Topic 1 | Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention involve building relationships between organizations and volunteers that are viable in the long term, with benefits outweighing costs. Costs consists largely of the time invested and thus the pressure that this creates on the schedule. Successful strategies therefore often include 1) reducing the number of hours, 2) allowing the volunteer to determine the time and location, and 3) combining volunteering with other activities in the schedule. The benefits of volunteering are obviously not based on money, but on the intangible fulfillment of the psychological contract, which largely concerns the "self-determination" (i.e., the autonomy, connection, and competences) of the volunteer.

Recruitment thus primarily involves corresponding to what the volunteer would like to give in terms of:

1) willingness, 2) availability, and 3) capability. A good, honest recruitment campaign invites candidates to enter a discussion about the realization of these "three B's." The recruitment of volunteers has less to do with finding the perfect match than it does with beginning a process of negotiation (e.g., using the slot machine).

Retention involves achieving and maintaining "job satisfaction" on the part of the volunteer. For volunteers, job satisfaction is based on self-determination and the fulfillment of the psychological contract. Self-determination consists of three elements: 1) autonomy, 2) competence, and 3) connection. Autonomy concerns the volunteer's ability to determine the conditions under which the work is to be performed. It is thus the pivot point between costs and benefits for a volunteer, with greater autonomy reducing the costs and increasing the benefits. Two comments are important in this regard. 1) When carrying out episodic volunteering or one-time activities (e.g., NLDoet or MLK Day), people would like to have everything explained as precisely as possible (Koolen-Maas et al., 2020). 2) Full autonomy cannot be given in some cases (e.g., when working with vulnerable groups). Competence is a tricky subject within the context of volunteering. Paid staff and professional organizations often automatically assume that a volunteer does not have certain skills. As a result, they

often provide (or require) training that must be completed in advance, along with regular contact with the organization.

Holmes, Meijs, Haski-Leventhal, Lockstone-Binney, and Oppenheimer (2017) combine recruitment and retention in the term "recruitability." They propose that recruitability involves 1) accessibility, 2) flexibility, 3) control, and 4) a cost-benefit analysis. In addition, recruitability has eight dimensions. This is elaborated further for the Dutch situation by Van Seumeren and Meijs (2021). This article is available here.

Reading list for these topics:

1   Willingness, availability, and capability are the three elements of "volunteerability," as elaborated in:

Meijs, L. C. P. M., Ten Hoorn, E. M., and Brudney, J. L. (2006), "Improving societal use of human resources: from employability to volunteerability," *Voluntary Action*, 8: 36–54. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/improving-societal-use-of-human-resources (Open Access)

2   The ways in which volunteers consider willingness, availability, and capability in their choice of specific volunteer positions (including one-time activities) are investigated in the following Master's thesis:

Doosje, O. (2018) Why does no one want to repair kids' bikes? A research on the volunteer's decision for specific activities. https://www.nov.nl/themas/wetenschap/publicaties+wetenschap/1088213.aspx?t=Waarom-kiest-de-vrijwilliger-nou-voor-die-ene-activiteit- (Open Access)

3   Autonomy is not an element of the costs and benefits of volunteering. The opposite may even apply within the context of one-day volunteering (e.g., as part of NLDoet or MLK Day).

Maas, S. A., Meijs, L. C., & Brudney, J. L. (2021). Designing "national day of service" projects to promote volunteer job satisfaction. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *50*(4), 866–888. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0899764020982664 (Open Access)

4   Research based on self-determination theory indicates that leadership styles that support autonomy generate greater satisfaction on the part of volunteers.

Oostlander, J., Güntert, S. T., & Wehner, T. (2014). Linking autonomy-supportive leadership to volunteer satisfaction: A self-determination theory perspective. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *25*(6), 1368–1387. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257672634_Linking_Autonomy-Supportive_Leadership_to_Volunteer_Satisfaction_A_Self-Determination_Theory_Perspective (Open Access through ResearchGate)

5   The starting point for negotiating with volunteers can be found in the volunteer slot machine.

Meijs, L.C.P.M. & Brudney, J. L. (2007). Winning volunteer scenarios: The soul of a new machine. *International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, *XXIV*(6), 68–79. https://www.ijova.org/docs/IJOVA_VOL24_NO6_Meijs.pdf (Open Access)

6   The elaboration of recruitability in English is available here:

Holmes K, Haski-Leventhal, D., Meijs, L., Lockstone-Binney, L., & Oppenheimer, M (2017). Sustaining volunteering in Australia https://curtinic.github.io/cbs-volunteer-convertability-calculator/index.html (Open Access)

7   Recruitability; het vergroten van het vermogen om vrijwilligers te werven en behouden [Recruitability: increasing the ability to recruit and retain volunteers]. By Van Seumeren and Meijs. Read here

8   De fruitmachine: creëren van winnende scenario's voor vrijwilligers en organisaties [The slot machine: Creating winning scenarios for volunteers and organizations]. By Van Seumeren and Meijs. Read here

9   Designing "national day of service" projects to promote volunteer job satisfaction.

Maas, S. A., Meijs, L. C. P. M., & Brudney, J. L. (2020). Designing "national day of service" projects to promote volunteer job satisfaction. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *50*(4), 866–888. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764020982664