

National Organizations and Volunteering

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"Our future may lie beyond our vision, but it is not completely beyond our control. It is the shaping impulse of America that neither fate, nor nature, nor the irresistible tides of history, but the work of our own hands matched to reason and principle will determine our destiny."

--Robert F. Kennedy

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## Introduction

### Origin of this inquiry

This inquiry arose from wide-ranging, open and fruitful discussions about the current and future status of volunteering at the initial meeting of the National Forum on Volunteerism. The forum, cosponsored by Aid Association for Lutherans and VOLUNTEER, brought 12 volunteer leaders together in Appleton, Wisconsin, at the home office of Aid Association for Lutherans, in April 1980. They identified and examined those factors in society that will have a critical impact on the ability and willingness of citizens to volunteer in the coming decade.

Among several general conclusions that emerged from the forum discussions were these two:

1. The volunteer community--that combination of volunteers, concerned citizens, volunteer-involving organizations, resource organizations and volunteer managers that are committed to increasing the level of citizen involvement--is in and of itself a critical factor in the society and, if properly organized, can exert a powerful influence on the critical environment factors.
2. Volunteer leaders and administrators must actively prepare for the future, must create appropriate planning strategies and must seek to create and maintain coalitions and collaborative activities that will increase the strength and effectiveness of the volunteer community.

These two conclusions reflect the growth and maturity of the volunteer movement; the increase in volunteering under governmental auspices; the increased centrality of Washington as the locus for communication and decision making which affects the voluntary sector; and the creation of national organizations to serve general and particular interests of volunteers and organizations using volunteers.

Some of the observations, questions and comments of forum participants lend specificity and substance to those two conclusions:

- The volunteer community lacks a sense of unity and direction.
- Our country lacks an all-embracing, unifying sense of purpose, of community, of values and of the importance of volunteering thereto.
- What does the word "volunteering" mean to people generally?
- A leadership crisis exists in volunteering because of the lack of resources to bring people together.



- Some national organizations are reluctant to collaborate, either from a desire to protect their own turf or because they claim to speak for all of volunteerism.
- What is needed to knit such a diverse field as the volunteer community together?
- Perhaps some special approach is needed to bring new coalitions into being at the national level.
- How does the volunteer community see itself? What kind of an image of itself does it have?

The nature of these questions, conclusions and observations gave rise to the need for additional information concerning the organization of the national community. As a sequel to the forum, the consultant was asked to respond to the following four questions:

1. How is volunteering being advocated, represented and protected nationally?
2. To what extent are existing national organizations meeting this need?
3. What strategies and actions are implied by the answers to the above questions?
4. How can the various components of the volunteer world work together to affect necessary change?

#### Scope and method of inquiry

Within time and resource constraints, it was determined that a quick scan of the national scene would be undertaken, rather than an in-depth study. Similarly, it was determined that principal emphasis would be placed upon national voluntary organizations.

In an effort to find answers to the questions, the consultant undertook a number of activities: reviewing books, periodicals and articles dealing with volunteering and the national community contained within the consultant's personal library; compiling a working list of things relating to volunteering that ideally ought to be done within the national community; forming a working classification of national organizations as they related to volunteering; writing to those organizations primarily and directly concerned with volunteering for information about purposes and programs, and for information about gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies; and asking several leaders within the volunteer community for their perceptions of the extent to which functions on the working list were met or unmet nationally.



## The Volunteer Community--in Brief

On one thing all observers agree: the volunteer community is an unbelievably complex, large and unmapped system. No one knows exactly how many people are volunteering today. The Census Bureau estimated that 37 million volunteers contributed their time in 1974; another estimate made for the Filer Commission that same year placed the number at 70 million.

Volunteers perform an incredible diversity of tasks, respond to an uncharted array of motivations, may derive a wide range of satisfactions from their activities, and labor within an uncounted number of agencies or informal settings. Volunteering today goes far beyond the simplistic view of Cotton Mather who, more than two centuries ago, called helping others an "incomparable pleasure" and urged that opportunities to do so be pursued with "rapturous assiduity."

Growth in the volunteer community has reflected the same responses to societal forces and changes that have impacted the whole voluntary sector. These include demographic factors, such as the relative reduction in the number of young people and sharp increase in the number of older persons; the greater empowerment of the poor and of minorities during the last decade and a half; changes in the nature of the work place and of the work force; rapid expansion of the concept of corporate social responsibility; the women's revolution; the gradual shift from an emphasis on privatism in the 1970s to an emphasis on Judeo-Christian ethos of caring as the 1980s begin; the ravages of inflation; and the full force of the energy crisis.

Newer forms of volunteering today include self-help human support groups (perhaps the most rapidly growing form of volunteer activity) and informal block and neighborhood organizations. There's also an increase in consumer, public interest and advocacy volunteering, and in the use of the initiative as a form of political action. They all seem to reflect, in varying degrees and under varying circumstances, alienation or mistrust of major political and economic institutions, the inability of many so-called traditional organizations to revise their volunteer programs to meet the new needs and expectations of volunteers, a serious disillusionment with the professional helping establishment, and a resolution by the volunteers to get some means of control over events and forces affecting their lives.

## Working List:

### Things that Ought to be Done Nationally

If volunteering is being "advocated, represented and protected" nationally, precisely what kind of programs, services and functions are we talking about? With the help of two knowledgeable and experienced practitioners in the field, the consultant constructed the following array of functions which, in the best of worlds, would be provided by national organizations and would achieve advocacy, protection and representation of volunteering.

1. Formulate a unifying statement of values, goals and national purpose that reflects and emphasizes the contribution of volunteering to our quality of life, a better society, and the empowerment of people.
2. Improve the image of volunteering by seeking better public understanding of volunteering, including among other things, interpretation of the historic and current relationship and interdependence of volunteers, volunteering and voluntary organizations; the creation of an agreed-upon taxonomy; emphasis upon newer forms of volunteer effort; and development of uniform methods of accountability.
3. Provide a national forum for the exchange of information and experience among volunteers, leaders and supporters of volunteers.
4. Develop standards, guidelines and accreditation for the administration of volunteer programs.
5. Conduct research to achieve an improved data base regarding volunteers, societal groups (business, labor, government and the religious community) and among organizations within the voluntary sector.



