statement, financial statement, statistics, anything that describes the current state of the organisation. The context in which the organisation functions is important, so some information and reflection on the society in which it operates is also relevant.

The presentation needs to be real. Weaknesses as well as strengths need to be exposed.

Look at the mission statement. Will it still lead the group into the future? Does it need to be adjusted it to make it relevant for this year?

(continued overleaf)

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Having built up the background, everybody works together to set goals for the next year. These can be done under different headings but they need to link together to ensure that they are compatible.

Goals need to be checked. How do they fit with the mission statement? Are they practical? What resources will they need? Where will we get those resources? Do we have to let go of anything to achieve those goals? What are the difficulties we are likely to encounter? How will we deal with those difficulties? Who will take responsibility for ensuring that each goal is met?

The last act is to set up a timetable for the year with specific achievable goals and have the whole group adopt this timetable. The timetable should include checkpoints at which progress will be reviewed.

Once the plan has been completed, celebration is important. Both working and playing together build the bond that eases work in the future.

This process has been used over a number of years and is proven to be effective. Because the whole group has contributed to the creation of the plan they are all likely to feel committed its implementation. The inclusion of a wide range of people in the process is likely to produce a more creative plan. The process needs to be facilitated by either a group member whom everyone trusts or an outsider.

Bonds can be broken. Interests change. In volunteer work people's lives affect their ability to give time and so they come and go. It is therefore important to carry out an exercise such as this not once but regularly, at least once a year. To those who say 'we've done it all before', I say it changes every time because the group is never quite the same and events have happened each year to change the content.

When was the last time your group held a gathering like this?

There is no foolproof method of keeping relationships with and within a voluntary board smooth and sweet. Part of the nature of these groups is that they bring together people with very different interests. Exercises such as the weekend away and looking at the attributes of a healthy organisation as described in a previous chapter help groups to work in partnership, focused on their mission.

A healthy partnership between board and paid staff involves:

- Commitment to the mission
- Mutual respect for each person involved
- Clear role descriptions
- Dialogue
- Time and money allowed for communication
- Shared responsibility
- Good volunteer management practices
- Good paid staff management practices
- Regular renewal process
- Competent conflict management

Chapter 10

Volunteers in the Church

Volunteers are Essential to the Church

Churches use volunteers as a major workforce, but they often see themselves as somehow different from other users of volunteers.

Church volunteers are readers, money-counters, cleaners, gardeners, musicians, parish councillors, teachers of children and adults, community workers, social workers – the list could go on and on. The skills they use cover a wide range; from sweeping and cleaning to playing an organ, from floral arranging to operating an overhead projector to training a group of adults or children. Some of the work is public, such as reading during a service, but much of the work done round a parish is never seen. Church volunteers are often the face of the church in the community, whether as friends to the friendless or as professionals offering a sophisticated social service.

Church use of volunteers is not just an easy way out for a group that is short of money, rather it is fundamental to their philosophy. In many denominations ministers come to a parish for a short time and then move on, so if any outreach from the congregation into that community is to be sustained it must come from lay people – the volunteers.

If the church is to realise a vision of congregations living out their Christianity in the community, it must inevitably have a large volunteer workforce. They are 'the disciples of all nations' referred to in Matthew 28:20. If the church is to be effective all the faithful need to be able to make their contribution. If a church does not have volunteers, it is not church.

What roles do volunteers perform in your congregation?

Problems Faced by Church Volunteers

One would expect such a group of volunteers to be happy in their work but this is often not the case.

The story one frequently hears of is of bitter, burnt-out people doing the same job they have done for years. They are overworked, taken for granted and no appreciation is shown for their efforts. The cry is that 'Nobody is prepared to help these days'. This is borne out by the reduced number of active groups in the church functioning with greatly reduced membership.

This all sounds a long way from the church of the Gospels – a long way from the Christian ethic of loving one another.

What is your experience as a church volunteer?

When asked the reasons for this lack of appreciation of work done, church people of varying denominations had some interesting responses:

A Church of Scotland woman in Scotland said: 'I think that people get hooked into the Calvinistic idea that it is wrong to praise people because that will lead them to the sin of pride.'

A clergyman thought: 'If you show human appreciation you take away from the purity of their gift of doing things for God.'

A New Zealand woman observed: 'Most church volunteers are women, yet the people with the power are the predominantly male hierarchy who do not appreciate the gifts of women. It is just another example of the oppression of women in the church.'

A businessman who is a church elder said: 'If the volunteers need acknowledgment they are doing it for the wrong reasons. If they are doing things for the right reasons they shouldn't need anything like that.'

The issue of the male hierarchy not appreciating the gifts of women is certainly very real for many church women. This is part of a much wider issue of sexism in the church, which cannot be dismissed and should be borne in mind in any discussion of volunteer work.

Motivation of Church Volunteers

Underlying the responses is the assumption that somehow people who volunteer in churches are different. The belief is that they volunteer for spiritual reasons only. This assumption has not been borne out by reality.

People in churches volunteer for physical, psychological, social and spiritual reasons.

People in churches volunteer for the whole range of human reasons as well as some spiritual ones.

There are a great number of human needs and reasons that cause people to volunteer in the community at large. People who volunteer to work in the church do so for many of these same reasons as well as religious ones, just as church people who volunteer in the community sometimes do so for religious reasons.

Fundamental to understanding the needs of volunteers is the understanding of the wholeness of people. Our needs are physical, psychological, social and spiritual. These do not function separately in our lives but in wholeness, interacting at all times and in all situations. If the church tries to meet the spiritual needs of people while ignoring the physical, psychological and social, it creates a disconnectedness that is inhuman.

What are the reasons you have or haven't volunteered in the church?

Sadly at times even the spiritual needs of volunteers are not met by the church. They supposedly leave it all to God while failing to recognise that God communicates His love and thanks to people through people.

This is a picture of gloom and doom. It is based on the experiences of many people in many churches throughout the world. Fortunately it is not universal. Many church groups are working hard to recognise the worth of and improve their volunteer programmes and practices.

Recognition of Volunteers

The acknowledgment of the work done by volunteers is often overlooked or actively discouraged by church groups. Modern understanding of psychology and the model Jesus himself gave both give encouragement to the concept of thanking and acknowledging the work done by volunteers in the church as in any other place.

Jesus himself expected to be thanked after curing the ten lepers. He said to the one who returned and thanked him, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine – where are they?'[19]

Churches have available to them special ways of honouring volunteers.

All the ways of acknowledging volunteers listed in Chapter 5 are applicable to church situations. But churches have other options open to them as well.

As celebration is an important part of volunteer recognition, it is appropriate that it is part of the community's liturgical celebration. This

may be the public signing of a contract. It can be a ceremony of induction for volunteers undertaking a particular ministry.

A congregation could focus on the contribution of one group of volunteers at a particular time. Suggestions for activities are:

- Having the Sunday service reflect the contribution of this group with relevant readings, prayers and music.
- Using the newsletter to highlight the work of this particular group. It might include profiles of individual volunteers.
- Holding a training day that will re-energise and renew the people who provide the service. This would be a time to improve skills and nurture spirits.
- Providing free of charge a celebration meal for the volunteers.

The focus could be on a different group each month and over a year have provided recognition and appreciation for all the volunteers of a parish.

What ideas do you have for celebrating the contribution of the volunteers in your church?

And if there is still any doubt about whether it is appropriate for churches to respond to their volunteers in this way, let us go to the Gospels and see how Jesus treated that band of volunteers who were his disciples. The way Jesus cared for his disciples gives us a good model for working with volunteers. He spent quite a lot of his time caring for his workers.

The way Jesus cared for his disciples gives us a good model for working with volunteers.

The whole of Chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel is a training session for disciples. Jesus instructed them in what they were to do and how they were to do it. He told them not to take spare clothes, haversack or sandals in the expectation that the people would look after them. He affirmed them with his own authority.

