

## Fostering Motivation in the Engagement of Volunteer Workers: An Analysis of Volunteers in Humanitarian Organisations in Zimbabwe

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### Abstract

The aim of the study was to look at the factors that motivate volunteers' engagement in voluntary work in Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe. A descriptive survey was done to answer the research questions. Questionnaires were self administered to 60 volunteers sampled from two NGOs in Zimbabwe. Two focus group discussions with 6 volunteers from each organisation were also carried out. SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data and content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data from focus group discussions. This involved extraction of major themes and which were then merged with the quantitative data that was obtained. The results revealed that volunteers need to be formally contracted and nurtured and that they were motivated by material rewards, trainings and recognition.

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**Keywords:** volunteer, motivation, NGOs, rewards, engagement.

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### INTRODUCTION

Many NGOs recruit and engage volunteers for many of their activities and are sometimes led by volunteer boards. Volunteers can be part of the organization's government (for instance, they can be members of the board of directors) while others work at the operational core of the NGOs and are in charge of coordinating everyday activities (Hamilton, 2006). By focusing on a specific mission and drawing on the passionate support of local communities and loyal volunteers, NGOs are able to address issues that organizations in other sectors cannot or will not do (Seffrin, 2010; Fernando and Heston, 1997). Even in developed countries NGOs, have emerged to bridge the gap between what governments and corporations can do and what society needs or expects (Seffrin, 2010). In a non governmental setting, volunteer workers are usually perceived to produce cohesive communities and become productive members of society (Williamson, 1999). Volunteers are central to the achievement of organisational missions and effective volunteer engagement is a fundamental lynchpin of the humanitarian sector (Mbohwa, 2009).

Volunteers are individuals with unique feelings, motives, and ambitions and managers need to respect volunteer individuality and keep volunteering rewarding and stimulating (Frontera, 2009; Green and Matthias, 1997). Understanding the different motivating factors for volunteers can help NGOs, as volunteer administrators to be able to work more effectively with volunteers, assigning tasks and recognizing and rewarding accomplishments.

In Zimbabwe there is no specific legal regulation for volunteers neither is statutory framework for the

engagement of volunteers. In the absence of any specific legal provision, the reimbursement of expenses, rewarding, protection of volunteers against risks of accident, illness and third party liability connected to a volunteer's activity is at the discretion of the hosting organisation (Mbohwa, 2009). Organisations have had different success stories with the engagement of volunteers and the strategies to motivate these volunteers also differ with some invoking incentives mirroring those of formally employed workers with the other extreme being the verbal thank you (Mbohwa, 2009). The current ad hoc or un-coordinated approach to working with volunteers in Zimbabwe can lead to damaging inconsistencies between different project sites, or across the humanitarian sectors. Inconsistencies have been noted where the same activities are carried out by paid (casual) labourers in one location and in other areas by volunteers. Levels and types of "incentives" (cash, food, clothes or other goods sometimes given to volunteers to encourage participation) also vary considerably between projects. Although the impact of these inconsistencies has not been investigated, inter-agency discrepancies in rewarding volunteers has been blamed for damaging the relationship between communities, local authorities and NGOs-creating security risks for field staff (Frontera, 2007).

As it is increasingly becoming apparent that local volunteer engagement is critical to the world's sustainable future, it is prudent to note that; while humanitarian organizations in Zimbabwe have grown accustomed to seeing their roles defined in terms of leveraging tight resources, maximizing community engagement, and advancing organizational growth and program sustainability, too few have made the

connection between those goals and creating an effective system for volunteer engagement (PIA, 2008). Given the numbers of volunteers working with NGOs, and the growing need for these volunteer's inputs in community programs, it is imperative to research on the engagement of volunteer workers in a non governmental setting to identify the best practices for the successful engagement of volunteer workers which can be promoted amongst all the agencies. This study offers an empirically based framework and guidance for development agencies interested in engaging volunteers to reach strategic goals in their organizations

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause (Skelly, 2009). It is undertaken from a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain. Volunteers were defined as community members voluntarily working to support program activities for a few hours per week (approximately 1 to 4 hours per week). The volunteers are not put on the pay roll although they can be entitled to some fixed allowances depending on their contributions and the circumstance under which the programs are implemented. In Canada, volunteers only receive out of pocket expenses if this is agreed on at the onset (Skelly, 2009).