## A Working Classification:

### National Voluntary Organizations

Although, on the surface, all national voluntary organizations are similar in their concern with volunteers and volunteering, the reality suggests that there are substantial differences among organizations in their purposes, goals, programs and perceptions of their relationships to volunteers. In any effort to look at the national community, it would be inaccurate and futile to lump together, for example, VOLUNTEER and the American Red Cross, the United Way and the Association of Junior leagues, the Alliance for Volunteerism and UNICEF. There are intrinsic differences which go to the heart of how volunteering is being "protected, represented and advocated" nationally.

In an effort to gain some insight, the consultant attempted a classification of national voluntary organizations concerned with volunteering. With recognition that such an effort is oversimplistic, bound to be controversial and represents only a beginning attempt to find order in a complex environment, the following is suggested:

1. Those national voluntary organizations primarily, directly and generically concerned with volunteers and volunteering. They are:

Alliance for Volunteerism  
Association of Voluntary Action Scholars  
Association of Volunteer Administrators  
Association of Volunteer Bureaus  
Independent Sector, Inc.  
VOLUNTEER

2. Those organizations concerned with volunteers and volunteering, but with particular or limited constituencies or memberships. Examples:

Association of Junior Leagues  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Association of Volunteers in Criminal Justice  
Church Women United  
Aid Association for Lutherans

3. Those organizations that achieve program objectives through the use of volunteers. Examples:

American Red Cross  
United Way of America  
YMCA/YWCA  
Big Brothers-Big Sisters



## The Primary Six

It would be largely, but not exclusively, within the first classification group that one might expect to look for leadership to create a unifying force in and for the national volunteer community. There follows a brief description of purpose, constituency and program for each of the organizations contained within that group. For ease of identification, these agencies will be referred to as the "primary six."

### 1. Independent Sector

Independent Sector (IS) is the successor organization of the National Council on Philanthropy and the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (CONVO). Brought into being early in 1980, it has the following general purpose: to preserve and enhance our national tradition of giving, volunteering and not-for-profit initiative. IS is a membership association. Voting members are those organizations with national interests and impact in philanthropy, voluntary action and other activities related to the independent pursuit of the educational, scientific, health, welfare, cultural and religious life of the nation. It includes so-called national umbrella groups, national organizations, foundations and corporations whose programs reflect national and international interests, including those regional and community foundations, statewide foundations and major regional voluntary organizations which have national interests and impact.

Independent Sector will act as a meeting ground where the diverse elements in and related to the sector can comfortably come together to learn how to improve their performance and effectiveness and how to create a positive national climate for giving, volunteering and not-for-profit initiative. Specific program areas include: public education, communication within the sector, research, encouragement of effective nonprofit operation and management, and government relations.

Independent Sector has not yet had time to put a full program in place. Meanwhile, its most visible activity has been concerned with government relations. IS has carried forward and extended CONVO's information and monitoring function in relation to the all-important Charitable Contributions Legislation (S. 219 and H.R. 1785). In this connection, constituency organizations and a sizeable mailing list of individuals have been kept currently informed about the status of each measure, the stance of each member of congress and prospects for action. Independent Sector also has held a conference about effective lobbying and another about legislative networking. Independent Sector has itself extended the CONVO network into a system of legislative network volunteer coordinators, each of whom is assigned the responsibility to keep a legislator informed about a particular issue.

Independent Sector will continue the National Conference on Philanthropy, begun by the National Council on Philanthropy, to be held this year in



Washington, D.C., in October. A publication titled *Governmental Relations Info and Action* periodically reports on a wide range of subjects of interest to organizations, executives, and volunteers. Finally, Independent Sector is now supplying staff service to the 501 C 3 group, an informal assemblage of national umbrella agency executives concerned with developments in public tax and regulatory policy.

## 2. Alliance for Volunteerism

The Alliance for Volunteerism is an association of 17 national organizations that have an estimated 10 million volunteers on their rosters. The purpose of the Alliance is to strengthen the volunteer movement in America and to make it more effective through cooperative action. The Alliance provides an opportunity for its members to identify and articulate the major issues that face volunteerism; unite in advocacy; share services, facilities, and ideas; and collaborate in developing models of effective volunteer programs. The Alliance performed a most significant service when, in the mid 1970s, it identified issues and needs which were then, and remain today, of great interest to volunteers. Included were such items as women and citizen participation, religious involvement, corporate volunteering, minority involvement, standards and accreditation of volunteer programs, research, and advocacy, among others.

Today the Alliance program includes analysis, testimony, information and communications about two legislative measures of great interest to the volunteer community. The first was the Durenberger Amendment (Amendment 1678 to S. 1843) to establish a national commission on volunteering. In this connection, the Alliance cosponsored a National Forum on a Commission on Volunteering at Blacksburg, Virginia, March 26-28. The second measure was the Tsongas Amendment (Amendment 1675 to S. 1843) to establish a national service program. Because of the exceptional interest of the Alliance constituency in this subject, the board placed national service at the head of Alliance priorities for the remainder of 1980.

In collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Alliance sponsors the annual Mayor's Award Program, a series of awards that recognize the creative use of volunteers by city governments.

The Alliance Secretariat prepares two newsletters, *A Memo to Members* and *News and Notes*, both of which report matters of interest to the volunteers community.

At the present time, the Alliance is internally assessing its membership policies, program and structure in relation to needs in volunteerism today, looking toward developing a framework to make it possible for the Alliance to increase its effectiveness and impact in the 1980s.

