

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE VOLUNTEERS

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Abstract: Between the existing production factors, the human resources represents an important resource of any organisation; this resource having a particular specificity, being unique, enjoying particular qualities, which make them indispensable. In NGOs, besides with hired staff, are operating, also, the the volunteers, who have both rights and obligations within the organization.

Paper aims to analyse a range of issues related to management of the volunteers. The methodological approach was based on using the field sociological survey, based on a questionnaire.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relations between NGOs and their beneficiaries, the volunteers represent the main bridge, having a leading role in the smooth running of projects and programs of the organizations. The relations between these two entities, NGOs and volunteers, involve a series of rights and obligations which are drawn from their nature of their particularities.

For efficient management of relationships between volunteers and, also, for responsible, involvement of volunteers in the programs of the organizations it is required a careful organization of these activities by an efficient management of volunteers.

2. STAGES OF THE VOLUNTEERS' MANAGEMENT

The volunteers' management is a process presuming completion of 9 basic steps:

- the preparing of the organization for involving the volunteers;
- recruiting volunteers;
- the selection of volunteers;
- orientation and training of the volunteers;
- supervising the volunteers;
- the motivating of the volunteers;
- the recognizing of the volunteers;
- ensuring relationships between volunteers and staff;
- evaluation of programs and volunteers.

The preparing of the organization for involving the volunteers is the pre-planning stage, the longest and most difficult part of creating a volunteers' management system. This stage involves a series of changes at the level of the organization's documents, at the level of the attitudes inside the organization and of the operating mode.

In order that the whole activity of the organization to be efficient, in order that the volunteers to feel welcome and in order that the organization to meet their motivations, it is necessary the completion of the following phases:

- the declaration of the volunteering as an organizational value;
- the analyze of the needs of the organization in the involvement of the volunteers;
- the developing a set of policies / procedures;
- the appointment / hiring a volunteers' coordinator;
- the preparation of the required documents;
- the allocating a budget for the involving of the volunteers.

Also, in order to achieve a good preparation for receiving of the volunteers, it is particularly useful editing a publication called the *Volunteers' Guide*. The document will be

distributed to the new volunteers and has an essential role in preliminary orientation and, also, in ongoing.

It is recommended that the *Volunteers' Guide* contains a series of information as in the example presented in the table no. 1.

Table no.1 Volunteers' Guide

General informations about the organization:	Informations about the volunteering in the organization :	Policies and procedures of the organization
➤ Introduction / Welcome	➤ The role of the volunteers in the organization;	➤ General rules
➤ Brief history of the organization;	➤ Services and programs involving the volunteering	➤ Organization's ethical code
➤ Organizational chart / organizational structure	➤ How to start	➤ Management practices
➤ Whole team list (name, responsibilities, contacts)	➤ The volunteers' job descriptions	➤ Expectations about results
➤ Mission and vision	➤ Roles and responsibilities	➤ Disciplinary action
➤ A brief description of services / programs		➤ Dismissal
➤ Profile of clients (beneficiaries)		
➤ Annual budget and funding sources (for short)		

Recruiting volunteers is a complex process by which the organization attracts and leads people to engage directly in volunteer activities arising from the programs organized by the organization.

In "Management. Conceptions and applications" the recruitment is defined by Panaite Nica and Aurelian Iftimescu "the personnel recruitment represents the attraction and formation of a lot of candidates eligible for occupying one of more vacancies." [8]

The purpose of recruitment is, especially, attracting the right people for the activities supported by the organization and, also, may be an opportunity to reinvigorate the organization by bringing new forces into the existing team. Recruitment is a process of strategic importance in the ongoing and development of the programs and activities of the organization and, that is why, it is impulsive that the recruitment should receive a careful planning of its stages, in close connection with the elaboration of procedures for selection of volunteers based on analysis of needs of the organization.

In order to assess the needs of the organization, it is necessary to examine important issues such as:

- the activities that can be carried out by the volunteers;
- the number of volunteers needed to carry out the program or the programs of the organization;
- the abilities and the qualities of volunteers, the organization has in view for their recruitment.

The failure of the recruitment process entails failure of the programs due to the lack of the volunteers.

The importance of recruitment is underlined by the involvement in the process of all those who are directly or indirectly parts of the organization, from the board of directors and employees of the organization to existing volunteers and even to the beneficiaries of the organization's programs.

