

# RESEARCH You May Have Missed

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
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**RESEARCH YOU MAY HAVE MISSED** . . . provides brief summaries of recent research relevant to youth development practice. It is designed to help youth development professionals keep up-to-date with contemporary research.

■ Boyd, B.L. (2003).

**Identifying competencies for volunteer administrators for the coming decade: A national Delphi study.**  
*Journal of Agricultural Education*, 44(4), 47-56.

The role of the volunteer administrator is in flux. The use of volunteers is becoming more important at a variety of organizations, and volunteers are themselves becoming more specialized and demanding in the use of their time. Cooperative Extension uses volunteers extensively, including more than 624,000 in 4-H alone. This study used a panel of experts to develop competencies that will be needed by volunteer administrators during the next decade; identify barriers to the acquisition of these competencies by administrators and discuss ways to overcome these barriers. The Delphi technique was used for developing group consensus; participants were separately asked to name competencies, barriers, and methods for overcoming these barriers, and then were asked to review others' responses to develop a common set of responses. A total of 33 competencies were developed using this method. The competencies were grouped generally into organizational leadership; systems leadership; organizational culture; personal skills; and management skills. Organizational leadership included competencies such as long-range planning skills, organizational vision, and the

creative use of technology to impact programs. Systems leadership included items such as understanding group dynamics and team building and collaborating with others. Organizational culture included competencies such as creating a positive environment, effective interpersonal skills, and trusting volunteers to get the job done. Personal skills included such items as conflict resolution, communication, and ability to predict and manage change. Management skills included being competent in recruiting, screening, recognizing, and retaining volunteers, among others. Significant barriers to attaining these competencies included both personal (e.g., unwillingness, lack of knowledge) as well as organizational (lack of organizational commitment, too many responsibilities for the administrator, etc.) barriers. The group recommended several methods for encouraging the attainment of these competencies, such as recognizing and rewarding administrators for attaining the competencies, creating an environment that encourages life-long learning, offering coursework in these areas, and allowing flexibility in work schedules. This article is useful in considering what skills volunteer administrators need and how they can attain those skills. **-KEH**

■ Dorsch, K.D., Riemer, H.A., Sluth, V., Paskevich, D.M., & Chelladurai, P. (2002).

**What affects a volunteer's commitment?**  
Toronto, Ontario: *Canadian Centre for Philanthropy*.

This report examines how organizations can attain a high level of commitment from their volunteers. Volunteer satisfaction is key to volunteer retention. This report delineates the results of a study looking

at motivations and satisfaction of 1,074 volunteers, 56% of whom were female, ranging in age from 12 to 79 who volunteered in a variety of sports, recreation, and cultural organizations in Saskatchewan. The authors

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found that to have the highest level of commitment from their volunteers, organizations must have clear policies and procedures; create a safe, trustworthy, and supportive environment; ensure that volunteers accept their responsibilities; and give volunteers ways to satisfy their need to help their communities and others. Volunteers are more motivated when they like the social environment in which they volunteer, including the volunteer's freedom and control, sense of safety, support, recognition, and level of trust and fairness. Volunteers are motivated when they want

to achieve a desired outcome, such as helping others, advancing their careers, interacting with others and being recognized for their efforts. Volunteers want to feel that their role is important; they want to fully understand their role, accept its responsibilities, and feel sure they can do it. They want to be satisfied and feel good about their role. Organizations that do a good job supporting their volunteers, making policies clear, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for volunteers, and matching the volunteers' needs with their roles will have more success in retaining volunteers. **-KEH**

- Ecklund, E.H., & Park, J.Z. (2007).

**Religious diversity and community volunteerism among Asian Americans.**

*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46(2), 233-244.

Religion and race both significantly impact rates of volunteerism in the U.S. As American society grows more diverse, it is important to analyze the ways in which the increasing presence of non-white, non-Christian religions impact participation in volunteerism. This article analyzes how Protestant, Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist religions impact volunteerism among Asian-Americans. The authors begin by reviewing literature that shows that religious organizations can facilitate increased volunteerism, but also tends to group demographically similar people together. Additionally, it has been shown that people from minority groups are often not asked to volunteer as frequently as from White groups. With this context in mind, the authors hypothesize that, first, religiously affiliated Asian-Americans will have higher rates of volunteerism than the non-affiliated. Second, that human capital such as education level, income, and gender will have a positive effect on volunteerism among Asian-Americans in the same way that it does among White Americans. Third, that Protestant and Catholic Asian-Americans will volunteer more than Asian-Americans from non-Christian groups because the Christian religious organizational structure tends to facilitate American-style volunteerism. The authors tested these hypotheses by analyzing data from the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey.