Volunteers are usually selected on the strength of their professional background and intrinsic interest. Like formal employees, they are also critical talents in the sustainable implementation of development programs (Karugu, 2008). Managing talent with top quality HR practices can boost performance for an organisation by up to 30% (Scout, 2008). Given the tight squeeze in the talent market, organizations large and small are scrambling to be an employer of choice and to manage their portfolio of talent(both employees and volunteers) as carefully as their balance sheet (Frontera, 2007). In current economic conditions, many companies have felt the need to cut expenses. Therefore it becomes imperative to identify and implement strategies to motivate volunteers as they provide labor in a cost effective manner.

Craven (2012) identified the following as the main reasons to involve volunteers in humanitarian organisations-

1. Volunteers bring an attitude and a spirit to their work that is different than fully-paid staff. It is not a better work ethic or motivation, just a different one, one that complements that of paid staff. Through this particular volunteer attitude, volunteers can bring a personal passion and fresh perspective to a project.

2. Volunteers can free up the time of fully-paid staff to deal with many other critical issues and tasks.
3. Volunteers are often motivated to get their family, friends and co-workers to volunteer their time and expertise as well. This means that volunteers can extend a program's sphere of influence and access to additional people, businesses and organizations.
4. Volunteers bring the luxury of focus. A volunteer is usually focused on a particular issue or activity at a project, and can fully concentrate on only that issue or activity, whereas fully paid staff must often take on a myriad of unrelated responsibilities.
5. Volunteers may have skills, experiences or expertise that current staff does not have, but that are very much needed by the organization. They can bring a diversity of culture, skills, and experience that might be lacking among paid staff.
6. Volunteers are not financially-dependent upon the project they are assisting. This can mean they can approach assignments with less pressure and stress than fully-paid staff, and may make them feel even freer to experiment in their service, to try new things or to offer criticism.
7. Volunteers often feel freer than fully-paid staff to propose innovations or new ways of operating, and more free to criticize. If volunteers are not a part of the population served by the organization, they can be more objective about issues.
8. If volunteers are among the population served by the organization, they can bring first-hand knowledge to their contributions
9. In certain cases, some people served by a project are more inclined to work with volunteers than paid staff. These people may see volunteers as more neutral in their approaches than paid-staff, or they may feel that volunteers are there to help more because of personal motivation, while paid staff is there because it's their "job."
10. Volunteers can become effective advocates for your organization. A letter to the local newspaper or a testimonial to the local government, from a volunteer at an organization can carry more "weight" than that of a paid staff person, because a volunteer is not depending on a salary from your organization for his or her livelihood.
11. Many funding bodies/donors rate volunteer involvement highly when choosing programs to support.

From the ten years preceding 2006, staff and volunteer turnover has become a major concern for humanitarian agencies (HPN, 2006). It has sometimes

been presented as a reality that humanitarian agencies have to live with, but it has also been blamed for reducing the effectiveness of programmes as a result of discontinuity in staffing and loss of institutional memory. However it has been noted that usually, as skilled labor move from one job to the next in NGOs, volunteers are a special group of workers that is usually stable and stay for long in organisations if well managed (Guthridge et al, 2008). Research indicates that when volunteers are connected to the cause of an organization and kept appraised they are less likely to leave. Volunteers usually leave an organization because of the following reasons ;when they are underutilized, the physical environment does not support their efforts, the atmosphere is impersonal, tense or cold, their suggestions are not acted on, or responded to and the reality of their experience is not what they expected when they joined the organisation. Therefore, a volunteer administrator must adapt different styles of management to the various needs of volunteers and strategically fulfill these needs to accomplish the goals and tasks of a program (Skelly, 2009).