In Mark Chapter 4: 37-41 we hear of how Jesus calmed both the storm and the apostles when they became frightened in the boat. He rescued them in their fear.

John 21 tells of him cooking breakfast for them when they were tired after a night's fishing.[20] In Luke 22 we hear of the feast Jesus had with his apostles the night before he died.[21]

Mark records in 6: 30-32 Jesus encouraging them to take time out to rest and eat after a busy period, and in Matthew 18:19-20 they are exhorted to pray together. In Luke 10 we see Jesus empowering his workers[22] and later affirming them.[23] Throughout the Gospels he challenges them to do things they thought would be beyond them.

Jesus of the Gospels was not afraid to affirm his workers. The idea that it was somehow not proper seems to have crept into religion later.

Management of Church Volunteers

The need for good volunteer management applies as much to church volunteers as to others.

In Chapter 3 are listed the components of good volunteer management. Every single one of those is applicable to church volunteers. There is no need to work through all the headings again as the basic theory spelled out in earlier chapters applies as much to church volunteers as to others. Some issues need expanding, however, in the light of church experience.

Why are Volunteers Being Used in this Role?

An education programme can demonstrate the relevance of volunteer roles.

The very first question to be answered is: 'Why are we engaging volunteers?' The general answer to this question is covered in the first part of this chapter, but it has to be answered in each particular situation. Is the volunteer participation important because of the special quality of skill or caring that a volunteer can give, or the need to encourage and enable wider lay participation in church activities?

Just as elsewhere, volunteers in the church need to know that the work they are doing is important. One way to ensure that they know is by offering an education programme that demonstrates the relevance of a particular role and the context it belongs in.

In the church the tension is not just between whether the work should be paid or unpaid but whether a task should be done by a priest or minister, a religious or a lay person. For the clergy the question might be: 'Can a volunteer lay person be trusted to competently perform a task previously done by a priest or minister?' Often it is the clergy that need re-educating about their own changing role in relation to work with lay people. Failure to do this can undermine a volunteer programme.

Why are volunteers used or not used in particular roles in your church?

Knowing the Deal

Contracts help church volunteers and churches know what they are committed to.

Just as in any other volunteer position, church volunteers need to know what they will be committed to. They need to be clear about their role or task and what is expected of them. They need to know how they fit in to the system they are part of. It is important that they are clear who they are accountable to and what they do if they cannot attend: whether it is their own or the coordinator's responsibility to find a substitute. The thing many

people dread is offering their services for a position and then feeling they have to stay for ever, so they need to know how long they are committed for.

How do you know what is expected of you in your role as a church volunteer?

All these issues can be formally recorded in a contract. This minimises the chances of misunderstanding.

The contract on page 162 was developed for Janne, a young woman who was undertaking an increasing amount of work aimed at developing parish community. She had previously graduated from two church-based programmes in adult education and community work.

The contract was signed by the worker and the minister during the Sunday morning service. This had the effect of publicly acknowledging Janne's work and authenticating her role in this community.

The contract itself spells out clearly what is expected of the worker and the parish. It spells out the lines of accountability through supervision and through reports to the council. In this way the parish is protected against the worker going outside her brief or acting unprofessionally. It also commits the parish to supporting this work.

This contract also protects the worker from hazards that lone workers can encounter in a group as loose as a parish. It specifies the limits of her work. She is clearly defined as a community worker and adult educator. This protects her from having to fulfil other roles such as social worker or teacher of children's programmes.

While she has a responsibility to research the needs of the parish community, it is the council, not she herself, that has the responsibility for seeing that those needs are met. Many a worker in this sort of situation has been ground down because the needs she uncovered were more than one person could deal with and there was nowhere to go with the overflow.

There is a clear expectation that the parish will ensure her professional supervision and that she will participate in this. Professional supervision above all other things provides development for the workers and protection for the people who receive her service. Church workers seem to be slow to pick up the concept of professional supervision and yet it has so much to offer not only the volunteer workers but clergy and paid workers as well.

CONTRACT BETWEEN PARISH and JANNE

Parish community worker and educator of adults

Janne agrees:

- To research the needs of adults in the parish community.
- To run courses and form groups in response to these needs in the areas of personal and community development.
- To bring to the Parish Council any needs that are identified but Janne is unable to meet.
- To encourage other similar workers in this parish.
- To network with other similarly trained workers in the Diocese.
- To organise and attend monthly meetings with a professional supervisor.
- To undertake ongoing training for herself.
- To evaluate work as it proceeds.
- To report to the parish through the Parish Council every three months.
- To present accounts of money spent.
- To present a record of time spent.

The Parish agrees through the Parish Council:

- To oversee and support Janne's work.
- To respond to Janne's reports and requests for assistance.
- To provide practical resources – materials, venues, books, etc.
- To be prepared to cover the shortfall on courses that do not cover their own costs.
- To ensure that Janne receives professional supervision.
- To provide ongoing training for Janne and others who work with her.
- To evaluate Janne's work and supervision on an annual basis.

This contract is agreed to by both parties and will be reviewed on... [date].

Signed by:

..... Minister

..... Parish community worker

Date .....

Training and Supervision

Volunteers need feedback on how well they are doing their job. If someone has made a good job of reading at a service, it is important to tell them so. If someone is not reading well it is equally important to discuss with them how they could improve their performance: provision of training might well be appropriate here.

Some church volunteer work involves responsibility and relationships with many people. This can be demanding and require the support of a supervisor who will help the worker review their work and help them develop their skills in dealing with difficulties.

> One parish has organised group supervision for the leaders of all its education programmes on a monthly basis. Participants review their successes as well as their problems and pool their resources in finding ways to deal with difficulties. This has helped sustain their interest and energy.

The other useful role a supervisor can perform is to help a volunteer let go of a role they are no longer able to perform. This helps prevent burn-out and reduces the likelihood of the volunteer being left feeling bitter.

Training can help develop both the skills and knowledge of church volunteers. Where specific religious input is sought, they may require church-based programmes, but some churches get and give good value by funding some of their volunteers to attend leadership courses in such places as polytechnics.

What training would you like to improve your knowledge and skills as a church volunteer?

Paying Volunteers' Expenses

Most church members contribute money to their church. This may be the reason that they find it particularly hard to ask for a refund of the expenses they incur in their voluntary work. Some pastors cash in on this reluctance by not openly offering to pay. Justice demands that people who give their time and energy to the church should not be out of pocket through doing so. Travelling to pick up books and tapes, buying music, flowers, pens, paper and typewriter ribbons all costs money. It should

Justice demands that people who give their time and energy to the church should not be out of pocket through doing so.

not have to come out of the volunteer's family budget.

Church members are no different from the rest of the community in that some will not be able to volunteer because their budget will not cope with the extra costs involved. For others these costs are not a difficulty but they would appreciate having them acknowledged.

How much does it cost you to volunteer for your church?

Inclusion of Volunteers in Decision-making

Allowing them to be part of the decision-making in relation to their volunteer work is a key to having happy and productive volunteers.

Another issue for church leaders of volunteer programmes is the inclusion of volunteers in decision-making. This is a hard issue for leaders of church communities, as many operate in a totally hierarchical system where decisions are made at the top.

Marlene Wilson, however, reminds us that 'People are committed to plans they help make. Yet this frequently is overlooked by both clergy and lay leadership. So, the first principle of good planning is to involve those affected by the plan in the process.'[24]

Allowing them to be part of the decision-making in relation to their volunteer work is a key to having happy and productive volunteers. Not only will they be committed to their work, but they will bring a perspective that is essential for wholeness in the church's vision.

It will of course take time to gather people together and get their opinions. At times, it will seem more efficient to make decisions without consultation. The gains of consultation, however, are worth it.