These data allowed them to draw comparisons between Christians and non-Christians, and to measure the possible influence of religion on civic participation. They found that Protestant and Catholic Asian-Americans did volunteer more than Asian-Americans of other religions. In fact, Buddhist and Hindu affiliated Asian-Americans volunteered less than Protestant and Catholics, but also less than non-religiously affiliated Asian-Americans. They also found, in contrast to their original hypothesis, that human capital variables did not increase volunteerism rates among Asian-Americans as they tend to for White Americans. It is possible that the structure of non-Christian groups does not facilitate organized volunteerism in the structured way that volunteerism is viewed in the U.S. Additionally, Asian-Americans who are Buddhist or Hindu may have lower rates of volunteerism because they face a double-minority status by being part of both racial and religious minority groups. As a result, they are not asked to volunteer as frequently or they are not involved in organizations that foster volunteerism. The authors conclude by noting that "researchers should not assume emerging diverse communities will simply fit the models of civic participation found among other groups. Rather, the diversity in forms of participation among non-Christian religions might generate different kinds of volunteer habits when compared with Christian religions" (242). **-ES**

- Hager, M.A., & Brudney, J.L. (2004).

**Volunteer management practices and retention of volunteers.**

Washington, DC: *The Urban Institute*.

The Urban Institute did a national telephone survey in 2003 of 1,753 charities in the United States (an 80 percent response rate from their overall sample), looking at volunteer activities and management practices. Their study was based on findings from a

1998 study that showed that two-fifths of volunteers have stopped volunteering at some point because of problems with volunteer management and administration where they were volunteering. The authors identified nine best practices in volunteer management and examined the

extent to which charities had adopted those practices, which included (in descending order of the proportion of charities which followed them) (1) regular supervision and communication with volunteers; (2) liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers; (3) regular collection of information on volunteer numbers and hours; (4) screening practices to identify suitable volunteers; (5) written policies and job descriptions for volunteer involvement; (6) recognition activities such as award ceremonies for volunteers; (7) annual measurement of the impacts of volunteers; (8) training and professional development opportunities for volunteers; and (9) training for paid staff in working with volunteers. Overall, only practice (1) was followed by a majority of respondents. Larger charities were more likely to have adopted the best practices identified. Organizations that used

volunteers more extensively or for more hours, particularly in direct service such as mentoring or tutoring, were more likely to have adopted the best practices. Retention rates averaged around 80 percent from year to year, but varied widely across charities. Retention rates were negatively associated with having a younger volunteer base (under age 24) as well as with, surprisingly, communication with volunteers. Volunteer recognition activities, training and professional development for volunteers, screening of volunteers, and one-on-one recruitment were positively associated with retention. Organizations that adopted practices most directly concerned with satisfying their volunteer base reap the highest rates of retention. Volunteers did not tend to be motivated by practices that served the needs of the organization rather than the needs of the volunteers. **-KEH**

- Kemmelmeier, M., Jambor, E.E., & Letner, J. (2006). **Individualism and good works: Cultural variation in giving and volunteering across the United States.** *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 37(3), 327-344.

The present study investigates whether cultural individualism is related to greater levels of prosocial behavior toward strangers. The study explores the cultural differences between an individualist-oriented culture, which has been associated with the pursuit of one's self-interest rather than group interest, and a collectivist-oriented culture, in which individuals are expected to support members of their in-group, to examine if one group is more likely to volunteer and make charitable contributions. The authors used results from the 1999 installment of *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, a biannually-conducted national study to obtain representative state-level data on charitable giving and volunteering. Results indicated

that across states, giving and volunteering were reliably related. Individualism had a significant effect on giving and volunteering when they occurred for the benefit of a nonreligious organization but not when they occurred for a religious organization or informally. Individualism was more strongly related to volunteering for educational organizations, youth development causes, recreational organizations, and work-related causes than it was to any of the other causes assessed. The results suggest that, contrary to the view that individualism is a selfish orientation inherently opposed to community, prosocial behavior is a consequence of individualism, reflecting a sense of personal responsibility to and engagement with the community. **-RC**

- Kolnick, L., & Mulder, J. (2007). **Strategies to improve recruitment of male volunteers in nonprofit agencies.** *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*, 24(2), 98-104.