Like any other human resource facet, the modus operandi for engaging volunteers change with the changing socio- economic environment and the meaning of the term volunteer has to be dynamic. The period between 1998 and 2009 in Zimbabwe was characterised by both political and economic decline. Formal sector employment shrunk from 1.4 million in 1998 to 998, 000 in 2004 and the hyperinflation reached an official level of 230 million percent by the end of 2008 and the estimate of Zimbabwean living below the poverty datum line was 85% (Raftopoulos, 2009).

This study is theoretically based on the concept of employee motivation. The Social exchange theory and organisational justice theory unravel the subtle complexities underlying volunteer motivation and retention. Frederick Herzberg (1959), as quoted in Armstrong (2001), in his Hygiene / Motivation Theory proposed that people have two types of needs. He identified 'Hygiene Factors' as a type which included: Supervision, Interpersonal relations, working conditions, Salary. The second type which he called 'Motivators' included: Recognition, Work, Responsibility, Advancement Herzberg suggests that if the needs related to the Hygiene Factors are not met, volunteers get de-motivated (Armstrong, 2001; Larsson et al, 2004).

The Social exchange theory maintains that the employment relationships are a site of resource exchange governed by reciprocal stimuli or mutual reinforcements (Shore and Wayne, 1993; Lawler, 2001). If this reciprocity is broken the relationship will extinguish over time. In an attempt to explain individuals' decisions to remain in or leave a

relationship exchange theorists Blau (1964) noted that satisfaction within a relationship alone does not determine the likelihood that a relationship will continue. Rather, it is a function of individual comparisons of the levels of alternatives (defined as the lowest level of outcome a person will accept from a relationship in light of available alternatives). When the outcomes available in an alternative relationship exceed those available in a current relationship, the likelihood increases that a person will leave the current relationship (Blau, 1964). As a result, relationships that are rewarding are more likely to be stable .

Among the prominent cognitive orientations linked to the exchange theory, are the norms of distributed justice, or fairness, norms of reciprocity, and norms of equity (Homans, 1961; Scout, 2008). When these norms are violated, people are apt to complain more about the relationship and pressure their partners to restore a more just and fair pattern of exchange (Scout, 2008). Wang et al (2009) argue that organisational justice theory is about fairness that can be considered in terms of its outcomes, processes and interactions. Procedural justice concerns perception of fairness of procedures used to make decisions, while informational justice is about explanations given for procedures used and outcomes of particular interventions (Corquitt et al ,2001). Distributive justice pertains to volunteer perceptions about fairness of interpersonal treatment receive from supervisors and line managers, highlighting the fact that, in an employment relationship, the rewards experienced by partners should be more or less proportionately distributed (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Wang et al 2009). It can therefore be deduced that volunteer motivation is heavily impacted by things like cognitive dissonance and the exchange theory.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research involved a blend of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey design was used in this study. Data was collected from volunteers in Organisation A and Organisation B. Organisation A has its head office in Harare and Organisation B has its head office in Rusape. Both organisations have field offices in Buhera, Chipinge and Chiredzi districts where the majority of field officers and volunteer workers work from.

A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data and was self administered to 60 out of a total of 90 volunteers attached to the two organisations in Harare, Buhera and Chipinge. Stratified random sampling was used to sample participants. Stratification was done according to organisation and area of operation.

Two focus group discussions (one for each organisation's volunteers) with 6 people from each

organisation were also done. The focus group discussions took about 1 hour each. Convenient and availability sampling technique was used to select respondents for the focus group discussions since it was difficult to gather 6 volunteers at one point. The researchers made use of end of month meetings to get in touch with the volunteers.

To collect data from the volunteers the respective administrative offices of the two organisations were informed about the study. They then gave the researchers dates on which their volunteers would be having meetings and the researchers took advantage of such gatherings to collect data. Confidentiality was assured and individual consent forms were signed.

