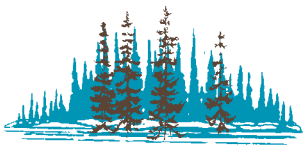
Intersections and Innovations

Change for Canada's Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector

The Muttart Foundation

ISBN: 978-1-897282-30-4



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Acknowledgements

For far too long, Canada has lacked a comprehensive resource examining Canada's charitable sector. That has now ended.

The Muttart Foundation has spent many years focusing on building the capacity of charities in this country. The publication of this collection is another contribution to that effort. By understanding more about itself, the sector can continue to develop and find new ways to serve Canadians and those in need outside our nation.

The authors of these essays bring different perspectives on the role and inner workings of Canada's charities. Collectively, they bring an unprecedented insight into the work of organizations whose diversity is exceeded only by their desire to serve.

It is difficult to express adequate appreciation to Dr. Susan Phillips of Carleton University for her leadership of this project. She has been a source of encouragement, persuasion, cajoling and improving authors from across the country. Her efforts now bear fruit as we make this material available to students, academics, practitioners and others interested in the history and future of Canada's charities.

Amanda Mayer of the Lawson Foundation volunteered at the outset to be the administrative overlord of the project, keeping the editors and authors up to date and keeping track of various versions of articles. We are so grateful for her skills, her patience and her friendship.

None of this would have been possible, of course, without the work of authors, themselves academics and/or practitioners. They took time from their schedules to contribute to a resource we hope many will find valuable.

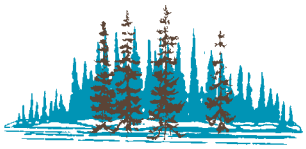
Lesley Fraser did an incredible job in editing the various chapters and ensuring consistency. And Don Myhre of P40 Communications has again brought his talent to the fore in providing an attractive design for a Muttart publication.

The work of all of these individuals has come together in this resource which we dedicate to all of those in, or interested in, Canada's charitable sector.

Malcolm Burrows, President

Bob Wyatt, Executive Director

The Muttart Foundation



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This book may be cited as:

Phillips, Susan D. and Wyatt, Bob (Eds) (2021) *Intersections and Innovations: Change for Canada's Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector.* Edmonton, AB, Canada: Muttart Foundation

Individual Chapter Citations

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Phillips, Susan D. and Wyatt, Bob (2021) Intersections and Innovations: Change in Canada's Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector. In Susan D. Phillips and Bob Wyatt (Eds.), *Intersections and Innovations: Change for Canada's Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector.* Edmonton, AB, Canada: Muttart Foundation

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Part II Navigating a Changing Environment

Governance and the Regulatory Environment

The Funding Environment

The People Environment: Leaders, Employees, and Volunteers

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The People Environment: Leaders, Employees, and Volunteers

Chapter 20

Volunteering: Global Trends in a Canadian Context

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Volunteering continues to play an essential role in the provision of programs and services, community governance, public policies, and democracy around the world (Kamerade, Crotty, & Ljubownikow, 2016; Turcotte, 2015). In Canada, 24.5 million volunteers contribute five billion hours annually, formally and informally, to help people directly or through organizations working in diverse areas – including health and social services, arts and culture, sports and recreation, education and research, law and advocacy, housing and development, the environment, human rights, international development, and philanthropy (Statistics Canada, 2021). Volunteer efforts in 2017 were valued at almost $56 billion and 2.5% of Canada's GDP (Conference Board of Canada, 2018). In addition to the value of the time that volunteers contribute, there is growing recognition of the many benefits of volunteering for neighbourhoods (social capital and social cohesion), organizations (increased capacity and cultural competencies), workplaces (improved employee engagement and public profile), society at large (better public policy and citizen engagement), and volunteers themselves (skills development and a sense of belonging) (The Millennial Impact Report, 2017).[1]