Many non-profit organizations rely heavily on recruiting and retaining volunteers. More specifically, many organizations find it challenging to recruit male volunteers. In response to this challenge, the authors asked adult males living in the Austin, TX area for their opinions and views of volunteering. Three focus groups were formed from men in business, religious, and homosexual organizations. They were asked about barriers and motivations to volunteering as well as features of organizations that would increase their likelihood of volunteering. The focus groups

also discussed optimal groups from which to recruit male volunteers. Barriers to volunteering included time, fear of commitment, feelings of incompetence, not knowing anyone, and fear of schedule inflexibility. Once having volunteered, many found it difficult to resist requests to invest more time or take on more responsibilities. Men with families were also concerned about finding volunteer activities for the entire family. Men tended to have less desire to participate in nurture-type roles. Motivating factors to volunteering included being familiar with the organization, being asked in person to volunteer, mattering

to someone, meeting someone outside of the person's everyday life, potential to volunteer for short-term projects, hearing specific examples of volunteer activities, being able to volunteer for problem-solving activities, and meeting people. Men also emphasized a desire to feel altruistic in helping another person as a motivating factor. According to the participants, organizations seeking volunteers should be well-organized with competent leadership and have clearly stated goals, including how donated money is spent. Organizations should first present information in a short presentation (e.g., an on-site lunch meeting) before requiring long training sessions. Training sessions should not take place during weekdays, and these

focus groups believed a 4-hour per month commitment was feasible. If a long-term commitment is required, these participants desired to understand the reason for this requirement. These men also desired to know that if they disliked a task, they could move within the organization to help with a different activity. Finally, the participants report the best groups from which to recruit male volunteers include college groups (e.g., fraternities), government organizations, religious groups and youth groups, corporations, high school students (e.g., sports teams), and the Internet. The Interfaith Care Alliance hopes to use this information to better recruit males into their nonprofit organization. **-KB**

■ Kulik, L. (2007).

**Explaining responses to volunteering: An ecological model.**

*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 36(2), 239-255.

Volunteering is defined as activity for the benefit of others that individuals perform out of their free will. Because it is performed out of one's own personal desire, the idea of burnout with regard to volunteering has not often been researched. The present study examined the relationship between sociodemographic variables (gender, age, economic and education) and personality traits, to volunteering satisfaction and burnout, in the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model proposes that human development occurs in a continuing process of mutual interactions between individuals and their environments. The goal of the present study was to examine the relationship between each of the sociodemographic and personality trait variables as they exist within the micro system (reflecting relationships between individuals and their families) and the macro system (one's ethnicity), with volunteering satisfaction and burnout. Questionnaires were given to 275 volunteers at various social service organizations in Israel. In Israeli society it is commonly believed that Israelis of Asian or African ethnicity (Mizrahim) are relatively traditional and subscribe to collectivist values, leading the researcher to hypothesize that they would have more positive attitudes to volunteering, than Ashkenazim Israelis (European or American), who tend to be

more modern and individualistic. Results indicated that age was related to each of the outcome variables: the older the participants, the lower their levels of burnout and the greater their satisfaction with volunteer activity. There was a negative correlation between education and satisfaction with volunteering: participants with higher levels of education expressed lower levels of satisfaction. There was no correlation between age and burnout, nor between economic situation or gender and volunteering. Participants with high self-esteem and high levels of empowerment expressed low levels of burnout and high levels of satisfaction with volunteer activity. This was also true for family support. The more support participants received from their families, the higher their levels of satisfaction and the lower their levels of burnout with volunteer activity. Professional supervision was also related to satisfaction with volunteer activity. When asked about issues concerning the provider organization, difficulties (lack of appreciation, wasting time, ambiguity and clients' suffering) were each positively correlated with burnout. With regard to differences between the ethnic groups in this study, Mizrahim did report higher levels of satisfaction with volunteer activity than Ashkenazim. The results of this study highlight the importance of considering the influences of an individual's environment when examining the effect of volunteer activity. **-RC**

- Mesch, D.J., Rooney, P.M., Steinberg, K.S., & Denton, B. (2006).