The data obtained from the questionnaire survey was inputted into SPSSx (Statistical Package for Social Scientists). Data from the focus group discussions with volunteers was analysed using content analysis and the major themes were blended with the quantitative results to give a comprehensive picture.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Six volunteers were interviewed from Mutare, 24 from Buhera and 30 from Chipinge. The water and sanitation urban programs were implemented in the city of Mutare with minimum involvement of volunteers. The food security and the rural water and sanitation programs were being implemented in Buhera and Chipinge where 90% of the volunteers were interviewed. The 60 volunteer workers involved in different programs were cross tabulated against their age groups as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Programs Volunteers were involved in by age

| Program                     | Age groups of volunteer workers(years) |       |       |              | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|
|                             | 26-30                                  | 31-35 | 36-40 | 41 and above |       |
| Food security               | 9                                      | 0     | 0     | 30           | 39    |
| Water and sanitation-urban  | 0                                      | 0     | 3     | 3            | 6     |
| Water and sanitation- rural | 0                                      | 0     | 9     | 6            | 15    |
| Total                       | 9                                      | 0     | 12    | 39           | 60    |

Sixty five percent were 41 and above years old by the time of the interviews, 77% of which were involved in the food security programs as shown in Table 1.

The volunteers were recruited from a pool of people from the communities who were prepared to sacrifice their energy and time to support program and were selected on the strength of their expertise in the relevant professions. They were from different backgrounds and Table 2 below is a summary of their different professions.

Table 2. Volunteers' professions by organisation and sex

| Profession               | Organisation A |         | Organisation B |         | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|-------|
|                          | Male           | Females | Males          | Females |       |
| Community health workers | 0              | 12      | 0              | 12      | 24    |
| Pump mechanics           | 6              | 3       | 3              | 3       | 15    |
| Teachers                 | 0              | 6       | 0              | 3       | 9     |
| Agriculturists           | 3              | 0       | 3              | 6       | 12    |
| Total                    | 9              | 21      | 6              | 24      | 60    |

In keeping with their different professions, 45% of the volunteers were facilitating the grouping of beneficiaries into Food Agriculture and Nutrition (FAN) clubs, 30 % were assisting both Organisations in training village pump minders in the rehabilitation of boreholes, 15% were advising beneficiaries on agricultural matters while 10% were facilitating the training of health and hygiene issues in the respective communities.

Ninety percent had at least 2 years of involvement in the two organisations' programs by the time of the surveys while only 25% of them were involved in these programs for 4 years as shown in the table below.

Table 3. Period of involvement in programs by organisation

| Name of the organisation | Years of involvement in programs |    |    |    |       |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----|----|----|-------|
|                          | 1                                | 2  | 3  | 4  | Total |
| Organisation A           | 3                                | 9  | 12 | 6  | 30    |
| Organisation B           | 3                                | 9  | 9  | 9  | 30    |
| Total                    | 6                                | 18 | 21 | 15 | 60    |

Eighty five percent of the volunteer workers were receiving some payment from the organisations with programs they were involved in and for all of them the payment was in kind and allowances were commensurate with their contributions to the organisation. Fifteen percent were not receiving any payment from the two organisations.

Literature has it that, Community Based Development programs in Kenya use various reimbursement schemes, including full-time paid agents, part-time agents with non-monetary incentives, and part-time agents who receive an allowance for expenses and paid agents are more motivated than others (Karugu , 2008). This shows that volunteer engagement of Organisation A and Organisation B was in tandem with global practices on volunteer workers.

### Volunteer workers `s willingness to continue working in the organisations

The study revealed that 90% of the volunteers were working with the organisations for at least two years and the that 90% of Organisation A and 50% of Organisation B volunteers were prepared to

continue working for the programs given other choices

The volunteer workers were asked why they choose to participate in the programs being implemented by Mercy Corps and ZimAHEAD and the responses were cross tabulated against their organisations and gender as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Reasons for participation by organisation and gender

| Reason for participating                            | Organisation   |         |                |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|
|                                                     | Organisation A |         | Organisation B |         |
|                                                     | Males          | Females | Males          | Females |
| Allowances attached to activities                   | 6              | 6       | 9              | 18      |
| Desire to develop own country                       | 9              | 12      | 3              | 15      |
| Training opportunities in the programs              | 6              | 0       | 3              | 0       |
| Opportunity to constructively occupy time           | 3              | 0       | 3              | 0       |
| Programs appealing to people's lives                | 3              | 12      | 6              | 9       |
| Passion to lead people                              | 3              | 3       | 6              | 0       |
| Opportunity to interact with high ranking officials | 3              | 0       | 3              | 0       |
| Training opportunities in the programs              | 6              | 0       | 3              | 0       |