How can volunteers be included in making the decisions that affect them in your church?

Personal and Spiritual Development of Volunteers

Church volunteers are likely to be seeking spiritual development.

Like other volunteers, church volunteers are looking for personal development in their work. Part of this is spiritual development. They see their church involvement as providing an opportunity to increase their own religious knowledge. They expect to have opportunities to reflect and pray with the people they are working with as an integral part of their work.

To be most relevant prayer and reflection should be related to the roles that the volunteers perform and a regular part of their performance of that role. Spirituality of volunteering is then integral to the experience of the volunteers, not something apart. One of the beauties of the Christian Scriptures is that they are built on many of life's ordinary experiences – sweeping, cleaning, planting, counting money, making music, meeting, reading, teaching, listening, loving and feeding. They will always be the basic source of reflection, but other writers have built on them and can also provide useful resources. An important point to remember is that most church volunteers are women, so when praying with them don't pray using language that excludes them.

> A Social Concerns Committee always has a devotional time at the beginning of each meeting. Each member takes a turn at being responsible for preparing and leading it. Sometimes there is music to listen to or sing. Sometimes there is a relevant reading from anything from the Bible to the newspaper. Sometimes members share their own prayers or experiences. It is never dull and it always relates in some way to the current work of the group.

What ideas do you have for your spiritual development as a church volunteer?

The result of good volunteer management in churches as elsewhere should be happy, competent workers who are developing psychologically, socially and spiritually. Their manager/pastor/leader should be feeling confident and satisfied, nurtured by the group that they themselves have nurtured, because that is what the *doing* of the Law of Love achieves. This is the work of the church.

Chapter 11

Volunteers in Sport

Who are Volunteers in Sport?

Edmund Hillary, Richard Hadlee, John Walker, Analise Coberger, John Kirwan, Erin Baker, Mark Todd, the All Blacks, the Silver Ferns – for many New Zealanders these people and others like them are national heroes. They are our international sportspeople. They have at some stage or other been the best in the world. They are the public image of New Zealand sport. These people, however, are but the tiniest tip of the iceberg of sport. They are where they are because of an enormous volunteer structure that supports sport from school-aged children through to adulthood.

> Jenny was one of seven adults who were the support crew for a couple of friends who were competing as a team in the two-day Coast to Coast race. They transported their competitors and their cycles and kayaks to the starting and finishing points of each section. They provided massage and food and drink and nurture between laps and overnight. They cheered them on their arduous journey, giving them powerful moral support. Members of that support crew gave two days of their time to contribute to the support of their team. They did it for the thrill of being part of their friends' success. There were over 600 teams or individuals competing in this race so there will have been some thousands of informal volunteer supporters like them.
>
> But as well as the supporters of the individual teams, the race itself is a major logistical event involving the contribution of a vast number of official volunteers, marshalling traffic and competitors, recording times, giving first aid, sorting out applications and just organising – imagine 650 kayaks lying on a riverbank waiting for 650 cyclists to each find their own as fast as possible! Some of the official volunteers will have given far more than the two days of the event and will have done it not just for their own friends but for all competitors.

This event is a graphic demonstration of the amount of volunteer support that goes into the success of a major sporting event.

Volunteer activity in sport is big.

The 1991 Census figures indicate that 68,115 New Zealanders volunteer in the coaching and administration of sport.[25] These are 43,053 men and 25,059 women. Coaching and administration does not include the work done by parents and partners in support of their children and partners at sport.

> Lucy heaved a sigh of relief when her youngest son stopped playing rugby. Suddenly she had gained an extra half-day in her week because she no longer spent Saturday mornings ferrying him and team-mates to and from rugby games. Often they played at fields that were too far away to come home in between. She was frequently an unwilling volunteer. Then there was the cry of, 'Oh Mum, I'm supposed to bring a plate'. Her partner was a runner so at other times there was housework and baking to be done because there was a harrier club committee at their place.

All this is volunteer effort in the cause of sport outside the officially designated volunteer roles.

Volunteer activity in sport is big. As we see some of our national sports moving into payment of players and national administrators, it is easy to assume that volunteers in these sports are no longer needed. Those who benefit from the commercialisation of sport, however, are only the very few top players in a minimal number of sports. By far the majority of New Zealand sports are supported by volunteer effort.

How much time do you volunteer to sport in an official capacity?
How much time do you volunteer to other people's sport unofficially?

So are volunteers in sport any different from other volunteers in their motivation or their needs?

Motivation of Volunteers in Sport

My first experience of a volunteer in sport was my father. He enjoyed a game – tennis, rugby, running, jumping, horse-racing. He was a good athlete himself and delighted in his children's sporting activities. Visits with his 'team' (there were seven of us) to country sports meetings or gymkhanas were part of our growing up. He encouraged us to develop our sporting abilities whatever they were. But his involvement in sport continued long after his

children grew up and left home. He continued to support schoolboy rugby as a coach and administrator and drove teams to compete in other centres. Until the year before his death he measured the long jump at the Boxing Day Sports at Waimate. He got great pleasure out of seeing young athletes compete at these sports and then following their careers as some went on to be national and international champions.

My father loved people. He saw in sport a means for young people to develop skills, gain confidence and learn to work in a team. He said, 'While they're playing sport they are doing something constructive and not getting into trouble.' He volunteered because he enjoyed seeing young people develop. But he also volunteered because he saw young people's involvement in sport as something that was good for the whole community.

People volunteering in sport have a variety of motivations.

In *Women Who Manage: Study of Volunteer National Sports Administrators* Jan Cameron[26] reports on her study of women who are volunteer national sports administrators. She talks about the reasons why these women volunteered. Many had been sportswomen and had enjoyed competing and wanted to give something back. Others became involved because of their children's or partner's participation in the sport. Some came in because they knew they had the skills and there was a need or because they wanted to learn new skills. Some found that their professions led them to volunteer in sport. Because these were national administrators, the opportunity to bring about change was also a strong motivator.

In another study, which draws on a wider range of participants, Rick Mansell[27] ranks the five main reasons for volunteering in sport as: to help the community, to gain a sense of achievement, as a chance to influence activity in an interest area, to develop personal skill and confidence, and as a chance to meet new people.

Sportspeople, both women and men, who have enjoyed their sport become involved as administrators and as coaches so that players, particularly children, who come behind them can also have this experience. Their sport has been good for them and they want it to continue for others.

A couple of teachers coached a representative rugby team because they had as children been members of this team and as a result had received educational opportunities which their families were not otherwise in a position to give them.

Another teacher had a dream for raising the profile of his sport by organising a year-long coaching academy for a team of under-19-year-olds from all over the country in preparation for an international

competition. Like many others, his volunteering was motivated by the desire to bring about change.

For parents making their children's sport a positive experience can motivate them to volunteer, although this is not universal. Many parents opt not to be involved in their children's sport.

At some levels of sport people will volunteer for the companionship of others. Young coaches without children of their own will talk of how they enjoy the company of the children they coach. But further up the hierarchy of sports bodies, volunteer motivation seems to be dominated by needs for achievement and power. This does not seem surprising given the increased competitiveness of sport at these levels.

What is your motivation for volunteering in sport?
What do you know about the motivation of the people in your group?

Management of Volunteers in Sport

Overall it seems that the motivations of volunteers in sport are no different from those in other sorts of volunteering. The weighting of different motivations may be different but so far research does not indicate this.

The same range of motivational needs means the same need for good volunteer management for sport volunteers. These are, of course, addressed in detail in earlier chapters but some need highlighting for sports volunteers. These are: job descriptions, training, supervision and support, acknowledgment, payment of expenses.