With the emergence of the do-it-yourself movement, the shared economy, and web-based technologies, volunteering is no longer confined to defined roles within structured organizations. People are raising awareness about causes they care about, fundraising to support others in their networks, and coordinating major events outside of organizations. They express their values through their sense of individual social responsibility throughout the day, rather than through specified "volunteer time" (Volunteer Canada, Recognizing Volunteering, 2017). Shifting demographics and generational characteristics have also influenced volunteering behaviours, most notably among the millennial cohort (those born between 1980 and 2000), who now comprise 37% of the workforce (Environics Institute, 2017).[2] Despite the expanding and

changing nature of volunteering, however, the rate of *formal* volunteering, which is defined broadly by Statistics Canada as "activities without pay on behalf of a group or organization ... [including] schools, religious organizations, sports or community associations" (Vezina & Crompton, 2015: 38), appears to be decreasing. This trend has continued, and by 2018 the formal volunteering rate had dropped to 41%; however, *informal* volunteering (defined by Statistics Canada as "directly helping people outside your household") was measured for the first time, with the combined rate of 79% of people 15 and older volunteering either formally or informally (Statistics Canada, 2021). This chapter will explore the social, practical, and policy implications of the evolving nature of volunteering in a Canadian context as it relates to global trends.

Volunteering in Canada: An Overview of Trends

Statistics Canada has been tracking volunteering behaviour since 1997 through the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, which has been integrated into the General Social Survey since 2010. Table 1 highlights the changes in formal volunteering for Canadians aged 15 and older over time, with the most recent survey showing a volunteer rate of 43.6%. The *formal* volunteer rate dropped from 47% in 2010 to under 44% in 2013, and 41% in 2018, and the average number of hours also decreased, from 156 hours in 2010 to 154 hours in 2013, to 131 hours in 2018. What could account for the changes in formal volunteer rates over time? Several explanations have been offered, including the aging population, increased caregiving demands on families, the changing nature of paid employment, and the rise in informal volunteering (Battams, 2017).

Table 1: Changes in Volunteer Rates, Average Hours, and Numbers 1997–2013

	1997	2000	2004	2007	2010	2013	2018
Volunteer Rate (%)	31.4	26.7	45	46	47	43.6	41
Average Hours Per Year	149	162	168	166	156	154	131
Number of Volunteers (millions)	7.4	6.5	11.8	12.4	13.3	12.7	12.7

(Sources: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013, and 2018)

In Canada, there are significant differences in volunteer rates among the provinces and territories (see Table 2). With the national volunteer rate at 44%, Saskatchewan has the highest rate (56%) and Quebec has the lowest (32%). Many theories about these differences have been put forward; however, none have been conclusively proven. Let's consider the possibilities:

- *Age distribution:* A province or territory with a higher proportion of older adults will have a lower volunteer rate, and vice versa (Sinha, 2015).
- *The level of public services offered*: A province with higher taxes and more public services requires fewer volunteers (Savard, Bourque, & Lachapelle, 2015).
- *The urban-rural split*: Rural communities may have greater cohesion. People know each other, and social networks and extended families are available to provide support (Birtch, 2017).
- *The degree of homogeneity*: Neighbourhoods that are homogenous have greater capacity to create cooperative and mutual support models.
- *The rate of population mobility or stability*: When people live in a community for longer, they develop attachments to the place, people, and organizations, and they feel a greater sense of responsibility for each other (Horwitz & Woolner, 2016).
- *The culture*: Differing social structures, history, and traditions incorporate mutual aid communality in different ways (Institut Mallet, 2015).

Table 2: Volunteer Rates (%) in Provinces & Territories by Age Group

Province	Total (43.6%)	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
Newfoundland and Labrador	46.4	66.77	41.7	49.2	51.8	39	37	22.6
Prince Edward Island	50.4	44	37.5	55.6	52.2	42.9	64.3	30
Nova Scotia	50.9	72	47.8	62.1	54.8	39.6	41.2	28.4
New Brunswick	40.6	55.6	36.7	41.9	42.2	33.6	40.8	30.8
Quebec	32.1	40.1	34.4	38.7	31.3	27.1	26.3	19.8
Ontario	44.3	55.9	41.4	45.5	45.9	43.6	40.1	27.1
Manitoba	52	61.7	52	54.7	49.7	49.4	44.4	43.6
Saskatchewan	56.2	61.6	54.4	66.2	53.7	54.8	53.7	38.6
Alberta	50.1	56.3	43	56.7	58.1	46.3	42.9	31.1
British Columbia	49.1	53.6	50.5	53.1	52.1	48.4	45.3	30.9

How do Canadian volunteer rates compare to other high-income countries? With a national rate of almost 44%, we compare favourably, although we share the downward trend. In the US, the national volunteer rate (among those aged 16 and over) is 25% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018); in Australia, 31% (for those over 18) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015); and in the UK, 47% (Cabinet Office, 2016). As in Canada, the trend in all three countries is a declining rate of formal volunteering and a possible rise in informal volunteering or direct assistance. This speaks to the changing nature of volunteering, which is elaborated on in the next section.