Sixty five percent had to participate in programs out of the desire to develop their own area. Of these 69% were involved in food security programs of the two organisations. Fifty five percent participated in the programs because the programs were appealing to people's lives, 63% of which were participating in the food security programs and half of them were community health workers and agriculturists. These two reasons for participation cited by volunteers (desire to develop own area and that the programs were appealing to people's live), suggests that the volunteers who cited them are typically philanthropic or altruistic people who pursue attainment for the general good. They have high ideals and values concerned mainly about interests that benefit the public. This corresponds to the findings in a research on volunteers by (Skelly, 2009; GMSA, 2012) which concludes that job satisfaction is the pay a volunteer receives and the work needs to be meaningful and interesting.

Twenty percent of the volunteers were driven by their passion to lead people as they were given leading responsibilities in the programs they were involved in. Ten percent felt being involved in the two organisation's program was their opportunity to mingle with high ranking officials both within and outside the public service. All the respondents who cited this reason were community health workers. Six out of 60 volunteers felt participating in these programs was their only opportunity to occupy their time more constructively.

Seventy seven of the volunteers regardless of gender and area of operation felt valued in being identified with these two NGOs and 74% of them had O' level as their highest level of education. 23% of the volunteers, all of whom had tertiary education and at least 41 years of age, felt they would continue supporting the programs implemented by the organisation as part of their societal moral obligation. Hundred percent of the pump mechanics indicated that they would continue to support community programs as the allowances they were getting were supplementing their incomes. All the volunteers who felt their efforts were appreciated were community health workers by profession and were supporting food security programs.

#### Suggestions on how to motivate volunteers

All the volunteers were asked what they would recommend done to motivate them to continue supporting programs in the two organisations and the responses were cross tabulated against gender in the table below.

Table 5: Suggestion to motivate volunteers by gender

| Suggestion to motivate volunteers          | Number of respondents |        |                |        |       |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------|--------|-------|
|                                            | Organisation A        |        | Organisation B |        | Total |
|                                            | Male                  | Female | Male           | Female |       |
| Realistic allowances                       | 6                     | 21     | 30             | 6      | 60    |
| Provide with the means of transport        | 6                     | 12     | 15             | 3      | 30    |
| Provide T/shirt and hats with a logo       | 3                     | 9      | 9              | 3      | 21    |
| Realistic workload                         | 3                     | 9      | 0              | 12     | 24    |
| Recognition of efforts made                | 0                     | 9      | 3              | 15     | 27    |
| Arrange workshops with food and allowances | 3                     | 12     | 0              | 6      | 21    |
| Arrange inter club competitions            | 0                     | 6      | 3              | 0      | 9     |

#### Incentives

Fifty percent indicated that, provision of the means of transport to volunteers will go a long way in retaining them. Results from the focus group discussions revealed that some volunteers were traveling for over 20 kilometres on foot to execute their different roles with the two organisations. "A bicycle will also be a good incentive as it will be left with the volunteer for personal use after the NGO left the area" reported one woman from the focus groups. According to the volunteers the walking distance was adding burden to the already burdened volunteers. This point was critical in that most of the volunteers were female who have other domestic chores and other family responsibilities to feud for the families. It was interpreted as the major cause of burn out among female volunteers.

Thirty five percent suggest that volunteers be given T/shirts or hats with logos of the respective organisations which do not only satisfy their clothing requirements but would also make these volunteers be identified with these NGOs. Interestingly, 35% of the volunteers, 86% of which were female volunteers, regardless of age, were happy with the organisations organizing workshops where good food is served and sitting allowances offered. Over 45% of the volunteers who valued food and workshops were from Chipinge district. It also emerged strongly in all the FGDs that volunteers expected to be served with food each time they were invited for a meeting with the two organisations. Food is a great motivator.