Job Descriptions

Volunteer coaches usually have one of two complaints: 'The committee members were always interfering and wouldn't let me get on with my job. They didn't like it if I used coaching methods different from theirs' or 'They left me with everything – coaching, fundraising, managing.' There was either too much interference or not enough support. When asked if these coaches had job descriptions the answer was always 'No, but I will see that I get one next time.'

Job descriptions are the most useful tool for defining the range and the limits of each person's job – paid and unpaid. They are also useful in highlighting the gaps. A coach who found himself doing all the tasks will

Job descriptions define the range and the limits of each person's job.

next season recruit others to do the non-coaching tasks and will 'definitely get a job description'.

Because they are the front-line workers in sport, it is the coaches who feel most strongly the impact of bad or non-existent job descriptions for themselves and for others whose work impacts on them. They have a team of players who need to be prepared to compete in a certain event at a certain time and place. If uniforms, or transport, or funds or whatever else is needed is not forthcoming, then it is likely to be the coach who tries to bridge the gap. There are major benefits for all volunteers having a job description because they will feel more confident about knowing what is expected of them and who has responsibility for other things.

Rick Mansell's study reveals that only 37.8 per cent of sport and recreation volunteers had job descriptions and of these only 55.1 per cent were considered adequate. So it seems that New Zealand sporting bodies have a long way to go in this area.

In its manual of training packages called *Running Sport Resources*[28] the Hillary Commission certainly recognises the need for job descriptions and encourages their use. This body is a major agent for change in the area of improved volunteer practice in New Zealand sport. Its top priority for funding from its Community Support Fund is the training and support of volunteers.

What does your job description say?
Do all the volunteer positions in your sports organisation have job descriptions?

Contracts

Volunteer contracts give a basis for negotiation.

Job descriptions logically progress towards volunteer contracts. These too will have benefit in sports as they can be negotiated season by season and changes can be incorporated that might have been learned from the experience of the previous season.

Volunteer contracts have a role not only in the ongoing positions in a club but also in one-off jobs. Sports bodies often own property, with grounds that need developing and buildings that need maintaining. Contractors who are club supporters can be very generous in providing their machinery and their staff to do such work. But everyone needs to be clear whether the work is being done as a donation or on a commercial basis.

The tennis club arranged with one of its members to provide his machinery and staff to develop a new court. The club committee thought the job was being done for free. They were later faced, however, with a bill for some thousands of dollars because the contractor had fallen out with some of the members of the group.

A volunteer contract may well have helped resolve this difficult situation.

Does your organisation have volunteer contracts?

Training

In the past coaches seem to have learned their job by observing what was successful and unsuccessful in the people who coached them. Some have come to coaching with expertise from their own professional training, often as teachers. Some have developed their own particular coaching techniques.

In recent years the Hillary Commission has made a major contribution to coaching by offering general coaching training and by giving support to coaching training programmes run by individual sports.

But it is not only coaches who need to be trained for their role in a sports body, and the Hillary Commission also offers training for sports administrators in volunteer management and in the areas of club activity such as fundraising, promotion and marketing, planning and running a special event. It also gives training in the specific committee roles of chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

The Hillary Commission offers training in volunteer management for sports administrators.

As in all areas of life, the more a person can learn about a task they are undertaking the more confident and successful they will be in that role. While competitors in sporting activities seem to know and act on this, the same attitude needs to be carried into their volunteer roles as sports administrators.

An offer of training is a way of recruiting to a job a volunteer who does not have the necessary skills but would like to learn them. The management and administration skills needed for sports committee work can be transferred to other roles people might have or might like to have in other parts of their lives. Training will always look good on a CV, and training certificates can be used as evidence of training done.

What have you gained from training you received as a sporting volunteer?
What training do you offer volunteers?

Supervision and Support

Burn-out – it happens in sport just as it does in other fields. It usually happens in a situation where a volunteer is overworked and unsupported.

A quote from one innovative coach is very revealing. When asked about his relationship with his parent body he said, 'If it works it's their idea. If it doesn't work, it's my stuff-up. They seem to want my project to fall flat on its face.'

This comment was echoed by other young coaches, who felt that their administrative body was not prepared to support their new ideas. They felt these bodies were made up of ex-players who had been there for a long time and were convinced that their way was the only way.

This raises the question of what it means to be supported in a role. The best supporter is someone who believes in you and yet can challenge you realistically. Ideally they will come from the management body of the sport, but if this is not possible a coach who is to avoid burn-out needs to find support elsewhere.

The basis of good support is the process of honestly being able to share success and failure and learn from the experience.

One coach said, 'My best year's coaching was when I shared a flat with a group of other players. We sat around at night and talked about our sport and discussed what was successful and what was not.'

It was the process of honestly being able to share success and failure and learn from the experience that is the basis of good support.

Another way of achieving this kind of peer group support is demonstrated by two teachers who jointly offered themselves as coach for a team. By working as a duo they were able to bounce ideas off each other and give each other support. This was particularly important for them as they faced criticism from administrators and players' parents for using training techniques that were new and different.

One of the greatest pressures that coaches talk about is the conflict between their own needs as a player and the demands of their role as coach. This often results in their giving up their own participation as a player, which can leave them feeling resentful. It is also a factor in the common claim that there are never enough people willing to help – many prefer to stay as players.

It would be of value to coaches if sporting bodies were to provide a forum where they could regularly gain support by sharing ideas and gaining feedback. Coaching training is a starting point for this but it needs to be ongoing.

The needs of the coach have been the focus here because the coach is often a person working alone whereas other volunteers are working in a

group such as a committee. People working in a group can be expected to receive support from this group, so it is easy to assume that the support needs of committee members are likely to be less acute. This will only be true if the committee itself recognises that part of its role is to support its members in their work. It is very easy to be so task-orientated that the needs of individual members are totally submerged.

Secretaries, treasurers, chairpeople can leave a meeting with a whole raft of tasks to do. What do they do if it is too much? Who do they consult with if it is not working out as planned?

Jan Cameron says, 'Some women also recognised their own disadvantage in being the only woman, or one of only two women, in their national organisations.'[29] A woman in a predominantly male group or a Maori in a predominantly Pakeha group is likely to feel that their perspective is not being heard. This is because the majority culture of the group is different from and likely to be indifferent to the needs and way of working of the minority. Some form of regular support and sounding-board can help such a person to stay and be effective on that committee. If the organisation does not recognise this need and provide the support necessary then a wise committee member will seek it elsewhere.

It is interesting to note that while team-building is an essential part of many sports, committees do not necessarily carry this knowledge over to their own work. Time spent on team-building will provide the group with the means of supporting its members through the most arduous tasks.

What support do you get for your voluntary work in sport?
What support would you like to get in this area?
What support could you organise for the volunteers in your sport?

Acknowledgment of Volunteers

Volunteers in sport are no different from other volunteers in their need for acknowledgment. Various methods of acknowledgment are discussed in Chapter 5.

In sport the players often receive public acclaim and media attention. Even within a sports club prizes are given to the winning teams. Some clubs also encourage players who try hard or play fair. But how often is the contribution of the volunteers acknowledged? Some will get their rewards from seeing a job well done or having made a positive contribution to

change, but even these people like to be thanked as well.

Sports volunteers need subsidised training, financial support, visible identification and public acknowledgment.

Rick Mansell's research indicates that volunteers felt that their organisations ranked recognition very low in priority and few went beyond a written or spoken thank-you. When asked how they would like to be acknowledged, the volunteers' preferred methods were: subsidised training, financial support, visible identification and public acknowledgment.

Acknowledgment ties in very closely with support because often acknowledgment is about feedback. It is how a volunteer gets to know that they are doing a good job and that it is appreciated.

Players wear uniforms. Sports officials also like to be clearly identified at an event. Identification is helpful for the competitors and the public in identifying who to go to for assistance, but it also has another role. A badge, or bib or uniform for an official, along with a job description and contract, is a way of indicating to the volunteer and to others that this position matters. It is a way of affirming the importance of the role. This is important acknowledgment for many volunteers.