## 3. VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement

VOLUNTEER was created on July 2, 1979, by the merger of the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) and the National Information Center on Volunteerism (NICOV). Its statement of mission and goals reads as follows:

VOLUNTEER is dedicated to simulating and strengthening voluntary action and volunteer involvement--those traditions through which



responsible citizens, individually and collectively, in neighborhood and nation, seek to build a free society. VOLUNTEER is committed to: the securing of the rights of all citizens to fully participate in seeking solutions to human, social and environmental problems and in making those decisions which effect the lives of their neighbors and themselves; the promotion of volunteering and citizen participation as a way for all people to seek their full empowerment as citizens; the preservation and strengthening of the voluntary sector as a partner with government and business in charting the future of our society; the development of local capabilities to effectively involve citizens in the full life of their community; and the development of an enlightened and effective leadership for the volunteer community.

Following the merger in 1979, VOLUNTEER developed an Organizational Membership Associate plan, by which organizations were offered certain services (consultation, library, conference, publications, special rates for training events, etc.) based upon a sliding fee schedule. A special Supplemental Associate plan was created for local voluntary action centers (VACs) and volunteer bureaus. As of Aug. 15, 1980, VOLUNTEER had attracted approximately 700 associate organizational members, including about 200 voluntary action centers. This represents almost all of the fully organized and operational VACs throughout the country. This figure also includes an unknown number of volunteer bureaus, some of which are identified as VACs in their communities, others of which have become associates as volunteer bureaus.

VOLUNTEER's program is broad in scope and relevant in depth. It may be classified in five areas:

The media program makes regular provision for supplying information, facts and perspectives to national and local newspapers, magazines, and other media outlets. *Voluntary Action Leadership*, a thoroughly professional journal, goes to 6,500 subscribers. In addition to a wide variety of articles, features and reports, it contains information about professional development activities for volunteer leaders and administrators and in a recent issue listed all known university-based programs. Two newsletters, *Volunteering* and *Newsline*, are sent bimonthly to the more than 700 associate members. *Volunteering: 1979-1980*, the first annual report about the state of volunteering in the United States, was sent to news media throughout the nation.

VOLUNTEER provides technical consultation to its associate members as part of the membership agreement, and to others by contract, including 25 corporations.

In the arena of government relations, VOLUNTEER has actively supported the Durenberger proposal for a Commission on Volunteering; has sought to focus the attention of Congress on the responsibility of ACTION to assist in promoting and supporting volunteering, and has coordinated support of Rep. Mikulski's efforts to increase the deductible mileage allowance for volunteers.



A major activity has been conferencing. The National Frontiers Conference, begun by the NICOV, is being continued on an annual basis, as are from three to five regional conferences each year. VOLUNTEER and the New York Voluntary Action Center sponsored New York's Second Annual Salute to Corporate Volunteers this spring. This fall an advanced level seminar for corporate volunteer coordinators will be held. VOLUNTEER is attempting to organize a national conference on religion and volunteering. One of the more successful special conferences was Volunteers from the Workplace, sponsored in 1979 by NCVA. The proceedings of the conference were widely distributed.

VOLUNTEER has been active in carrying forward special, demonstration projects, which perhaps should have been listed as an additional national function in this inquiry. Three such projects were recently completed: a two-year project to provide management, program development, board development and fund-raising skills to 80 local Law Enforcement Educational Assistance Act grantee organizations; a two-year effort to develop a model for involving the "hard to involve" in museums, libraries and historical organizations; and a three-year program to develop a curriculum about volunteering for high school students. VOLUNTEER has just launched a similar project involving physically disabled youth. It has also set up demonstration skillsbanks in 11 cities; has begun a collaborative project in five sites to test the concept of family volunteering; and is in the midst of a contract with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to model new forms of citizen involvement in traffic safety issues.

#### 4. Association for Volunteer Administration

The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) has as its purpose the promotion of volunteer administration as a profession; the provision of exchange of knowledge and experience in the creative use of volunteer services administration; and the promotion of professional education and development. Members, who may be either paid or nonpaid, come from a wide variety of settings, including health care, community services, corrections, social services, the arts, education, research, government programs and advocacy.

To further the organization's purposes, a wide variety of program activity is carried forward. The following are examples:

AVA sponsors annual regional and national conferences. This year the annual conference is cosponsored with the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars and the Association of Volunteer Bureaus. Some regional conferences are cosponsored with the Association of Volunteer Bureaus.

AVA endorses certain educational events of other organizations, which makes it possible for participants to receive credit toward professional certification.



A comprehensive statement of Professional Ethics in Volunteer Services Administration was approved by the membership at the 1975 annual meeting.

AVA provides a program of professional certification of volunteers in the field of administration of volunteer services, a certification that must be renewed every five years.

AVA has been the driving force behind the publication of the professional journal *Volunteer Administration*. This publication contains articles of interest to volunteers about a wide variety of topics.

#### 5. Association of Volunteer Bureaus

The Association of Volunteer Bureaus coordinates the interests of volunteer bureaus in the United States and Canada. It is responsive to community-based volunteer-coordinating agencies which need a focal point for exchanging information and experience.

About 190 local volunteer bureaus are currently members. As noted above, volunteer bureaus and voluntary action centers are becoming interchangeable in name; hence it is not precisely known how many of each are among the 190 members. Membership is open to volunteer bureaus and other organizations and individuals.

Members of the Association look to the national office for staff consultation, sample materials and information regarding all aspects of volunteer bureau operations and programs. The Association offers national and regional workshops and conferences for member bureaus to facilitate the exchange of ideas and techniques. The Association asserts that it represents a diversity of viewpoints and speaks with an independent voice for grass-roots volunteerism.

One of the most significant achievements of the Association has been the publication of Standards and Guidelines for the Field of Volunteerism in March 1979. Based on the earlier work of an Alliance for Volunteerism task force in which representatives of the Association played a leadership role, the standards deal exhaustively with the organization, administration and programs of volunteer organizations. The standards were developed with input and review from a wide spectrum of agencies and individuals; they are applicable to voluntary action centers, volunteer bureaus and other user agencies.