The volunteers suggested that holding of inter and intra group competitions where outstanding efforts would be rewarded, was a tried and tested motivator for most volunteers. Unfortunately, only Organisation A was conducting these competitions in Chipinge district. Fifteen percent of the volunteers (all of them less than 41 years of age), felt they were happy with two organisations arranging inter club competitions. Sixty six of those who liked competitions were from Chipinge and 34% from Buhera. 67% of those who felt inter club competitions would motivate them were female volunteers .

It can be noted that, although some of the volunteers` requirements were not financial in nature, like T/shirts, trainings and other non financial expectations, in reality these had have strong financial and budgetary implications. If not well administered, the non monetary incentives can cost more than paying volunteers on a monthly basis. Considering the limited funding of these programs as highlighted above, most NGOs may be financially challenged in their attempt to successfully motivate volunteers.

The above discussions on the incentive requirements of the volunteers might force one to conclude that these volunteers were not driven by their moral obligations to develop their own community but by the tacit desire for money and food. This finding is at odds with research finding in USA which revealed that more than 61 million Americans volunteer regularly and the motives for volunteering were; being asked, affiliation with a cause or belief system, and external affiliation inducements to volunteer, such as people seeking to volunteer to meet others or work with a group during corporate days of service, to learn a new skill or to maintain skills while stepping out of the job market, temporarily or upon retirement (Seffrin, 2010). One can therefore conclude that the reason for volunteering differs depending of the socio economic status of the persons or economy involved. In keeping with this understanding, economists deduced that, when the wage for work in the market economy increases, the

opportunity cost of volunteering increases and less voluntary work is offered *ceteris paribus* (Pawlby, 2003). Insofar as voluntary work is rewarded financially, an increase in this rate raises the number of voluntary work hours offered (Pawlby, 2003).

Homans (1961) in his social exchange theory states that, human behavior is in essence an exchange, of rewards or resources of primarily material character (wealth) and secondarily of symbolic attributes. Therefore, volunteers participated in these programs with their expectations depending on their socio-economic status. The unemployed and the pensioners may be more worried about satisfying their basic needs although other motivators may come into play. This explains why Clayton Alderfer (1968) in his E.R.G theory hinted that, managers need to understand that each volunteer operates with the need to satisfy several motivators simultaneously and leadership which focuses on exclusively one need at a time will not motivate their people effectively (Mahwood, 2009).

Therefore it can be concluded that, incentives do constitute a major motivational factor for low-income and unemployed individuals who make up the majority of volunteers in the Zimbabwean context. Although the incentives offered may be small, or non-financial, they are often sufficient to motivate many poor people to volunteer (Wilson, 2007).

### **Recognition and Appreciation of Effort**

Forty five percent (most of which being females over the age of 35) of the volunteers, regardless of area of operation, in the survey hinted that program managers should formally recognise their contributions to the programs. Participants in the focus group discussions indicated that to be appreciated, to feel important and needed, was a prime motivator for every volunteer. Volunteers indicated that some regular staff members from the two organisations were not giving due respect to these volunteers. This ranged from criticizing them in the public and not giving them preferential treatment on the distribution of some items to the communities. One volunteer in Chipinge clearly stated she expected to get a double share of agricultural inputs to show the difference between a facilitator and a general beneficiary. This clearly shows that, for some volunteers, volunteering might not be because of altruism but may be in anticipation to expected gains or reward consistent with the provisions of Homan's (1961) exchange theory. Action Aid International (2005) points out the importance of acknowledging the volunteers' work as a genuine source of motivation, because it brings them satisfaction and appreciation; they will feel that what they do is important for the organization. Recognition is also part of the emotional or intrinsic compensation (Volunteer Development Agency, 2001).

Those who felt their efforts were not recognised indicated the NGO staff neither thanked them nor acknowledged that things were done the right or wrong way. This lack of feedback was making the volunteer feel unimportant or unnecessary, which to them, was a great disappointment. One can therefore conclude that volunteers expect professional treatment and private constructive criticism. These sentiments were echoed by Karugu (2008) who reported that encouragement and recognition are essential to stimulating and maintaining active involvement in volunteer groups. There was still room to improve the recognition of efforts by the volunteers in the two organisations with 50% of the volunteers citing it as a suggestion to retain volunteers.