Who Is a Volunteer? Expanding Definitions

Sociopolitical shifts affect the lives of individuals and how they interact with others; these same forces also influence how and why people decide to get involved in their communities, and thus shape our understanding of who is a volunteer. Given these changes, then, it is important to examine what we mean by volunteering and to acknowledge the ways in which it has expanded and continues to evolve over time. The common definition of volunteering is "time given by choice without compensation" (Volunteer Canada, Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, 2017; "Volunteer Work," n.d.). While on the surface this may seem self-explanatory, it invites us to delve further into how we define *choice* and *compensation*. Does "by choice" mean without undue influence? Does "without compensation" mean without receiving anything in return? When the concrete benefits of volunteering have become so compelling and the consequences of not volunteering can create significant disadvantages, these terms have become relative and often meaningless. Do we consider employees volunteering to support a workplace fundraising campaign led by their manager to be doing so "by choice"? Can we consider getting into a competitive university social-work program by listing one's volunteer hours to be a form of compensation? In such circumstances, how do we differentiate among motivations, benefits, and concrete compensation for volunteering?

Despite extensive literature on the subject of volunteering, a universally applicable definition of volunteering, and who is a volunteer, remains elusive. The difficulty of reaching consensus on this subject is due in part to the notion that volunteering is, like many social phenomena, a social construct that is both constructed and constructs meaning through the interactions of individuals in a social space (Cnaan et al., 1996). From a social constructionist lens, then, investigating what it means to volunteer is less about reducing it to a convenient, concise definition and more about examining how individuals understand their own distinctive experiences of what volunteering is to them and their communities. Such an approach is fruitful in that it builds on our broad, open-ended definition of volunteering by allowing us to consider more intimately the experiences of individuals and communities as we conduct research, create policy, and establish organizational practices around volunteering.

An alternative way of understanding when and why individuals volunteer, by systematically calculating costs, is rooted in economics and is known as the net-cost approach. Following this approach, a rational individual will engage in voluntary actions when the private benefits of the action to the individual exceed the private costs. However, if the individual includes the public benefits of the action in their personal calculations, it may appear to an onlooker that the action has greater costs than benefits (Cnaan et al., 1996; Handy et al., 2000). Tested on samples in several countries, including Canada, net-cost is a theoretical approach to understanding volunteering that offers additional clarity for determining what constitutes voluntary action, and what does not.

Such approaches leave open the question of choice: can we consider that someone has volunteered *by choice* when their choice is highly influenced by its potential impact on a future career path and livelihood or by power dynamics within the workplace? One activity that highlights the issue of "discretionary" versus "compulsory" is mandatory community service –

community involvement that is required by legislation, policy, an educational program, or the judicial system. This includes high school graduation requirements, social assistance guidelines, community service learning initiatives, and alternative sentencing programs. Mandatory community service often involves monitoring, verification of hours, and administrative arrangements. If volunteering is by choice and without compensation, can we consider mandatory community service a form of volunteering? We will examine the objectives of these programs further in the section on public policy.

Types of Volunteering

Various terms have emerged in response to the evolving nature of volunteering, reflecting the changing demographics, social-political shifts, global trends, and technological advances. It is interesting to look at these concepts through the lens of the key elements of the broad definition of volunteering being "by choice" and "without compensation." In this section, we examine different forms of formal volunteering, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive and, in many cases, overlap, and we consider what they illustrate about broader trends.

Ongoing or long-term volunteering involves a longer-term commitment, generally with a regular schedule within an organization. This may be in the form of leading a weekly activity, having one-to-one time with someone, doing two shifts per month on a help line, or serving on a board or committee.