#### 6. Association of Voluntary Action Scholars

The Association of Voluntary Action Scholars (AVAS) is a professional, scholarly association concerned with a better understanding of citizen involvement and volunteer participation. Its membership includes academic scholars engaged in or interested in voluntary action research and leaders and participants in voluntary, nonprofit organizations and programs.



Members represent more than 20 academic fields, disciplines and professions--practitioners in every phase of voluntary activity.

AVAS publications, services and other activities provide an interdisciplinary medium for learning about and contributing to the growing body of voluntary action research.

## Relationships Among the Primary Six

### 1. Purposes

In their statements of purpose, the six agencies disclose very similar concerns. For example, Independent Sector has as its purpose enhancing our national tradition of giving, volunteering and not-for-profit initiative. The Alliance for Volunteerism exists to strengthen the volunteer movement and to make it more effective. VOLUNTEER's mission is to stimulate and strengthen voluntary action and volunteer involvement. The Association of Volunteer Administrators' proposal is to advance the field of volunteer administration as a means of promoting and supporting volunteerism. The Association of Volunteer Bureaus provides for the exchange of information and experience among member bureaus and speaks with an independent voice for grass-roots volunteerism. The Association of Voluntary Action Scholars is concerned with a better understanding of citizen involvement and volunteer participation.

### 2. Memberships

A varied membership pattern exists among the six agencies. Independent Sector has a membership of approximately 200 national organizations. Many of them use volunteers in the delivery of services; all of them use volunteers as board members, advisory committee members and so on. The Alliance for Volunteerism is a member agency of Independent Sector; two of its 17 member organizations--the Association of Junior Leagues and National School Volunteer Program--also are members of Independent Sector in their own right. The Association of Volunteer Administrators and the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars are members of the Alliance for Volunteerism. So also is the Association of Volunteer Bureaus, for which staff support and office space is provided by the United Way of America. VOLUNTEER has a pattern of organizational associates, which includes most of the local VACs and many local volunteer bureaus.

### 3. Programs

There obviously is a great deal of similarity in the program activities of the primary six agencies. The extent to which there is similarity in content (for example, in publications and conferencing) and overlapping among consumers (readers and attendees) is beyond the scope of a quick scan. The consultant believes that there is. But whether this is for good or ill would need to be further researched, to determine what the members of the volunteer community want and how they feel about what they are getting.

Several program activities are common to all six agencies; others are carried forward by two or three; others are unique to a single agency.

Those activities that are common to all six include: conferencing, on a national, regional or ad hoc basis, sometimes as a single sponsor, frequently



as a cosponsor with another organization(s); networking, primarily within the agency's own constituency; government relations and advocacy, on issues directly or indirectly related to volunteers, an example of the latter being the Charitable Contributions Legislation; encouragement of research; and a publications program, aimed at supplying information to the agency's constituency and providing better public understanding about the agency and volunteering.

Some activities are common to a few of the six agencies: technical consultation, limited to VOLUNTEER, the Association of Volunteer Bureaus and the Association of Volunteer Administration; an awards program, limited to the Alliance for Volunteerism and VOLUNTEER; collaboration with business, labor, government and religion, primarily carried forward by Independent Sector and VOLUNTEER.

Those activities which appear to be unique to a single organization include: program demonstrations--VOLUNTEER; formulation of a statement of professional ethics for volunteers--Association of Volunteer Administration; professional certification of volunteers--Association of Volunteer Administration; formulation of standards for volunteer programs--Association of Volunteer Bureaus.

## Further Interrelationships on the National Scene

### Membership

Beyond the primary six agencies, the so-called traditional organizations have varied membership patterns. For example, the American Red Cross, the Girl Scouts of America and the Boy Scouts of America are members of both Independent Sector and the National Assembly for National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations. The National Assembly's primary purpose is enhancing the effectiveness of its member agencies to achieve their own goals and objectives and to have greater collective impact on human needs. Similarly, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, together having a reported five million volunteers, are members of both Independent Sector and the National Health Council, an umbrella organization having purposes similar to that of the National Assembly. Both the National Assembly and the National Health Council are members of Independent Sector. Another large voluntary organization, UNICEF with three million volunteers, belongs only to Independent Sector.

Depending upon definition, the largest volunteer network is that of the United Way of America, a member of the National Assembly and Independent Sector. One definition embraces 2,300 local United Way organizations and their member organizations. A report for the Filer Commission estimated that for 1973, this network received approximately 2.4 billion volunteer hours in direct program activity, policy setting and fund raising. This report obviously overlaps with many national agencies which report independently, such as the American Red Cross with 1,350,000 volunteers, the Boy Scouts with 1,100,000 volunteers, and the Girl Scouts with 570,000 volunteers, to note just three.

Another method for the United Way to report would include those volunteers who give their time to fund raising, budgeting and planning within and through the 2,300 local United Ways. This would itself be an impressive figure, but the consultant does not have it at hand.

### Collaboration

The promotion of collaboration may be found among many national organizations. Two examples follow:

- A. A recently completed project, "I Can," was an interagency project sponsored by the American Red Cross. "I Can" sought to develop a career/educational training program and counseling model that could be adopted by voluntary agency advisors. Participating in the project were the



Association of Junior Leagues, *Association for Volunteer Administration*, Boy Scouts of America, National Council of Jewish Women, *VOLUNTEER*, YMCA and YWCA.

- B. An interagency collaborative project sponsored by the Association of Junior Leagues undertakes to bring together schools of social work, volunteers, and social service agencies to identify issues in the use of volunteers and to strengthen and improve practice. Organizations involved in the project include Family Service Association of America, The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, *VOLUNTEER*, National Council of Jewish Women, *Alliance for Volunteerism* and Henter College School of Social Work.