From the Olympics downwards, sporting bodies are renowned for creating award ceremonies for their competitors. It would be wonderful if they were to put the same energy into thank-you celebrations for their volunteers, without whom the competitors would have no competition.

If sporting bodies want to increase the participation of volunteers they need to be looking not only at what they want to get out of their volunteers but also at what the volunteers want to get out of their participation.

How is your volunteer work acknowledged?
How would you like your volunteer work to be acknowledged?
How does your group acknowledge the contribution of its volunteers?

Payment of Expenses

In sport as in other volunteer activities, volunteers donate their time and energy. There are also, however, financial costs involved.

Time spent in volunteer work is time that is not available for earning money.

Time spent in volunteer work is time that is not available for earning money. Some volunteers can be sacrificing their own earning possibilities in order to give time to their sport. Others are able to do some of their volunteer work in their paid work time with their employer's blessing. This might be taking phone calls or doing typing and photocopying. In this case it is effectively a donation of time, and sometimes materials, that an employer makes to that sporting body and it should be acknowledged as such.

As well as the opportunity cost of volunteering there are other more tangible costs. Going places, attending meetings and events, whether in

private car or public transport, always costs money. Communication by telephone or by letter inevitably costs. Many volunteers have responsibility for the care of small children and have to pay for childcare so that they are free to carry out their volunteer responsibilities.

There is the wear and tear on equipment such as typewriters, computers or fax machines. But there is also other wear and tear for people who volunteer as coaches. They will be wearing out their shoes, sports clothes and sporting equipment. This also impacts on the family budget.

The need for training of volunteers to enable them to do better work and get more satisfaction out of their work was discussed earlier. Training costs money, but should it be the volunteer's money? It is often proposed that training should be charged for because that will ensure that the participants value it. This sort of thinking goes against the logic of volunteer work. The volunteer is paying for their training by giving their valuable gift of time. To ask for cash over and above this is an imposition.

In 1990 Rick Mansell[30] used his survey data to draw up a monthly expense bill for volunteers. It looked like this:

Telephone	$ 12.35
Postage	$ 11.39
Petrol	$ 26.41
Training	$ 8.30
Childcare	$ 5.71
Equipment	$ 11.81
Subscriptions	$ 16.82
Personal equipment	$ 18.37
Total monthly output	$111.16

This is a considerable sum. Sporting bodies need to acknowledge that their volunteers are incurring this level of costs and need to find ways of reimbursing at least some. They need also to be aware that this level of costs makes it impossible for some people with low incomes to volunteer.

What does it cost you to be a sports volunteer?
What does it cost those who volunteer in your organisation?
What ways can you find to reimburse these costs?

People on low incomes cannot afford to pay the costs of volunteering.

There are other often hidden costs that are incurred mostly by women volunteers who have the responsibility of running a family. Where these

women are involved in volunteer positions that involve meetings over mealtimes or travel they find that they are spending more on convenience foods for the rest of the family.

Kate remembers her children rejoicing when she went away on volunteer work because 'Dad always lets us have fish and chips'.

In reality many sporting volunteer positions are only available to people who have the cash to spare to cover the expenses. This is sad and something that sporting bodies could look to changing.

Sport is Leisure

Sporting volunteers have the same range of needs as other volunteers. They are people who are expected to be skilled in their work.

People who participate in sport as players and as volunteers expect to enjoy themselves.

But sport is also leisure-time activity. People who participate in sport as players and as volunteers expect to enjoy themselves. Participation in sport should not feel like work. In fact sport is where people go to get away from the stress of work.

Good volunteer management puts in place the practices that allow volunteers to gain enjoyment out of their participation by providing a structure that supports. All volunteers deserve good volunteer management.

Chapter 12

Volunteers in Welfare

Difficult Situations Faced by Volunteers in Welfare

It is not new for volunteers to be involved in the delivery of welfare services – they have done it for centuries. Some we know about because they wear the label 'saint' but they are just the beacons for the millions of other ordinary folk who care for others in their communities.

In New Zealand in the 1990s there have been major structural changes in government delivery of health and welfare. Government's reduction of its contribution to these fields has meant that more responsibility for caring for people is falling on the voluntary sector, including the churches. This has meant these agencies picking up increasing work in welfare and in the part of health that involves caring rather than medical treatment. Volunteers have always been active in this field and reduction in funding has meant that they are being used increasingly to do harder work.

So who are the some of the people that volunteers are caring for in New Zealand?

Penny is pregnant with her second child and her partner has left her. She is tired and sick. Her self-esteem is low. Her benefit barely meets her basic needs. An agency volunteer gives her support by providing babysitting and being there to talk to. Sometimes Penny gets the volunteer to prepare a meal for her.

Phillip is intellectually disabled and the only speech he has is a grunt. A volunteer comes once a week to go with him to aerobics, where he enjoys being able to participate as he moves in time to music.

Jane has bouts of depression and is often abusive to the volunteer who faithfully visits to befriend her.

Jim is old and incontinent and this creates difficulties for the volunteer who regularly takes him on an outing.

Margaret is physically unable to move herself or dress herself. Her greatest relief comes when a volunteer takes her to a swimming-pool and helps her dress, undress and enjoy the buoyancy of floating in the water.

Michael has Aids. The volunteer who visits him just sits and listens to his fears about his disease.

Paul is in prison. One of his hopes for the future is to make use of the skills he is learning at a parenting class run by volunteers.

Paddy is an alcoholic and often turns up for food and shelter at the City Mission, where she is cared for by volunteers.

Volunteers are called on to do hard work that demands caring, skill and commitment.

All of these people have needs. While some may once have been met by the state, increasingly the supportive roles that make living possible are falling on volunteers. In each of these situations the volunteer is called on to do hard work that demands caring, skill and commitment. In most of these situations the client is vulnerable. If the volunteer does not do their job properly the client suffers. The volunteer is therefore expected to carry considerable responsibility.

This is the sort of work that many groups are using volunteers to do. The responsibility that the volunteer carries for the well-being of the people receiving these services raises specific issues in volunteer management in the areas of recruitment, selection, training and support or supervision.

What sort of welfare volunteer work do you know of?

Recruiting Volunteers for Difficult Jobs

How does an organisation recruit volunteers to work with clients who can be needy, demanding and sometimes even unpleasant?

As with all volunteering, people will have a variety of motivations. Some will respond to human need because of their religious or humanist spirituality. Some will see the benefit to the whole community when the neediest are empowered. Some will be looking for work experience.

Recruitment of people for demanding volunteer jobs needs to be targeted. The aim of targeted recruitment is for the volunteers to self-select appropriately. Having too many unsuitable volunteers to choose from creates a real headache for an organisation.

People who will do this sort of work well often have special qualities. Any advertising needs to appeal to the qualities of caring but also be realistic about the type of work expected. Potential volunteers may have had experience themselves of people with disability and so be motivated to meet such a need. These people can sometimes be found through the disability networks or newsletters.

Advertising needs to appeal to the qualities of caring but also be realistic.

People who will do difficult caring work may be motivated by the Christian ethic of love for neighbour and some of these may be found in churches.

Some young people may be wanting to work in the caring or health professions and value the chance to have hands-on experience. They may be reached through schools, universities or polytechnics.

The most effective recruitment is done by existing volunteers who are getting satisfaction from the work they are doing despite its apparent unpleasantness, its hardships and its disappointments. They will draw in other volunteers by talking positively about their work both to friends and to wider groups.

> Dan was at a barbecue at a friend's place and started talking about the satisfaction he was getting from playing games with some of the people living in a residence for people with intellectual disability. After listening to him both Jill and Andy thought they would be interested in helping too.

Ask people you know who are working as volunteers with needy people why they do it.