Short-term volunteering refers to special projects and assignments that can generally be accomplished within six months. This can include reviewing the bylaws for an organization, serving on an event-planning committee, or filling in for a regular volunteer.

Episodic volunteering refers to a planned, one-time, or occasional volunteer role such as serving at a registration table for a conference, decorating the room for a fundraiser, or participating in a park cleanup.

Surge volunteering occurs when the public is motivated to help when an unexpected event such as a public health emergency, a natural disaster, a security incident, or an international refugee crisis arises. In recent years, we have experienced forest fires, flooding, ice storms, the SARS pandemic, and large-scale funeral services following violent tragedies. This can create challenges when there is no designated central clearinghouse. Another form of surge volunteering can occur when a community hosts an international sporting event, such as the Olympics; however, these events have the advantage of being anticipated.

Microvolunteering refers to brief, single acts that are useful to an organization or a person and are typically emergent or flexible in terms of their timing. An example is an organization called Be My Eyes. If a person with visual impairment is in a grocery store and needs someone to read a label, they take a photo, send it out to the network, and the first person available can send a voice message back.

Skills-based volunteering is an approach to volunteer matching that focuses on the transfer of skills. It is further defined as a "service to non-profit and voluntary organizations by individuals or groups that capitalizes on the personal talents, core business or professional skills, experiences, or education, often for the purpose of building organizations' strength and capacity" (Points of Light Foundation, as adapted by Volunteer Canada, 2011). This can happen when a volunteer a) contributes specialized skills to an organization, b) serves as a coach, mentor, or advisor to an organization using specialized skills, or c) gains specialized skills through an experience in an organization.

Pro-bono services describes a type of volunteering in which a company provides the services it offers to the public at a cost to an organization at no cost, where the service is a) provided with the same standards as it would be for a paying client, b) undertaken by the firm and not necessarily by an individual, and c) monitored for quality as it would be for a paying client. Although skills-based volunteering and pro-bono services appear very similar, these scenarios illustrate the difference:

> The marketing coordinator in a bank may volunteer to lead a rebranding exercise for a youth addictions treatment centre. *This is skills-based volunteering*. The arrangement is between the individual and the organization. The bank does not offer marketing services and would not oversee or determine the standards of service for the volunteer assignment.
>
> A public relations firm agrees to provide consultation services to lead a rebranding exercise for a youth addictions treatment centre. *This is a pro-bono service*. A contract is drawn up. Consultants are designated. A manager will supervise the work, and the reports are produced under the name of the firm.

Virtual volunteering and remote volunteering refer to volunteer roles that do not need to be done onsite or in-person. They can be done for an organization in the volunteer's community or from anywhere in the world, doing newsletter editing or graphic design. Virtual volunteering can also be an adapted service-delivery mode, during an emergency, to continue services to vulnerable populations or support to organizations such as online tutoring, friendly visiting, mentoring, support groups, and social skills training, or facilitating online meetings and hosting webinars.

Employer-supported volunteering is some form of support for volunteering from an employer (Statistics Canada, 2015). One-third of Canadian volunteers report receiving such support, which includes paid time off, organized group activities, providing small grants to organizations where employees volunteer ("dollars-for-doers" program), and various forms of recognition. The benefits to workplaces include attraction of talent, employee engagement, workforce development, enhanced public profile, and strengthened stakeholder relations. The *Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering*[3] outlines values, guiding principles, and standards of practice to ensure mutually beneficial engagement between host organizations and businesses.

Table 3: Types of Employer Support for Volunteering (ages 15 to 64)

Type of Formal Employer Support	2013	2010	2004
Any type of support	55	57	57
Use of facilities or equipment	27	30	31
Paid time off or time to spend volunteering	20	20	21
Approval to change work hours or reduce work activities	34	35	33
Recognition or letter of thanks	19	24	23
Other	3	4	4
Donation of prizes, gift certificates	1	2	2
Financial donation to the organization	1	1	2
Donation of T-shirts or company goods	1	1	1
Sponsorship of an event; payment of entry fee or membership fee	1	1	1
Provision of transportation	0	1	0

Note: Only respondents who answered all the questions on formal employer support are included.

(Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, and Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2010, and 2013)

> *Informal volunteering or helping* includes all the ways that we help people in our social networks, neighbourhoods, and communities (Benenson & Stagg, 2015; Wang, Mook, & Handy, 2017). It can include cooking a meal for someone in mourning, driving someone to an appointment, shovelling someone's driveway, or babysitting someone's children while they attend a night course.
>
> *Individual social responsibility* is the broadest concept of all. It refers to the many decisions and actions we take throughout the day that reflect our values, including, for instance, choosing to compost your orange peel in the morning, carpooling to work, buying coffee that is fair trade and local roast, investing in a social purpose fund, and refilling your carry-along water bottle (Volunteer Canada, Recognizing Volunteering, 2017).

In the US context, studies have found that groups that have been traditionally marginalized, such as those from lower-income segments of society and people of colour, tend to engage infrequently in formal volunteering but frequently in informal volunteering (Ahn et al., 2011; Burr, Tavares, & Mutchler, 2011). In the Canadian context, it has been suggested that Quebecers are less likely to engage in formal volunteering, because of a history of mistrust of anglophone-dominated institutions, but that they engage frequently in informal helping and volunteering and in community-based action (Reed & Selbee, 2000). Thus, as Gottlieb and Gillespie (2008: 400) note, "a socio-economic divide separates formal volunteers from those who do not volunteer through an organization." This divide is not only emblematic of larger social concerns and issues, but is further magnified through the prioritization of formal volunteering over informal volunteering in the research literature.

To avoid this problem, when studying the impact of volunteering both for individuals and communities, researchers should consider broadening their definitions of who is a volunteer and what it means to volunteer in order to encompass the numerous activities – both formal *and* informal – that individuals in Canada and elsewhere carry out every day. To exclude any of these "non-traditional" forms of volunteering from our conversations discredits the efforts of volunteers and skews our understanding of the phenomenon at all levels. Statistics Canada has already begun to collect data on informal volunteering and direct helping, reporting that 83% of Canadians engaged in informal volunteering in 2010 (Vezina & Crompton, 2015).

Motivations to Volunteer

When people complain that they don't have the time and resources to meet their needs and those of their loved ones, why do they still give away the very resources they value most: time and money? Canadians volunteer many hours annually, and volunteering activities often are costly to the volunteer, both in time spent and out-of-pocket costs such as transportation or daycare. To appreciate why volunteers willingly incur such costs, we need to understand what motivates them.

Research has established that volunteers are motivated to take on volunteer activity at a cost to themselves for multiple reasons (Cnaan & Goldberg, 1991; Wilson, 2015). A formalization of the motives to volunteer has been systematically undertaken and various models and scales developed to assess these motives, the most common of which is the functional model: the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), first advanced by Gil Clary and his colleagues (1992, 1996, 1998) and then modified to include six general motivational functions. Adding to this model, Esmond and Dunlop (2004) developed the Volunteer Motivation Inventory (VMI) model based on further research and modifications to the original VFI to create a set of 10 general motivations for volunteering: values, reciprocity, recognition, understanding, self-esteem, reactivity, social interaction, protective, and career motivations.

In the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Statistics Canada, 2004, 2007, 2010) and the General Social Survey: Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Statistics Canada, 2013), volunteers were asked about their reasons for volunteering for the organization to which they contributed the most hours: "*Thinking about the reasons why you volunteered in the past 12 months on behalf of this organization, please tell me whether the follow reasons were important to you…*" The results, as seen in Table 4, show that the reasons given by Canadians has remained relatively stable over a period of years, with the exceptions of volunteering because of the involvement of friends or because of religious obligations. More specifically, 18% of volunteers in 2013 said that fulfilling religious obligations or beliefs motivated them to volunteer, down from 22% in 2004.