### Standards

Such functions as public education, the development of high standards of volunteer recruitment, selection, placement, supervision and recognition, concern with public policy as it affects volunteers, and the exchange of experience and communication within the field are to be found in many agency programs. The American Red Cross, YMCA, YWCA and UNICEF, to cite only four, are examples of highly sophisticated, effective volunteer programs.

### Generic resource standards

Note should be taken of what Ivan Scheier describes as the Generic Resource Structure: those organizations and individuals offering technical assistance, information, support services and training to local volunteer efforts. In addition to the primary six agencies and the others mentioned previously in the working classifications, there should be added: the 30 state offices of volunteering which come together from time to time in The Assembly, a national entity serving functions of convening and exchanging information; an unknown number of state volunteer offices in particular fields of interest and concern, such as state mental health departments, state departments of corrections and criminal justice, state departments of welfare; and finally, those 25 or 30 individuals who serve as private consultants and whose impact on the volunteer scene may be the most significant of all.

### Volunteering in public agencies

A quick scan would be incomplete without briefly noting that from 20 to 30 percent of all volunteer work is carried out in public agencies--federal, state or local. (It is estimated that this figure would be doubled if quasi-public agencies, those voluntary agencies that receive public money, were to be included.) Reflecting in part the new federalism, such as general revenue sharing, and the so-called consumer revolt of the 1960s, there is an increased dependence of tax-supported programs on volunteers, both in policy making and in service delivery. Such public programs include state and local departments of health, mental health, drug abuse, education and welfare; law enforcement systems; museums, civic groups involved in drama, music and the arts; and the Veterans Administration.



ACTION is the federal agency with primary responsibility to encourage, support and strengthen citizen volunteer involvement. ACTION has been hampered in its program because many leaders within the voluntary sector have limited knowledge of its programs and for many, the agency is controversial. An Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation was established in 1978 to create a liason with the voluntary sector, but it has been handicapped by the lack of an agency mission statement which clearly defines ACTION's role in supporting nonfederal volunteer effort. In June 1979, President Carter redefined ACTION's responsibilities (Executive Order 12137) with regard to nonfederal volunteer efforts and directed the agency's director to undertake a series of activities "to encourage and stimulate more widespread and effective voluntary action for solving public domestic problems."

Meanwhile, suggestions for alternate forms of federal support of nongovernmental volunteering have found their way into the public domain. Various proposals suggest the creation of a quasi-governmental entity, perhaps modeled after the National Science Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or the National Endowment for the Arts. Such an entity, it is believed, could be a unifying force for public and private effort, could be non-political in character, could achieve a balance between government money and private management, and could avoid future duplication and potential conflict between the federal government and existing agencies within the voluntary sector.

During 1979, Senator David Durenberger introduced legislation to establish a National Commission on Volunteering. The commission was to study: appropriate volunteer roles for persons of all ages and income levels; incentives, rewards and recognition systems for volunteers; the role of the federal government in support of voluntary organizations; and alternate federal structures. The proposal created acute anxiety in some quarters. Some felt its scope was too broad; others feared government intrusion in the affairs of voluntary organizations; many felt that it overlapped with Charitable Contributions Legislation and would dilute support for the two original measures; and some felt the matter of a national service program was highly controversial and should be considered separately. A revised version of the original measure, which concentrates on volunteering in the public sector and how the federal government can enhance volunteering in the private sector, remains temporarily dormant as this is written.



## Two Internal Problems

Two additional problems beset volunteerism. One is a question of taxonomy. What is the difference, if any, between voluntarism, volunteerism, voluntary action and citizen participation? Both the Yale University Program on Non-Profit Organizations and the Committee for the Third Sector have announced that their studies of the voluntary sector will include issues of taxonomy. This is welcome, and important.

Meanwhile, the consultant believes that the definitions of Joyce Black would, if widely used, greatly improve communication. She defines *voluntarism* as organized effort for the common good, the development of man's social structure, and the enhancement of the quality of life through voluntary action. She defines *volunteerism* as individual or group effort voluntarily given. These definitions see voluntarism as the corporation and volunteerism as the individual or group effort that makes the corporation work.

Black does not deal with citizen participation, a completely undefined terrain. Generally, *citizen participation* refers to the varied acts of volunteers which directly relate to government, whether as direct service volunteers, service on a board or advisory committee, or service on any official body that is concerned with governmental operations, including monitoring.

The second problem facing volunteering is one of definition. What is a volunteer? There appear to be three points of departure. The first is that of the so-called purists, who assert that a volunteer is one who performs acts of service of his or her own free will, without monetary reward (although out-of-pocket expenses could, and should, be allowed). At the other end of the spectrum are those who believe that volunteering should reflect freedom of choice but that it may be stipended, usually at less than the current wage rate or on a subsistence basis. By this definition, stipended VISTA personnel, CETA employees and National Service Corps members would be volunteers. Somewhere in between these two views are those who describe volunteering as relatively uncoerced work done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain. In this formulation, the two variables are the degree of coercion, as implied in a national service program, and the degree of commitment to what is done, rather than to thought of financial gain. If inflation and the energy crisis continue, this latter definition will likely attain greater currency, as more and more people find it difficult to volunteer and more and more agencies find it difficult to recruit or retain volunteers unless a modest stipend is available.

Apart from the merits of any particular definition, it is critically important for the field to decide what is meant by a volunteer and to agree on the difference between voluntarism and volunteerism. Such agreement would be an aid to internal communication and a prerequisite to communication with the general public. It will continue to be difficult, if not impossible, to mount a program of public education about volunteering when such semantic differences divide the field.



## Conclusions About the National Scene

### Centrifugal forces

The forces that draw the field are many and powerful. The attitudes of national organizations (all of which use volunteers in one way or another), as described by the organizing committee of Independent Sector, present obstacles to the creation of a new national umbrella organization. The committee cites "the ferocity for independence which exists in so much of the sector; the suspicion and actual antipathy which characterize so many of the relationships in this disparate, quarrelsome and competing world." These attitudes are frequently seen in overprotection of turf and in unwillingness to collaborate except on an agency's own terms.