The selection of volunteers is the process that deals with the following distinct situations:

- the organization to find the best volunteer work;
- the organization to find / create appropriate activities for volunteers who come into the organization and do not fit any existing positions.

Selection can be done in two ways:

- empirical selection - based solely on qualifications, recommendations, references and impressions
- scientific selection - complex methods criteria based that finally give an accurate picture of the daily. [6]

The selection of volunteer activity is closely related to recruitment activities, but clear determination of the roles of volunteers in the organization must take into account certain criteria essential to the success of activities such as:

- the expectations of the organization from the volunteers;
- the potential expectations of the volunteers from the organization ;
- the characteristics of the beneficiaries and of the programs in which volunteers will be involved;
- expectations of the beneficiaries from the volunteers and from the organization providing services.

The importance of the volunteers selection activity is determined by the fact that it permits to:

- identify existing abilities of the volunteers;
- identify training needs of volunteers for the success of future activities;
- allow orientation of the volunteers to work according to their individual abilities, interests and motivation;
- the volunteers to be involved in activities suitable for the category of the beneficiaries of the organization;
- the volunteers to clarify the picture about the organization, ongoing activities and their role in this structure
- the staff and the volunteers to clearly differentiate their roles.

Selection of volunteers is done by different methods depending on the scope and specifics of the organization. Among the most common tools used in selecting volunteers are found as described below.

Application forms - are used in the first stage of the volunteers' selection process, the information so collected are used to guide the volunteer to an activity or to become the base of the selection interview.

Recommendations - come as a complement to other methods and do not represent an alternative to them;

Recommendations may contain relevant informations about volunteer, on one hand, from the perspective of the relation with the person who made the recommendation and, in other hand, which were not surprised by any application forms or during the selection interview.

Volunteer selection interview is the tool by which we can gain the most complete information on prospective volunteers. Interview is:

- a tool for gathering information;
- a possibility of transmitting the desired informations about the organization, activities and beneficiaries;
- an opportunity to assess motivation, interest and abilities of prospective volunteers
- an opportunity to evaluate options for future integration of volunteers in the organization;
- a possibility for the volunteer to assess the possibilities of integrating in the organization from his own perspective.

The interview should be a two way process in which the organization obtains the desired information about the volunteers, and volunteers get the desired information about the organization.

These tools can be used singly or in various combinations.

Orientation and training of the volunteers - The orientation or welcome session is an opportunity for the volunteer, not only to familiarize himself with the organization and its concrete activities, but also to meet existing training opportunities. The orientation session should be required to answer to few simple questions that anyone ask himself when he want to get into an organization: *why get involved? how to get involved? with whom I will work?*

The orientation is an opportunity to the volunteer both to familiarize himself with the organization and its specific activities, but to know the existing training opportunities. It is important to give time and attention required to the orientation session in order to ensure the accumulation of the new volunteers of all knowledges and abilities which are necessary to the volunteering work.

The orientation or welcome session is a process by which the new volunteers achieve to accumulate as much possible informations about the organization they wish to be volunteers before starting to work, beginning with the transmission of the mission of the organization.

The orientation session would be appropriate to be supported by a *volunteer coordinator* or by a specialized person in training domain/ education. If in the organization does not exist such a function is recommended that the orientation session to be held by a person with developed communication abilities such as an employee of the department of public relations or, possibly, an older volunteer knowing the history, mission, values of the organization and the activities in which the volunteers can get involved. It is recommended that the orientation session to be conducted on-the headquarter of the organization in order that the newcomer volunteer to know the place where he will work, to know his colleagues, volunteers and / or employees of the organization.

The training offered by the organization has the function to increase the performance of volunteering activities. This training has a beneficial influence any future work of the volunteer (or volunteered or paid), and this aspect deserves to be underlined when to the volunteer is given the opportunity to attend a training session offered by the organization. Informations and abilities developed during these training sessions are some of the benefits offered by the organization to its volunteers.

The training sessions meet the needs of volunteers linked to specific abilities and knowledges they need to carry out their activities that they have chosen to undertake. It is important that the training to be done by specialists in that training field. The training must be adapted, both in terms of information content but in terms of methods of transmitting knowledges to a specific group of volunteers trained at a given time. In general, it is to be preferred a friendly and practical approach and practice, instead of a rigid and formal approach.