Table 4: Reasons Canadians Volunteer

Reason for volunteering	% of volunteers responding "Yes"			
	2004	2007	2010	2013
To make a contribution to the community	92	93	91	93
To use skills and experiences	77	77	76	77
Personally affected by the cause the organization supports	60	59	57	60
To explore one's own strengths	49	50	47	48
To network with or meet people	47	48	45	46
Because friends volunteer	43	47	47	39
To improve job opportunities	22	23	21	22
To fulfill religious obligations or beliefs	22	22	21	18

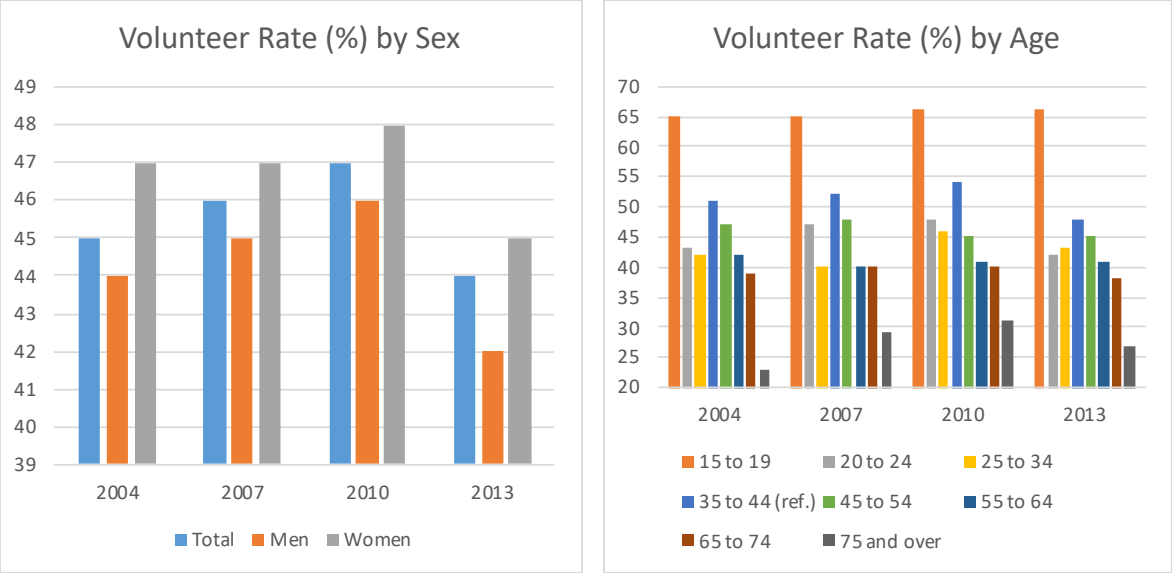
(Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013)

Volunteering through Stages, Ages, and Life Circumstances

People's choices about volunteering reflect not only their motivations, interests, and availability, but also other characteristics, such as age, life stage, and circumstance (Volunteer Canada, Recognizing Volunteering, 2017). Indeed, Canadian volunteering rates change across the life course. As shown in Figure 1, youth (ages 15 to 19) have the highest volunteer rate, followed by a drop for young adults, a peak for those between 35 and 55 years old, and then a gradual decline for older adults (Statistics Canada, 2015). In adolescence, volunteering may be a vehicle for both exploring and expressing values and developing a sense of identity and purpose.

Though the volunteer rate has been consistently the highest for youth aged 15 to 19, the average number of hours per year is also the lowest for this age group (Statistics Canada, 2015). On the other end of the age spectrum, older adults, many of whom are no longer in the paid workforce, have a lower volunteer rate but volunteer the most hours on average per year. Among adults in the middle stages of life, those with school-age children living at home tend to have a high volunteer rate and give above-average numbers of hours each year. Overall, adults between the ages of 35 and 55 tend to volunteer at consistently high rates, despite multiple demands on time from work, family, and other obligations.

Figure 1: Volunteering Rates by Sex and Age



(Sources: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2013, and the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004, 2007, 2010)

In addition, life circumstances have been shown to have a significant influence on volunteering patterns and motivations and the benefits that result. Those preparing to return to the paid workforce after a parental leave, illness, or period of unemployment may be focused on opportunities to rebuild their endurance for work, refresh or develop new skills, or network. Those who are new to a community may be looking to gain Canadian experience, make social contacts, and learn more about their new environment. In the next section we explore in more detail the impacts of life stage and circumstance on volunteering to illustrate the complexity and diversity of the volunteer experience among different groups and individuals.