In addition, a dichotomy exists between concerns about voluntarism (organizational concerns) and concerns about volunteering (needs and concerns of volunteers). Conferences, speeches, workshops and articles seem to be focused on one or another, but seldom on both, of these interests.

The perceptions of each appear to be limited to its own boundaries and to a limited connection between the two. People concerned with tax reform as it affects charitable contributions are off in one room, so to speak, and persons concerned with a tax credit for volunteer time are in another. Board members, themselves volunteers, tend to become preoccupied with policy. As one participant observed at the National Forum, the lack of communication between agency service volunteers and board members is a big problem.

In part because of this dual approach and in part because of problems of taxonomy and definition, those concerned with voluntarism and volunteerism seem sometimes not to speak the same language. Despite the fact that each approach includes common concerns, the reality is that each is concerned with its own agenda. And indeed, a further reality is that each agenda appears to be extensive enough to demand and warrant such behavior.

But much more needs to be done to elevate volunteering to a position of comparable attention and importance in the total scheme of things; and much more needs to be done to establish linkages and identify commonalities between these two areas of concern.

### Centripetal forces

Despite the diversity and diffusion inherent in a pluralistic environment, it must be emphasized that the forces binding the broad field of volunteerism together are infinitely stronger than the forces pulling it asunder. There is a common value system, derived from our Judeo Christian heritage, which undergirds acts of caring and supplies a moral and ethical foundation for justice, compassion, empowerment, neighborliness and love. Again, the Independent Sector organizing committee put it well when it referred to



the values which the new organization should foster: commitment beyond self; worth and dignity of the individual; individual responsibility; tolerance; freedom; justice; and responsibilities of citizenship.

These values, are, of course, reflected in traditional and in new and innovative volunteer programs, and in those collaborative efforts which enhance and make possible more effective program efforts. But much remains to be done, as we shall see. Progress will require that national organizations reaffirm traditional values and a commitment to common goals which transcend more limited perspectives.

### Previous Efforts at National Collaboration

1. The National Committee on Volunteers in Social Work was established in 1933 by representatives of nursing, public health, and family welfare organizations. In general, its purposes were to stimulate and raise standards of volunteer work.
2. The National Advisory Committee on Citizen Participation was established in 1945. Cosponsored by the United Way of America (then Community Chests and Councils) and the National Assembly of Voluntary National Health and Social Welfare Organizations (then the National Social Welfare Assembly), the Advisory Committee addressed itself to the problem of how the interest of millions of wartime volunteers could be sustained in peacetime. As one outcome of this work, the Association of Volunteer Bureaus was created to function under the auspices of United Community Funds and Councils (successor to Community Chests and Councils) and to be responsible for developing manuals, guides and conducting workshops for volunteers and volunteer bureaus.
3. Parenthetically, it should be noted that the Peace Corps was formed in 1961 and that in 1962 the Social Security Act was amended to provide 75 percent federal matching funds to states to support statewide plans of volunteer services, as complementary to its expanded social services program. Other federal programs--housing, juvenile justice, urban renewal--encouraged and required local citizen participation as a requirement for federal participation.
4. In 1963 the National Social Welfare Assembly formed, in cooperation with the National Health Council, a Committee on Volunteer Services to stimulate and encourage national agencies to give leadership to their local affiliates in the imaginative use of volunteers to enrich services.
5. The National Congress on Volunteerism and Citizenship was a bicentennial activity sponsored by the National Center for Voluntary Action (a predecessor of VOLUNTEER). The congress was an ambitious effort to create a vehicle for the expression and resolution of grass-roots citizen concerns. Based on local forums, then regional forums, the National Congress brought some 250 persons together to debate and take stands on issues identified in the earlier forums. Proceedings of the congress were published and widely distributed.

The congress was funded by the Kellogg Foundation, the Germaine Monteil Cosmetics Corporation and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. More than 10,000 Americans participated in the local and regional forums. Among the conclusions was an enthusiastic agreement that such events should occur periodically.



## Responses to Original Questions

### How is volunteering being advocated, represented and protected nationally?

If this question is applied to the list of things that ought to be done on a national level (page 4), it suggests three levels of response. (The consultant observes that, in the absence of sophisticated consumer research, it is impossible to be more than impressionistic in answering this question.)

1. *Those functions being done best.* Included in this group are: the development of standards and guidelines for the operation of volunteer programs; consultation and technical assistance; the promotion of professional development for volunteers; and the provision of information on education and training resources. (Numbers 4,6,7 and 8 on working list.)
2. *Those functions being performed in part, but where much more needs to be done.* Included in this group are: research; networking; and furthering collaborative relationships with business, labor, government, and the religious community. (Numbers 5, 11 and 12 on working list.)
3. *Those functions being done least successfully, if at all.* Included here are: formulation of a unifying statement of values; improving the image of volunteering; providing a national forum for volunteers; impacting the helping establishment; and advocacy for volunteers, who they are and what they do. (Numbers 1,2,3,9 and 10 on working list.)

### To what extent are the existing national organizations meeting this need?

Many existing national organizations contribute to meeting the needs contained within the working list of functions. For example, every national agency that uses volunteers is concerned with improving program standards as an aid to the retention of volunteers, with better public understanding as an aid in recruitment, and with training and resources for technical assistance to start new programs and to upgrade performance.

Volunteers themselves have formulated a statement of ethics for volunteers (through the Association of Volunteer Administrators, for example), and are concerned with professional development of volunteers, with the availability of educational programs and with networking to improve communication among volunteers in different settings.

The growing support structure for volunteers and organizations using volunteers includes national agencies in the three classifications of agencies previously defined: those national agencies concerned primarily, directly and generically with volunteers and volunteering; those organizations concerned with volunteers and volunteering, but with particular or limited constituencies or memberships; and those organizations which achieve program objectives through the use of volunteers.