Selecting Volunteers to Work with Vulnerable Clients

Selection of appropriate volunteers is crucial for offering a good service. The selection process needs to protect the client. It should find volunteers who can focus on the needs of the person receiving the service. It needs to exclude anyone who is likely to damage the client in any way.

The selection process needs also to protect the potential volunteer. A volunteer who is needy and fragile is put at risk of abuse if selected into a programme that works with people who might be in great pain or who might be abusive.

Where the clients are vulnerable people the agency must take responsibility for making a judgment on the suitability of volunteers.

The process outlined in Chapter 4 is effective in allowing maximum opportunity for people to make their own decision about whether or not a particular volunteer role will suit them and they are suited to it. A very small number of people, however, who offer their help are not sufficiently self-aware or are in fact disordered and so are not able to see their unsuitability for the work. This is particularly important if the role of the volunteer is to be a carer of others. There needs to be a selection procedure in place where the agency takes responsibility for not accepting unsuitable people as volunteer carers. This is for the sake of the volunteer and for the sake of the people being helped, particularly children or other vulnerable people.

Some agencies using volunteers find this situation very difficult. They get caught between feeling obliged to accept the offer of help of any potential volunteer and sensing the unsuitability of the person for the work they want to do. On one hand they want to give every volunteer a chance to help and on the other hand they have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their clients. Some will ask themselves what right they have to refuse a volunteer.

In many other volunteer situations a person can be given the opportunity to have a go, make mistakes and learn from them. But where the welfare of a third person is at stake there is no room for mistakes. It is not appropriate to let an unsuitable volunteer 'have a go' and as a result do damage to an already distressed person.

Even this is not straightforward because none of us started off knowing all the skills of our work. No new worker can be expected to start off as skilled as a more experienced one. Workers develop their skills as they gain experience in their work. So the question the selector is often trying to answer is: 'What potential does this person have to be an empowering worker with clients?' The selector has a very responsible and very difficult task.

It is easy to understand why people find this difficult, particularly in small towns where people know one another. Many voluntary boards shy away from the hard decisions and then find that they are offering an unsatisfactory service.

Selection of people to be volunteer carers requires skill and experience. The people doing the selection need to have knowledge of the work and experience in the helping field. The person they deem unsuitable may well be quite angry about not being selected, and the selectors may find themselves dealing with this anger. Or worse still, they may hear about it second-hand as the unsuccessful applicant tells their friends of their 'mistreatment'. But the friends of a person who is unsuitable in a caring role are often all too aware of their friend's shortcomings and the knowledge

that this person was not accepted may enhance rather than detract from the reputation of the agency.

An agency's prime responsibility is to give the client a good service.

The reason an agency is set up is to provide a service for its clients. Volunteers are often used to deliver the service, but in selecting the volunteer to do this, the agency has to remember its prime responsibility is to give the client a good service.

It may be possible if a potential volunteer is unsuitable to help identify the skills and talents that the person has to offer and suggest other areas where these may be used, rather than reject them outright. But it is important to bear in mind that a person who has set their heart on a particular role may not necessarily respond positively to being told their skills lie elsewhere.

In making a selection an agency is not necessarily making a permanent decision about a potential worker. In some cases the selection procedure highlights an area of a person's life that needs further work and they may be suitable volunteers after having completed this work.

Here the wit and wisdom of Peter Drucker are helpful again: 'The old rule is, if they try, work with them. If they don't try, you're better off if they work for the opposition.'[31]

Selection Criteria

Patterns of behaviour or attitudes help identify suitable carers.

One of the most difficult questions for a person with the responsibility of selecting volunteers to work with people who are vulnerable is: 'How do I know what to look for?'

It is more relevant to look for patterns of behaviour or attitudes when assessing a person rather than saying they will be accepted or rejected on one particular attribute. For example, many caring roles require good listening skills but some good listeners can go overboard with sympathy and promote dependency in their clients. Other attributes are needed as well as good listening.

Spending time preparing a realistic list of skills and attributes for the job is well worthwhile. This then becomes the basis of selection criteria.

Many unhealthy ways of relating were discussed in Chapter 7. In their extremes these have the potential to disempower rather than empower clients because the focus of the relationship will be on meeting the helper's needs rather than those of the person being helped. Looking for signs of healthy or unhealthy ways of relating can help selection.

The biggest anxiety for the selector is wondering whether this person is likely to treat the vulnerable client in an abusive way physically, emotionally or sexually. While there is no foolproof way of being sure, an extended

An extended training and assessment period will maximise the chances of showing up inappropriate behaviour.

training and assessment period will maximise the chances of showing up inappropriate behaviour.

Some guidelines can be useful. Remembering that the purpose of a helping relationship is to meet the need of the client, any person who is using the client to meet their own or some outside needs is behaving abusively. Likewise, a person who fails to participate fully in the group processes of training, supervision and review is not holding themselves accountable to the group and so becomes a potential danger.

Signs that indicate that a person might have difficulty forming a healthy helping relationship with someone who is vulnerable and may indicate the possibility of abuse are:[32]

- Unrealistic expectations of clients and the behaviours that can be expected of them given their age, stage or disability, and being rigid in maintaining these expectations.
- Frequent comments or jokes that put people down on the basis of their disability, sexuality, or race.
- Comments that are cruel.
- Extreme views rigidly held and an inability to listen to another's point of view.
- A tendency to be over-emotional, show discomfort or be completely unaffected by hearing of other people's pain, particularly in relation to abuse.
- A tendency to trivialise or deny the existence of physical or sexual abuse.
- Failure to recognise their own vulnerability or that of the person they are helping.
- Judgment and blaming of people without understanding the complex situations that give rise to need.
- The use of religion to justify the abusive use of power over a vulnerable person.
- Belief that they know all the answers and a lack of openness to different points of view.
- Non-attendance at training sessions, particularly ones on sensitive areas such as grief, sexuality, abuse.
- Rigid boundaries or reluctance to set any boundaries.

Some of these worrying behaviours are in conflict.This is because it is the extreme nature of the behaviour that is of concern. If a potential volunteer exhibits a group of these behaviours it would be unwise to allow them to

work unsupervised in a one-to-one situation with a vulnerable client.

There is no perfect selection process. Selection is only the beginning of responsible agency practice. Probationary periods and buddy systems that involve the volunteer working initially beside an experienced worker are good ways to continue the process and effectively extend the selection time.

While the focus in this section so far has been on the vulnerable client, it must not be forgotten that there are some situations where an unsuitable volunteer may be at risk from the unhealthy behaviour of a client. Good selection protects both parties. Each group that uses volunteers needs to choose the selection process suitable to the work and responsibility undertaken by those volunteers. The outcomes will be worth it.

What selection processes did you participate in before becoming a volunteer carer?
What selection criteria and processes does your agency use for volunteers?

Training Caring Volunteers

In order to be able to care for people who are vulnerable, volunteers need to be trained appropriately. A well-trained volunteer will be confident in offering an effective service. A volunteer who has not received suitable training is likely to feel inadequate as well as putting the client at risk.

If the person receiving the service has physical needs the volunteer needs to know how to meet them. If physical lifting is involved, a volunteer puts self and client at risk if they are not properly trained. Knowing what is expected if a volunteer is involved in toileting a client is vital for the self-respect as well as the comfort of the client. Volunteers need to be taught about other physical needs just as a paid worker would be.

The implications of lack of training in how to meet physical needs is perhaps more obvious than the implications of lack of training for people who are trying to meet emotional needs. Yet incompetent helping in this sphere can be just as damaging.