**The effects of race, gender, and marital status on giving and volunteering in Indiana.**

*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 35(4), 565-587.

This study has two purposes: to examine how race, gender and marital status impact rates of giving and volunteerism, and to explore how different survey methodologies bring out different answers in response to questions about volunteerism and giving, particularly among people from diverse population groups. Past research has shown that women tend to volunteer and give charitably more than do men. Research about the effect of race on volunteerism is more complex – a number of studies have shown that Whites tend to volunteer more than Blacks or Latinos. However, some studies have shown that controlling for human capital considerations, such as income, educational level and occupational status, can eliminate this gap. Research has also shown that race impacts the types of volunteerism that people do, with minorities disproportionately involved in informal volunteering, and are also asked to volunteer or give less often. For this study, the authors hypothesized that people who are older, have higher incomes, are more educated, and are married tend to volunteer and give more. They expected to see different rates by both gender and race assuming that women carry more of the giving burden and that discrimination excludes minorities from participation in charitable giving and volunteering. The authors also predicted that the differences found in giving and volunteerism would be impacted by different survey methodologies and

that people of different races and genders would respond differently to various survey methods. The authors used data from Indiana households and used a multi-method, multi-group research design employing eight different survey methodologies to compare rates of volunteerism and giving. Different survey methodologies did reveal differences in reported rates of volunteerism; one example of this was that frequent prompts in the survey resulted in more volunteer hours being reported. The results indicated that single females volunteer more than single males. Contrary to the original hypothesis, race did not impact volunteerism rates however there was a significant decrease in volunteerism among respondents with high school education or less. Although there were significant gender differences and differences between single and married respondents, the authors did not find that race created differences in volunteer rates when they controlled for human capital considerations. As a result, differences that may have been considered “race differences” appear from this study to actually be income, education or occupational status differences. As the demographic make-up of the U.S. shifts, women and people of color have gained access to a wider range of institutions. It is crucial to understand how gender and race impact their participation within these institutions; this study begins to explore these issues but also underscores how much more research is needed in this area. **-ES**

- Petrzalka, P., & Mannon, S.E. (2006).

**Keepin’ this little town going: Gender and volunteerism in rural America.**

*Gender & Society*, 20(2), 236-258.

Most studies on the topic of women and volunteering have focused on middle- and upper-class women volunteering in suburban and urban contexts. In general, these studies have indicated that while the volunteer work benefits communities, women themselves tend to minimize their efforts. The authors propose that the context in which the volunteering takes place influences whether women downplay or acknowledge the impact of their volunteer efforts. To explore this, women’s volunteerism in the tourist industry of rural America is examined. The authors focused on a small rural community in Iowa, specifically focusing on a local tourism organization, whose main focus was to develop tourism in the area through bus tours and the establishment and maintenance of a visitor’s center. For the volunteers,

typical activities included greeting tourists, selling items in the gift shop and providing tourism information to those who call or visit. The results are based on ethnographic data from 15 volunteers. Data were collected through on-site observations and interviews. Results indicated that the women framed their volunteer experiences in three ways: (1) as an expression of their maternal nature; (2) socially, as a way to have fun and meet people; and (3) materially, as a contribution to the economic development of the town. The women did not downplay or understate the importance of their volunteer work, emphasizing that their unpaid labor contributed to the social and economic vitality of the community. This study highlights the importance of considering the social context in which women’s volunteerism occurs. **-RC**



- Points of Light Foundation. (2001).

**Evaluation Report: Engaging persons with disabilities in service.**

Online link: <http://www.jjhill.org/pol/index.cfm?action=main.individualProvideDoc&lngID=1566>