The essential problem is that these efforts, focused on real and immediate problems and needs, are disparate and independent. What is lacking is the capability, on the part of a single organization or a collaborative effort, to take a continuous, wide-angle, uncluttered, independent and dispassionate view of the broad and changing picture of volunteering, the forest rather than the trees. Such a posture is prerequisite to the single most important thing that needs to be done--articulation of the foundation of moral and ethical values that undergirds and binds together all volunteer effort. Having achieved such a formulation, it will then be possible to seek ways of bringing a sense of unity into the volunteer movement, of injecting a sense of an exciting future, of improving the image of volunteering through a comprehensive program to impact the helping establishment. Such an effort must include both traditional and nontraditional agencies and must include a wide spectrum of volunteers.

What strategies and actions are implied by the answers to the above questions?

Implicit in the above analysis is the need to set in motion a process that would lead to agreement about where such responsibilities might be located. The consultant believes that primary responsibility for a broad overview of the field can best be lodged within a single national agency and that that agency should vigorously pursue supporting collaborative relationships.

As a hypothetical example of such a process, let us assume that Aid Association for Lutherans, because of its intense commitment to volunteering and its capability to play leadership and convening roles, brings together an ad hoc committee. The primary six agencies would be represented, as well as other organizations which are greatly concerned about the future of the national community, (i.e., United Way of America, Association of Junior Leagues, American Red Cross). Such an ad hoc group might address at least four alternative strategies: agree to leave the situation alone, believing that, over time, internal dynamics within the system will find an agreeable solution; move to create a new entity, perhaps an unrealistic idea since there are several national organizations already in place from which leadership can be expected; urge the major actors, at least the primary six, toward greater collaboration; or advocate strengthening an existing agency. The first and third options, doing nothing or urging collaboration, seem to the consultant to be passive and unresponsive to the urgent and clearly articulated needs which arose from the National Forum. The second, to create a new organization, seems an unduly cumbersome and unnecessary road to take.

The fourth option remains--strengthening an existing entity. The ad hoc committee would need to carefully formulate what criteria ought to be applied to any organization which would deliberately take on broader responsibilities in the field. The following criteria are suggested: that the organization have an exclusive, overarching mission in its concern for volunteers and volunteering; that it have a constituency which, as nearly as possible, spans volunteers from the so-called traditional organizations and volunteers to be found in increasing numbers in the newer forms of volunteer activity; that the organization have sufficient resources to enable it to perform an expanded role; and that the organization have leadership stature within the field.



Such an organization would naturally be sought within the primary six agencies, in this consultant's view. Some of the following observations about Independent Sector, VOLUNTEER and the Alliance for Volunteerism, the three most likely candidates, would represent the kinds of considerations an ad hoc group would wish to take into account.

Independent Sector includes volunteerism within its statement of broad purpose. But it is too early to assess what its contribution to volunteering might become, because it does not yet have a full program in place. Several of the functions from the working list are compatible with its purposes and planned mode of operation: seeking a better public understanding of the voluntary sector and volunteering; impacting the helping establishment; programs of advocacy for volunteering; networking; and collaboration with business, government and labor. Its board and staff leadership is of high quality, and its start-up and ongoing funding pattern appear to be adequate.

Its constituency includes some 200 national organizations covering a very broad spectrum. Because of the nature of this constituency, logic suggests that IS will come down on the "voluntarism" side of the earlier equation. As a consequence, its early attention likely will be concentrated on such pressing issues as tax reform, regulation, improving organizational performance, accountability, accessibility, charitable giving, better public understanding and governmental relations. Although there are overlaps with volunteers and their concerns at several points, essentially this agenda covers corporate and organizational matters which speak to organizational operation and survival, and are perceived by voluntary agencies as of critical importance.

The Alliance for Volunteerism has performed significant service in identifying, as it did in the mid 1970s, issues which were then, and remain, of primary interest to volunteers. These include: citizen participation, religious involvement, corporate volunteering, minority and women's involvement, standards and accreditation, research and advocacy, among others. Today the Alliance is carrying forward an important communicative role among national agencies in respect to the proposed Commission on Volunteering and the proposed National Service Program.

The Alliance has two serious problems in relation to this analysis. The first is that it has a small, although impressive, constituency of 17 national organizations. The second problem is that it now has extremely limited ongoing financial support from its membership. The Alliance was brought into being by a grant from the Lilly Foundation and as those funds have declined, the Alliance has not been able to find other funds, either outside the organization or within its membership, to mount a major program effort.

Like Independent Sector, VOLUNTEER is a new organization. It has a broad statement of purpose exclusively oriented to volunteers and volunteering. VOLUNTEER is in the process of developing a constituency of organizations that will span established organizations, local voluntary action centers, volunteer bureaus and grass-roots organizations. VOLUNTEER has maintained and extended corporate ties nourished by its predecessor organization--NCVA.



It is in the process of establishing similar linkages with the religious community.

VOLUNTEER has an annual budget of approximately \$1.2 million. About 80 percent of this is in the form of contracts for services and foundation grants for special projects and demonstrations; the balance is in basic, core support. While this pattern of funding has enhanced the reputation of the organization for technical assistance and for conducting demonstration projects, it has not yet created a core budget of sufficient size to sustain a broader and expanded range of activities. The selection of the name VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, readily contracted to VOLUNTEER, will prove to be an asset in terms of name recognition, of attaching the organization to the volunteer community in people's minds.

The consultant believes one of the tests of leadership can be the ability to successfully merge two organizations that ought to merge. Like Independent Sector, the staff and board leadership of VOLUNTEER deserve high marks.

How can the various components of the volunteer world work together to affect necessary change?

The kind of scenario envisioned here calls for a great deal of commitment, initiative and persistence--commitment concerning the importance of what needs to be done, initiative to begin and sustain a process, and persistence to overcome the fact that movement on the national scene is slow, often tediously so.