In another dimension of recognition of efforts, 45% of the volunteers regardless of age and profession, felt they would be best motivated if some deserving volunteers in their respective areas were made regular employees by the two organisations should a vacancy arise. This was coming from a background where some volunteers were feeling they could have better occupied some vacancies within the two organisations that were instead, filled by some other people from other areas. In Buhera one FGD participant had this to say, expressing his disappointment at how he lost the bid to get a field officer's post in Organisation B to a stranger who was less qualified than him." *Hazvina kundifadza kuti vangandatora umwevo munhu kupinza basa vachiziva kuti ndiro rangu chairo. Wacho wavakatora haana kudzidza seni. Ndakabva ndaziva kuti vanhu ava vanongoda kundishandisa ivo vasina hanya neni*", (I was disappointed to discover that they choose to take someone outside this area who is less qualified than me. That is when I realised that these people (in organisation B) just want to use me and do not value me).

#### **Payment of Allowances**

Forty percent of the volunteers from Organisation A and 90% of Organisation B were attracted to participate in the respective programs by the allowances attached to the activities they were involved in. All the volunteers expected some reasonable allowances to remain committed to the organisation.

Those who indicated that they would not choose to continue supporting programs being implemented by the two organisations cited lack of unrealistic allowances (100%). FGDs conducted in Buhera and Chipinge provide some insights into such responses. Some participants hinted that some of the facilitators working for the Food security programs were given an average of one American dollar (\$1) per session of teaching beneficiaries which would translate into less than twenty five dollars(<\$5) per month. To them,

such an amount was too little to provide basics for a normal family life considering that the programs they were implementing were so involving that they would not be left with enough time to engage in any meaningful economic or livelihood activity for their families. Let it be pointed out that some of these points were so sentimentally expressed that one would be forced to conclude that the two organisation down played critical ethical consideration in the engagement of volunteers. Would one overburden a volunteer to extend of making him/her worse off in the name of cost cutting?

Some volunteers who participated in the FGDs indicated that both organisations were at times less sensitive to their needs. An example given was during the year 2008 which was a mixture of drought and economy down turn, where the two humanitarian organisations continued to give them monetary allowances when food allowances would have worked well. They were also complaining that their allowance had never been reviewed in light of what other NGOs were offering and other the socio-economic changes, neither was it varied to the benefit of the longest serving volunteers.

Literature has it that, Community Based Development programs in Kenya use various reimbursement schemes, including full-time paid agents, part-time agents with non-monetary incentives, and part-time agents who receive an allowance for expenses and paid agents are more motivated than others (Karugu , 2008).

The greatest challenge facing both organisations was the management of expectation of the volunteer. On manager from Organisation B blamed themselves for not clearly spelling out the terms and conditions of the volunteer work only to be surprised to find out later that volunteers expected some payment. If it was made clear from the onset, one would have made an informed decision accept or to decline the volunteer work. Some want to be treated like employees. This problem was probably exacerbated by the fact that both organisation had no formal contract or memorandum of understanding with the volunteers stating what they would get from their involvement neither did they have job descriptions or written down scope of work. The engagement was highly informal.

It can be noted although offering incentives to volunteers is difficult to sustain, it is an important strategy for attracting the volunteers and keeping them interested in their work. Most volunteers, especially in southern Africa, are unemployed. It therefore becomes unrealistic for people to work without any monetary compensation, even though they may want to volunteer, because they and their families have to survive (Wilson, 2007). It is even

more difficult for the males to volunteer without receiving any monetary compensation because, traditionally, they must provide for their families.

### **Realistic Workload**

Seventeen percent suggested that volunteers should be given a realistic workload as they have other livelihood activities they are involved in, on top of their involvement in the programs. Those who participated in the FGDs reported that too much work tiresome. This could also lead to burnout which often occurs when people feel overwhelmed or cannot see any accomplishment (Frontera, 2007). Achievement even on a small scale leads to a feeling of success, a major factor in sustaining volunteer effort (Frontera, 2007). The volunteers made it very clear through the focus group discussions that they were not prepared to be involved in programs with unrealistic targets, where the chances of meeting targets were very slim. As highlighted above, lack of formal contracts, scope of work and clear performance indicators could have lead some volunteers to be overwhelmed with work.