Supervising the volunteers - Once the volunteers were recruited, selected, oriented toward tasks which are suited with their profile, the activity may begin! But from this point onwards, starts the task of the continuous monitoring of the activity of the volunteers, task owing to the volunteer coordinator. He must ensure that the volunteers' involving in the program is proceeding normally, so that objectives are achieved on time and at optimal quality parameters, the team is united and has no internal conflicts.

As noted above, the supervising can be achieved by:

- the coordinator of the volunteers;
- the coordinator of the department where he was placed (or employees of the department, with whom the volunteer works directly);
- a volunteer who assumes the leadership.

In centralized organizations and centralized programs in which most tasks are performed by volunteers, the supervising activity is done by the coordinator of the volunteers. However, this activity is very costly in terms of time spent, often this type of organization preclude ongoing of other activities organized by the coordinator of the volunteers and, so, the overall development of the volunteering program in all.

In contrast, in decentralized organizations where volunteers are placed in the departments of the organization, the coordinator of the volunteers shares the task of supervision with the coordinators of those departments or with employees working directly with volunteers. In some cases, the task of supervision is completely delegated to the latter.

Another possibility is that the supervision may be performed even by a volunteer who assumes leadership. The volunteers are excellent supervisors and to the fact that they reinforce, thus, the cohesion of the volunteers as a group. This variant has the advantage that besides that it reliefs the work of the employees, who may use, so, the time for other activities, it is, also, a good way to recognize the merits and the rewards of the volunteers (it is, finally, matter of a promotion on the hierarchical scale of the organization). The coordinator of the volunteer may provide training, advice and support throughout the activity of supervising other volunteers.

The special cases of the supervising are those situations where the contact with the volunteers is more difficult because of physical distance between the supervisor and the place of the ongoing of the activity of the volunteer:

- supervision of volunteers who are placed in other departments;
- supervision of volunteers working in the field.

The motivating of the volunteers - The motivation as a managerial process essentially aims to create a force field able to guide the conduct of all employees to the same horizon of expectation that better meet their needs. [2]

For an effective motivation of the volunteers, the coordinator of the volunteers must take into account the complexity and diversity of personal reasons which have led them to offer their time and abilities in the service of the organization's mission. The motivating of the volunteers (what is doing the organization to create optimal conditions to the volunteers for carrying out their work) and the inner motivation of volunteers are the two sides of same coin.

When creating motivating activities for the volunteers, it must take into account two important criteria:

- the need for consultation of the staff;

To indicate different needs or events linked to the work of the volunteers in the organization, it is very important that this consultation process between the coordinator of the volunteers and the staff to be permanent;

- the orientation of the jobs created to the concrete results.

This reasoning strategy has three essential characteristics of volunteers:

- *the ability to assume "ownership" of the concrete results* – it is important for the volunteer to have the possibility to say: 'I did it myself!'. The sentiment of the personal pride to a particular result can be undermined when the volunteer's work is only a part of a long string of actions that will lead to a result;

- *the opportunity to participate in the elaborating of the tasks* - the volunteer is not only involved in fulfilling the task, but also in planning and designing it. Sometimes, the staff may be reluctant to provide this opportunities to the volunteer, especially, reluctance justifiable when the turnover of the volunteers is very high;

- *the responsibility for results* – the volunteers should be responsible for successful achievement of the task. The task of the coordinator of the volunteers is to quantify the expected results if possible, to explain their importance to volunteers and then to monitor the measure in which the result is realized or not, providing constructive feedback as is necessary. In this context *the measurement of the results* is absolutely necessary in order to provide to the volunteer the mirror of the quality of his work.

The volunteers have multiple needs. The art to motivate them consists not only in to know how to approach them, but, especially, in to be able to understand the combination of individual needs, which are reflected in the team as a distinct entity. The easiest way to obtain accurate and complete informations is to ask for volunteers, reviewing with them the importance of different factors of motivation.

The recognizing of the volunteers - The recognizing of the merits of the volunteers - is a process, an attitude that must exist in all that can be done to attract, to inspire and to maintain the motivation of the volunteers. The key is to identify the needs of the person in order to may deliver exactly what is most important for the person or the group in case.

The recognizing of the merits of the volunteers is an important step in volunteers' management and is a sign of professionalism that is treated the involving of the volunteers in the activities of an organization. One of the most frequent problems of the recognition systems is that they fail to address to the individual motivation, starting from the premise that everyone in the organization have similar reasons for completing tasks.