Nor can any organization move beyond what its constituency wants and is willing to support. In this case, two kinds of constituencies are seen: a vertical constituency reaching a wide range of organizations of, for and by volunteers who have a major stake in what is to be done; and a horizontal constituency of peers among national organizations with whom a leadership organization needs to establish collaborative relationships. The collaboration of Aid Association for Lutherans and VOLUNTEER, in cosponsoring the National Forum, is an excellent example of what is called for and what will work. The current merger of the National Association on Volunteers in Criminal Justice and Volunteers in Probation/ National Council on Crime and Delinquency is another example of collaboration on the national scene to bring increased effectiveness into an important volunteer program.

The kind of leadership called for in this report will not threaten, diminish, dilute or conflict with what other centers of volunteer concern are doing. Indeed, it will have the direct affect of enabling them to do their functions better. Active and sensitive collaboration, especially among agencies in the first two classifications, will enhance what all organizations are doing and make the sum of the effort greater than the parts.

To what issues will the leadership and collaborative efforts called for in this quick scan be addressed? Participants in the National Forum on Volunteerism were unanimous in their belief that the single most important



objective for the volunteer sector is to formulate a statement of values and goals that reflects and emphasizes the contribution of volunteering to our quality of life and to a better society. There was agreement that this is an exceedingly difficult task because of the diversity of volunteers and organizations. But it was agreed that such an undertaking is: a prerequisite for improved public understanding of volunteering, what it is and what it does; basic to the provision of a sense of unity in this disparate volunteer community of national, state, local, neighborhood, traditional and nontraditional organizations and individuals; and essential if the volunteer community is to become proactive, rather than reactive, in respect to its image and on issues of concern to all.

In its exploration of values, the National Forum discussions contained implications for both individual and organizational behavior. Values are seen as founded upon a religious, moral and ethical base. These are reflected in such acts and beliefs as caring and service to others in need; in empowerment, which enables people to participate in those decisions affecting them and to take control of their lives; in a commitment to a just social order; in belief in a participatory society; in the importance of a sense of community to all members; in a common sense of humanity; in the importance of problem solving by coalitions of concerned citizens; and in freedom to act, regardless of motivation. These values influence both individual and organizational acts.

For the individual, whether motivated by self-interest, altruism, or any combination, volunteering must be seen as a privilege, a personal and public debt, an expectation of citizenship. During the National Forum, Martin Koehneke referred to a "declaration of dependence," which accords recognition to the fact that we are all dependent upon each other in the complex economic and social milieu in which we live.

Koehneke also referred to "a declaration of interdependence" for organizations, again reflecting that collaboration among all organizations is imperative if common goals are to be met. A practical question is how to achieve a balance between diversity, fragmentation, spontaneity and pluralistic effort (positive values in and of themselves) and centralization, authoritarianism and control (negative values in some contexts). The answer lies in the recognition of the higher organizational value of collaboration and participation in coalitions which transcends organizational turfdom, includes both traditional and nontraditional organizations, embraces national, state and local public and voluntary efforts, and includes the widest possible spectrum of individual volunteers.

Another of the eleven environmental factors identified by the National Forum--inflation--will supply a different set of tasks for individual and organizational agendas in the '80s. The following impacts were identified in the forum material: the affect on charitable giving; the impact on organizational budgets and on support for volunteer programs; the impact on people in the sense that it renders them powerless in the face of crisis; the impact on volunteers who may not be able to provide their out-of-pocket expenses; the fact that volunteering may be seen increasingly as a bridge to employment, especially by youth, seniors and women; the predictable increase in self-help volunteers who produce their own goods and services



often as part of a barter system; the increase in efforts of agencies to pay out-of-pocket expenses and to stipend volunteers; the existing increase in consumer and price monitoring activities; the reduction in public and private funding of local volunteer programs and the corresponding impact on career volunteer leadership; and the increasing emphasis on achieving increased cost-effectiveness of volunteer programs. Inflation also will affect national consultation and technical-assistance programs, which will necessarily adapt their agendas to helping clients adjust to inflation, adjust to cost-benefit analysis, develop programs dealing directly with inflation, help in money-raising techniques, and help in changing to self-sufficiency models whereby increased revenue comes from services performed, rather than public or private grants.

The issues, problems and opportunities for national leadership and collaboration in these two problems are limitless. And forum panelists, it will be recalled, identified nine additional environmental problems, all calling for the same sweep of vision, leadership and collaborative effort in the 1980s. Their understanding and resolution will call forth the effort of every volunteer and every organization concerned with volunteering.

There will be work enough for everyone. It is this kind of an agenda that the National Forum sought to foresee and it is this kind of an agenda that calls for the highest possible leadership within the volunteer community.



increasingly as a bridge to employment, especially by youth, seniors, and women; the predictable increase in self-help volunteers who produce their own goods and services often as part of a barter system; the increase in efforts of agencies to pay out-of-pocket expenses and to stipend volunteers; the existing increase in consumer and price monitoring activities; the reduction in public and private funding of local volunteer programs and the corresponding impact on career volunteer leadership; the increasing emphasis on achieving increased cost-effectiveness of volunteer programs; and finally, the impact of inflation on national consultation and technical assistance programs, which will necessarily adapt their agendas to helping clients adjust to inflation, adjust to cost-benefit analysis, develop programs dealing directly with inflation, help in money raising techniques, and help in changing to self-sufficiency models whereby increased revenue comes from services performed, rather than public or private grants.

The issues, problems, and opportunities for national leadership and collaboration in these two problems are limitless. And the Forum, it will be recalled, identified nine additional environmental problems, all calling for the same sweep for vision, leadership, and collaborative effort in the 1980's. Their understanding and resolution will call forth the effort of every volunteer and every organization concerned with volunteering. There will be work enough for everyone. It is this kind of an agenda that the Forum sought to foresee and it is this kind of an agenda that calls for the highest possible leadership within the volunteer community.