This report shares findings from a project initiated by the Points of Light Foundation in the year 2000 to learn how to effectively engage volunteers with disabilities. The report addresses three areas, namely, participation or the notion that everyone can serve, lessons learned on recruiting and engaging volunteers with disabilities, and changes in organizational policies and practices. Based on the initiative to engage volunteers with disabilities in service, the organization reports its successes and insights, suggesting that volunteers with disabilities can serve in a myriad of ways, and have generally been an untapped resource. In most cases, volunteers reported that this was the first time they had been asked to serve or provided with an opportunity where they were seen as contributors rather than recipients of service. Some lessons learned about recruiting and engaging volunteers with disabilities included: adequate planning in advance, engaging volunteers with disabilities in advisory boards, collaborating with organizations that serve

individuals with disabilities, making sure that project characteristics and setting met ADA standards. Most of the organizations involved in the initiative found that they made changes to their organizational policies and practices to include volunteers with disabilities successfully in their programs. However many organizations found that similar structures and practices had to be in place when engaging volunteers with disabilities as when working with youth or youth volunteers, for example, having systems in place for transport, or having another adult present that could provide assistance or support. Many organizations already had these systems in place. The report addresses key aspects of volunteer recruitment and engagement that could improve the volunteer force for youth development programs, namely, creating an inclusive volunteer force through engaging persons with disabilities and thereby tapping a resource that is seldom utilized; and creating an effective system for episodic volunteers, another strategy that is under-utilized. -AS

- Points of Light Foundation and National Network of Volunteers. (2004).

**Volunteering in under-resourced rural communities. Final Report.**

Online Link: <http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/neighboring/resources/pdfs/RuralCommunities.pdf>

This report describes key findings from a study exploring the nature and practice of volunteering in low income rural communities. Two phases of case studies including key informant interviews for volunteer centers in ten states and focus groups from three rural communities explored the nature of volunteering in under-resourced rural communities, the unique challenges in engaging low-income rural volunteers, new and emerging effective strategies to mobilize rural volunteers, and documenting how volunteers strengthened families and communities. The report describes certain commonalities of low income rural areas, namely, a narrower economic resource compared to urban areas, a tradition of informal rather than formal volunteering, cultural transitions with changing demographics, and lack of affordable and accessible training opportunities. In general the informal volunteering, also known as neighboring, is a predominant activity that creates and maintains rural community life. Challenges to volunteering were identified as a lack of personal and public transportation, negative perceptions of low-income populations, lack of recognition of the

barriers faced, lack of trust, and rural organizations' limited capacity and resource base. The top issues that attracted volunteers included projects that benefited youth or their schools, community-driven issues and issues related to health. Key informants reported that rural volunteers were generally geared to meet immediate needs and crisis situations. Similar to volunteer recruitment strategies in urban areas, the most effective ways to get rural, low-income volunteers involved were by personal invitation, speaking the language (being culturally and linguistically appropriate), recruiting college and high school students and court ordered workers. In addition the focus groups suggested utilizing community-driven motivations by organizing task-forces to work on key community issues, building the trust and credibility of organizational leaders and collaborating to share resources with other organizations. One key message from the report was that volunteer management for a rural area could not follow a specific blue-print since rural communities have unique needs and characteristics. Organizations need to take a place-based approach in successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers from under-resourced rural communities. -AS

Rhodes, J. E., & Reddy, R. (2002).

**Volunteer mentoring relationships with minority youth: An analysis of same-versus cross-race matches.**  
*Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32(10), 2114-2133.

Volunteers can make their largest impact on young people by becoming youth mentors. The question has risen, however, as to whether it is better to match mentors and mentees based on race. To address this question, the authors of this article compared outcomes of minority youth with both same-race and cross-race mentors enrolled in Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. The authors first cite reasons to support same-race matching, such as the belief that an adult of another race cannot accurately advise a youth of how to succeed as a minority if that adult is not a minority. The authors also cite reasons to support cross-race matching, including the belief that mentor qualities have a far greater influence than race and that it may in fact be beneficial by bringing separate socioeconomic groups together. The authors studied 476 minority

youth who were between 9 and 16 years of age. These minority youth were paired with either a mentor of the same-race, a different race (European American), or placed in a control group with no mentor. Parent, youth, and case manager data were collected via self-report at the start of the study and again 12 months later. Overall, youth with same-race mentors were more likely to report the initiation of alcohol use. Gender differences were also found: minority girls matched with a same-race mentor had less decrease in school value and self-worth while minority boys matched with a same-race mentor had less decrease in scholastic competence and self-worth, compared to cross-race matches of the same genders. The authors conclude that the race of the mentor may have less impact on youth outcomes than once thought. **-KB**

## Book Reviews

. . . on topics relevant to youth development will be periodically published. We encourage submissions for future editions. Reviews may be sent to Ramona Carlos (rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu).

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