A good training programme for volunteers in a caring capacity should increase the self-awareness and self-esteem of the participants. As appropriate helping begins with good listening, an essential ingredient of the programme is listening skills and the effect of imposing our values and beliefs on other people. It should also address the physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of the need or disability. Understanding the processes of grief is helpful in many situations. The particular requirements of the organisation

A good training programme should increase self-awareness and self-esteem of volunteers.

in terms of confidentiality will be appropriate in some cases, as will the requirements of the Privacy Act. Training would include lots of practical examples about the particular situation the volunteer will be in. Role-plays can help participants develop their skills in a safe environment.

During training for work in welfare the trainee is gathering information and learning skills. It is important to understand that they are also often working through their own life experiences and values, which may impinge on the work. For example, some will recognise their own pattern of grief for the first time during a grief workshop. This is appropriate and healthy as adults learn by relating new information to what they have already experienced. Workshop formats should allow for this. The primary focus of a training group, however, is learning rather than therapy and a balance must be kept. Sometimes it will be appropriate to suggest to a trainee that they seek further help with some issues outside the group.

How have you learned your skills?
What new skills would you like to learn?
How can you do this?

Supervision of Volunteer Carers

The real work in developing a good volunteer carer is done in ongoing supportive supervision.

Training is only the beginning. The real work in developing a good volunteer carer is done in ongoing supportive supervision. Here the volunteer reflects on their work with a person trained in the skills of supervision. This can be one-to-one or in a group. It must be in a supportive, confidential setting where the volunteer feels safe to share their fears and disappointments, as well as their joys and successes, in their work with clients.

Many volunteers are working in situations where their clients are in great pain, physically or emotionally, and their role is simply to share that pain. Hospice workers, refuge workers, welfare workers and crisis counsellors all face this reality. Supervision is the place where the worker can take their own pain and powerlessness in situations where there are no solutions. The supervisor can help the workers deal with their own pain so that they are able to continue to live and work effectively.

Volunteers sometimes have to deal with real value conflicts in relation to their work. What they see their clients choosing to do can often be very different from what the volunteer thinks they should do. This can cause a volunteer considerable distress. A good supervisor will help a volunteer work out how to act appropriately in this situation.

Beth's client's partner often beat her. Beth was really worried about the safety of her client and had talked with her about the possibility of leaving him and how to contact a refuge. The client kept saying she wanted to leave him and yet she stayed. This left Beth feeling anxious and frustrated. Her supervisor encouraged her to express this and then got her to name all the steps she had put in place for her client's safety. When she had done this Beth realised that she had done all that she could to protect her client. The rest was up to the woman herself and outside Beth's control.

Good supervision is a place of learning where a supervisor can help a volunteer develop new skills to deal with a challenging situation or to try out a different approach. It is also the place for a busy worker to reflect on the amount of work they are doing and cut down if necessary. The demands on many welfare agencies can seem infinite and this can put great stress on workers, volunteer and paid. Many volunteers end up burnt-out and have to stop their contribution, when better management of their workload at an earlier stage would have allowed them to continue.

For volunteers working with vulnerable people, supervision is essential. It protects both volunteer and client from exploitation and burn-out. It is the place where a volunteer can safely take their frustrations and their pain and expect to grow from them. In supervision both client and volunteer are protected by confidentiality.

What is your experience of being supervised?
Where can you find good supervision?

Healthy and Unhealthy Helping Relationships

Because the secret of good volunteer work is ensuring that the needs of volunteers are met, it is important to be clear who must meet them. In welfare work it is the organisation's responsibility and not the client's to meet the needs of the volunteers.

Clients who come to a welfare agency for material or emotional help have enough to deal with in their own lives. These people do not have the resources to meet the needs of volunteers who might be trying to help them. The agency that is using the volunteers has a responsibility to care for its volunteers so that they can care for the clients in a healthy way.

An unhealthy helping relationship increases the dependency of the

person being helped and adds to their problem. Just as a person develops unhealthy behaviours when they grow up in a household with an unhealthy parent, so a helper who uses a client to meet their own need can effectively encourage and cement unhealthy behaviour in that client. While a volunteer may be fulfilling all the actions required of them, if they are forming unhealthy realtionships they will be damaging their clients. Because many of the people seeking assistance from helping agencies may have already developed unhealthy ways of behaving, matching them with unhealthy helpers will simply add to their problems.

A volunteer who is focused on meeting their own need to be needed rather than on the client's need for growth is liable to unconsciously work to maintain the client in a helping relationship rather than working with them to move out. A volunteer who tries to tell a client how to run their life may feel powerful themselves but is likely to make a client feel worthless. A volunteer who sets arbitrary limits on how much help a person will be given without listening to their real need will not get too involved but neither will they improve their client's lot.

Many people act unhealthily to try to avoid pain.

Many people who act unhealthily do so because they are trying to avoid pain – their own and other people's. They avoid pain by trying to control the behaviour of people who will cause them pain. They avoid pain by suppressing their feelings, thereby not allowing themselves to experience pain. They avoid pain by trying to rescue other people from their own pain, by denying the pain or by giving help that removes the pain on the surface but doesn't deal with the problem.

It is through pain that people grow – physically, emotionally spiritually and socially. A truly empowering helper can stand beside a person in their pain and nurture them and wait. As during the birth process, the pain eventually moves on, giving way to new life, new possibility or sometimes death and further pain. A healthy helper is the midwife providing nurture and support and facilitating the process, but doing it at the pace of the person being helped as if they were the mother giving birth.

Clearly in today's world there are situations where professional intervention is needed. But this is the role of the professional who also must listen to the person's pain to be able to know when to intervene. The volunteer helper's role is to stand beside the person in their pain without trying to avoid or deny it and then be ready to respond to the person's needs as they are expressed. This is very different from a problem-solving method of working, which tries to control the situation by fixing the immediate problem rather than listening to the pain and allowing the person to work through it.

Help that empowers has at heart the interests of the person being helped.

A healthy helping relationship encourages the person being helped to develop their own power. It helps them look at long-term as well as short-term needs. It empowers the receiver of the help.

A healthy helping relationship encourages the person being helped to develop their own power.

How have you experienced being helped in a healthy way? How did you respond?
How have you experienced being helped in an unhealthy way? How did you respond?

Questions that can help a volunteer reflect on the health of their helping are:

Why do I do this work?
Which of my needs does this work meet? How?
How do I respond to my own pain?
How do I respond to another person's pain?
How do I know what the client needs are?
How are goals set in this relationship?
Whose goals are they?
What are my limits as a worker?
On what basis are my limits set?
How do I try to control my client?
What do I fear if I let go of my control of the client?

In a climate of uncertain funding, short-term contracts and quick-fix solutions, many voluntary agencies are under pressure to shape their helping style to fit in with current government philosophy. It is important to look at what makes healthy and unhealthy helping relationships.

It is very popular at this time to talk of the welfare state having made people dependent and suggest that various measures such as reducing benefits and 'work for the dole' schemes will lead to independence. This theory is wrong on two counts. Firstly, much dependence is brought about by unhealthy relationships and these cannot be healed by arbitrary methods. Secondly, independence, where each person is responsible only for themselves, is an equally unhealthy state for a community. The aim for a healthy community should be for interdependence, where people look after themselves and care for each other.

Agencies can question themselves on two levels. One is in terms of their helping relationship with the consumers of their service. The other is in terms of the way they relate to their workers.

Why does this agency offer help to people?
What limits are placed on the people who seek help? Why?
What opportunities are there for clients of this agency to express their feelings?
How are limits put on help given to clients?
How are jobs, roles and accountability defined and communicated?
How are paid and volunteer helping staff selected?
How are paid and volunteer helping staff trained?
How are paid and volunteer helping staff supervised?

Volunteers are the Hope of the Future

New Zealand has seen in recent years major redefining and restructuring of health and welfare services, particularly those provided by government. Services have been divided up into their elements in terms of individual tasks with goals and objectives. They have then been sold off to providers like bricks.