Ensuring relationships between volunteers and staff - The efficient work in an organization requires an excellent cooperation between team members and different departments of the organization. When the organization has both paid staff and, also, the help of volunteers, the cooperation between them becomes essential, especially being given the differences between them. Thus, the coordinator of the volunteers becomes a kind of lawyer of the volunteers in the front of the employees, he having to constantly ensure that the employees understand, respect and contribute to the increasing of the motivation of the volunteers, who collaborate with the organization.

The volunteers often arrive to work with other employees instead with the coordinator who recruited and trained them, but only rarely reaching to supervise them personally the work of the volunteers. Most often the volunteers become subject to other employees in the departments of the organization, working in related activities of the task delegated to them. So, the collaboration is essential, of it depending the efficiency of the fulfilling the objectives and the quality of their work.

The success of the collaboration occurs only when the organization's employees have the knowledges about how to work with the volunteers and are motivated to work with them. The same is true in terms of volunteers, except that the motivation for their work is self-evident. However, their prior training is as well necessary for employees.

For effective collaboration, it is necessary to remove the communication barriers, misunderstandings and prejudgements that they have about each other, volunteers and employees. The causes of the problems that arise between the two parties it is most often

the consequence of the confusion over their own role and of the attributes of the other party (volunteers, respectively, employees). Therefore, an essential role is given to the prior training of both sides concerning the cooperation, but, especially, of the employees.

Evaluation of programs and volunteers - The necessity for systematic program evaluation activities which are on gone by the organizations / institutions and volunteers arrived in the context of increased need for responsibility. To justify the undertaken activities or to attract public support to initiate, to on go or to support certain activities, it is necessary to have measurable results, which justify the program in cause and demonstrate the positive effects that will have on identified beneficiaries. Also, a program, that has since the beginning a set of clear objectives and successful measurable indicators, will be easier to put into practice.

The assessment is carried out at different levels within an organization:

- volunteers' work;
- volunteers' program itself;
- the project within which runs the volunteer program;
- the team efforts of volunteers;
- the staff' efforts;
- the impact on beneficiaries;
- the degree in which the predetermined objectives of the program have been achieved.

3. THE CASE STUDY

The case study pursued the approach of volunteers' management through the light of the incorporated stages of this complex process, in the goal to highlight the most representative stage of volunteer-organization relationship.

For this purpose it was developed a questionnaire with 27 questions that covered all stages, each of them having a scale with 7 levels of response.

Key pursued issues referred to:

- the existence and the content of volunteers' guide;
- the volunteers' recruitment procedures;
- the volunteers' selection process;
- the transmission of all knowledges and abilities which are necessary to the volunteering work;
- the monitoring of the volunteers;
- the motivating of the volunteers;
- the involvement of the volunteers in the activity of the organization to the maximum of their possibilities;
- the rewarding of the volunteers;
- the volunteers-staff relationship;
- the efficiency indicators of the volunteers' programs.

4. CONCLUSIONS

After the centralization of the results of the questionnaires it was found that the motivation, as a stage of the volunteers' management, raises most serious problems faced by managers, volunteers and coordinators of the volunteers. They must take into account that the motivating factors differ depending on the individual needs of each volunteer.

Thus, we may distinguish the following three main categories of needs, each one corresponding to the specific motivational factors:

1. the volunteers with needs for self-realization:
 - the clearly defined tasks;
 - the quantification of the success methods;
 - the documentation of the success in other organizations (letter of recommendation etc.);
 - the offered tasks from the category: “first of its kind”, “most important”;
 - the possibility to work independently;
 - the involvement in the designing the process through which will achieve the goals.
2. the volunteers with needs for affiliation:
 - the ability to establish personal relationships;
 - the fact to be appreciated as a person;
 - the opportunities to interact;
 - the personalized rewards
 - the feeling of being part of a group, team, etc.;
 - the chance to work for people.
3. the volunteers with power needs:
 - the possibility to have a certain degree of independence in achievement the task;
 - the access to people and to information they need;
 - the ability to take risks;
 - the recognition of merit, encouragement;
 - the contact with new challenges;
 - the feeling that they are openers of the roads.

By correctly matching the personal characteristics of each volunteer with motivational factors, it may realize an effective motivation of them, that leads to an involvement of them in the projects and in the programs of the organization.

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