### **Training Opportunities**

Fifteen percent of the volunteers acknowledged having been attracted by the training opportunities in the program. Sixty two percent of these were female volunteers participating in the food security programs. Most volunteers agree that the quality and intensity of agent training is not only the most important single determinant of program quality and impact but also of volunteer motivation.

Focus group participants reported that all volunteers had a rigorous initial training arranged by the implementing organisation and some of them had some refresher courses during the tenure of the program as a way of orienting them to the programs and sharpening their skills to improve their performance. However, some volunteers who participated in some of the FGDs felt that, on top of these training which mainly benefit the NGO, they expect these NGOs to give them better life skills, like initiating income generating projects, market linkages and other dealership skills which may not have anything to do with the programs they are implementing. These would help them to survive beyond the face of the donor rather than being equipped to deal with a program or problem at hand. Ellis(1989) argued that volunteers do not save money but they do help organizations to use the money they have in the most effective and efficient way, with the consequent understanding that volunteers do not come for free. Organizations must be willing to invest in this valuable resource in order to get the best value out of it.

Discussions with the management of both organisation indicated that they all appreciated an urgent need to professionalize their volunteer

engagement but were challenged by financial constraints. Volunteers were not recruited and contractually managed by their Human resources department but rather by field officers in their respective areas of operations. They all admitted that they were not doing their best in to sustainably motivate volunteer in their programs.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the study showed that volunteers' motivation in Zimbabwe generally revolves around material needs. Initially a volunteer chooses an organization based on a preconceived idea of how that organization will fulfill their desires like leadership ambitions, money to supplement income, training opportunities and other perceived incentives. As volunteers meet others who work in the organization and as they do work themselves, they get a clearer picture of the values, constraints, and traits of the organization which demoralize or burn them out.

Volunteers need supportive feedback as well as recognition for a job well done. A volunteer manager must share the vision of the organization with all volunteers and serve as a liaison between the organization and the volunteers and the basis for the management of the psychological contract. To some extent, one can be tempted to conclude that some volunteers were frustrated because they wanted to be treated like employees of the two organisations. Their behaviour falls within the framework of the frustration-regression principle in Alderfer's E.R.G theory where exhibiting frustrations stemmed from lack of growth and training opportunities and monetary concerns. The understanding of multiple motivators for volunteers is therefore critical for their successful engagement. The above discussed motivators for volunteer are also consistent with David McClelland's (1988) three types of motivational needs; achievement, power, and affiliation which exist in varying degrees volunteers.

The research findings confirm that volunteer like to learn, and to advance in levels of responsibility and that volunteer opportunities should include continued personal development and meaningful service as some volunteers acknowledged having been attracted by the training opportunities in the program. Training opportunities sends the message to volunteers that they are valued by the organisation engaging them. However some volunteers also expect these NGOs to give them better life skills, like initiating income generating projects, market linkages and other dealership skills which may not have anything to do with the programs they are implementing. These would help them to survive beyond the face of the donor rather than being equipped to deal with a specific program.

It was also revealed in the discussion of the payment and expectations of financial allowances and non financial incentives to volunteers that volunteers are not a source of cheap labour and can be more expensive than the use of regular employees. The failure by the two organisation to successfully manage the psychological contracts of these volunteers have resulted in many volunteers complaining of being over burdened following unmet expectations which ultimately caused burnout on some volunteers. NGOs need to take ethical consideration in the engagement of volunteer and ensure that they do not unduly overburden volunteers or making them worse off by robbing them of their time they need to feed for their families. This will make the engagement unsustainable and conflict with the humanitarian mission of NGOs.

It can also be deduced from the above discussion that the owners of engagement (the two NGOs) had no agreed recorded roles and responsibilities of volunteers they engaged, neither they did had formal contracts or memorandum of understanding stipulating what they should/(not) expect (materials, incentive or remuneration the committee will receive) from the relationship. This weak engagement process generally challenged the management of expectations from both parties.

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