This process of segmentation has meant that a major component of service is missing. The caring connection that provides for the needs of the whole person seems to have disappeared. People no longer trust that they will get the service they need. It is like knocking down a wall, then using the bricks to rebuild it. The original mortar has crumbled and they are trying to build the new wall without it. The new wall is incomplete and unstable so cannot be trusted to function as a sound wall.

Many of the providers in this system are indeed voluntary agencies with boards made up of volunteers. Some of these use volunteers to provide their services. Perhaps they need to look at how they can provide the mortar for the services they provide. This mortar might be the caring attitude towards the recipient of the service and the integration of the service into the needs of the whole person – body, mind and spirit. If they do this the recipients of the service may learn to trust society again.

This book ends where it started. Volunteering is full of paradox: volunteering is for everyone but some people are unable to do some jobs; volunteering is fun but it needs to be taken seriously; volunteering is for self and for others; volunteering is flexible but it needs structure; volunteering is a gift of time but it still costs money.

Whatever the future holds, it will be better because of the people who volunteer. They bring to society those things that make life worth living. The process of volunteering enables people to grow and develop themselves and the people they come in contact with.

Appendix

Census Information about Volunteering in New Zealand

The 1991 Census[33] asked:

- Did you do any unpaid voluntary work last week (such as assisting in Playcentre, sports coaching, church work, helping to run a club, marae work, helping a neighbour)?
- How many hours of voluntary work did you do last week?
- What type of voluntary work did you spend the most time on?

The notes to these questions said:

- Unpaid voluntary work is work you do which will benefit persons outside your household.
- Include unpaid voluntary work for which expenses such as travel or a small allowance are paid.
- Do not include unpaid work in a family business.

In 1996 the question was:

In the last four weeks which of the following have you done without pay for people who do not live in the same household as you? DON'T COUNT any you did for pay:

- Looking after a child who does not live in the same household as you, unpaid.
- Unpaid household work, cooking, repairs, gardening, or looking after a person who is aged, ill, or has a disability (DON'T COUNT work for your own household or people living there).
- Unpaid training, coaching, teaching, giving advice or counselling,

helping at school etc.
- Attending committee meeting, or organisation, administration, policy work etc. unpaid, for group, church or marae.
- Unpaid fundraising work, selling etc, for group, church, marae.

Other unpaid work:
- for people who do NOT live in the same household as you, or
- for a group, church or marae

for example:
- Fixing neighbour's car
- Delivering meals on wheels

Table 1 shows the 1991 figures for labour force status and sex for the total workforce and for those who volunteer.

TABLE 1

People Who Volunteer from Population Resident in New Zealand Aged 15 Years and Over

Labour Force Status & Sex	Total Labour Force*	People Who Volunteer†	% of Labour Force
Employed full-time			
Male	734,280	140,532	19.1
Female	416,916	70,950	17.0
Employed part-time			
Male	60,789	13,161	21.7
Female	188,415	56,889	30.2
Unemployed seeking full-time work			
Male	78,672	14,583	18.5
Female	46,422	9,522	20.5
Unemployed seeking part-time work			
Male	12,039	2,706	22.5
Female	26,637	7,833	29.4
Non-labour force			
Male	376,311	50,712	13.5
Female	649,803	119,085	18.3
Total			
Male	1,262,199	221,694	17.6
Female	1,328,199	264,279	19.9
Total	2,590,287	485,976	18.8

* From New Zealand 1991 Census, National Summary, Table 27.

† From 1991 Census, New Zealanders at Work, Table 15.

The 1991 Census data also gives a picture of the different types of work people volunteer to do. The percentages of people who volunteer in different types of work are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Men and Women Volunteers Who Work in Different Types of Voluntary Work*

Type of unpaid work	Men (%)	Women (%)
Arts, Crafts, Cultural Activities	4.3	3.7
Domestic Services	21.2	19.5
Education Services	5.5	15.3
Health Services	0.7	1.8
Administrative and Clerical	10.2	10.4
Sports Coaching, Administration	19.4	9.5
Welfare and Support Services	27.6	30.7
Youth Activities	4.1	3.9
Not Specified	6.9	5.2

* Calculated from figures in New Zealand 1991 Census, National Summary, Table 21.

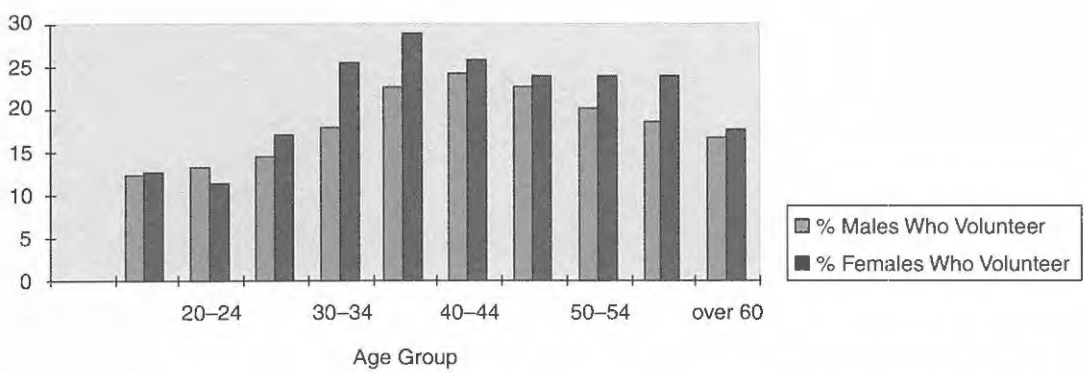
TABLE 3

Percentages of Adult Population Who Volunteer by Sex and Age Group*

Age	% Males Who Volunteer	% Females Who Volunteer
15–19	12.16	12.29
20–24	13.07	11.25
25–29	14.47	16.83
30–34	17.66	25.26
35–39	22.41	28.55
40–44	24.05	25.65
45–49	22.27	23.43
50–54	19.82	23.41
55–59	18.40	23.62
over 60	16.52	17.44

* Calculated from data in 1991 Census, New Zealanders at Work, Table 16; and 1991 Census, National Summary, Table 27.

Age Group Volunteering in New Zealand



At the time of publication, only preliminary results were available from the 1996 Census. Early figures from the 1996 census are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Percentages of Adult Population Who Volunteer

Sex	Number Who Volunteer*	Total Population 15 yrs-plus*	Percentage
Male	507,405	1,349,964	37.6
Female	641,280	1,436,256	44.6
Total	1,148,685	2,786,220	41.2

* From 1996 Census, National Summary, Table 23.

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Index

More than a million New Zealanders (44 per cent from the full-time workforce) volunteer their time to support environmental, welfare and recreational needs, and in the health and education fields they are becoming indispensable.

They volunteer for a variety of reasons, from wanting to have a say in their child's schooling to giving something back to the community. But they all have one thing in common: they want to be appreciated. Unfortunately, many of them feel undervalued, and organisations often don't know how to utilise these people properly.

Volunteers: A Guide for Volunteers and Their Organisations is the ideal handbook for coordinators, social welfare educators and volunteers themselves. It shows how to create a healthy organisation where everyone's needs are met and in the process greater efficiency is achieved.

***Mary Woods** BSc* has lived life as a volunteer working with other volunteers, while her paid employment has included research worker, facilitator and trainer. In 1991 a Winston Churchill fellowship took her to explore volunteering in Canada, the USA and Britain. In 1996 she delivered workshops at the Association of Volunteer Administration International Conference in Calgary, Canada.

Cover: Volunteers in action. Planting native trees at Travis Wetland (photo Eric Banks); fire-fighting practice with Sumner Fire Brigade; workers at the Adult Reading Assistance Scheme (photo Pam Wilson); writing newsletters for Rotary (photo Mary Woods); coaching sport (photo Chris Hope); and hospital service (Department of Medical Illustration, Christchurch Public Hospital).

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