Youth and Young Adult Volunteering

According to 2013 data from the GSS, two-thirds of youth aged 15 to 19 volunteer, making them the age group most likely to volunteer in Canada (Turcotte, 2015). Volunteering is also prevalent among young adults, especially those attending university. Gronlund and colleagues (2011) found that nearly 80% of Canadian university students surveyed as part of a cross-national study engaged in some form of volunteering, compared to about 42% of all 20- to 24-year-olds (Turcotte, 2015). This study also reported that altruism, learning, and resumé-building were the strongest factors motivating Canadian university students to volunteer (Gronlund et al., 2011).

Studies of volunteering and calculations of the value of volunteer time (by Independent Sector, for instance) typically consider only the contributions of youth who are at least 15 to the neglect of younger volunteers (Shannon, 2009). Among the limited research on the under-15s, Shannon (2009) found that young volunteers who were also members of the Boys and Girls Club in

Atlantic Canada engaged primarily in fundraising tasks and those that supported club staff or assisted other community members such as the elderly. Despite barriers attributed to time constraints and availability of age-appropriate opportunities, among other factors, youth report that they find volunteering fun and rewarding and say that they, too, volunteer in response to a request or need.

The phenomenon of youth volunteering (at all ages) will likely continue to grow as Canadian schools continue to make volunteering mandatory. Ontario first began requiring students to complete at least 40 hours of volunteer work before graduation in 1999 (Gallant, Smale, & Arai, 2010), and as of May 2018, seven of the 13 provinces and territories have some form of mandatory community-service program in high school (Sagan, 2015). These programs are intended to foster civic engagement, with the goal of encouraging a lifelong commitment to active involvement in the community through volunteering and other means.

A "pro-volunteering" attitude is implicit in these policies. Although the number of hours and form of these mandatory activities differ from province to province, such programs will undoubtedly impact the way in which young Canadians experience volunteering, as well as the extent to which they become and remain involved in volunteering. Indeed, Turcotte (2015) estimates that about one-fifth of all youth volunteers between ages 15 and 19 volunteered because it was required by their schools.

Despite these policies promoting youth engagement, and despite relatively positive official statistics about youth and young adult involvement in volunteering, there remains widespread concern and apprehension about the extent to which younger Canadians volunteer in meaningful ways. For example, recent hearings by the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector reflect policy-makers' concerns and assumptions about millennials' limited involvement in volunteering and giving. Indeed, much has been made in both academic and popular publications about the differences in motivations, interests, and behaviours between millennials and previous generations (e.g., Campione, 2016; Einolf, 2016; Smith, Cohen, & Pickett, 2014), offering strategies that reflect millennials' use of technology, their need for "meaning" and personal connection to a cause, and their limited financial resources (Ray, 2013; Smith, 2018).

While such insights may provide helpful guidance for nonprofit leaders, it is important to note that anxiety over the potential of future generations is a common and prevailing theme in high-income countries. Such concerns are exacerbated by the continued use of generational labels (such as "millennials" and "baby boomers"), which may encourage the magnification of difference and distance between age cohorts (Gullette, 2004), and a preoccupation with the "problem" of an aging workforce, commonly cited in both research and policy (Ng, Gossett, & Winter, 2016). Thus, in looking to encourage younger people's involvement in volunteering, practitioners and policy-makers should be careful to avoid generational stereotyping and instead look for authentic and meaningful ways to engage with individuals at all ages.

Volunteering in Older Age and Retirement

In Canada, people 75 and older are the least likely age group to volunteer (Turcotte, 2015). However, while people become less likely to volunteer after 65, those who do volunteer at this age (and beyond) devote more hours on average than younger groups, suggesting that older people represent a significant proportion of all volunteer time in Canada (Cook & Sladowski, 2013). Despite some concerns about whether baby boomers will volunteer to the same extent as older age cohorts as they approach retirement, research indicates the opposite: they are engaged. For instance, Einolf (2009) predicted, and affirmed, that the boomers would volunteer at higher rates than earlier generations, attributing this finding in part to changing social norms and expectations around the meaning of retirement, as well as the sheer numbers of boomers as compared to earlier generations. From a volunteer administration standpoint, Tang, Morrow-Howell, and Hong (2009) found that training opportunities and recognition of volunteers' contributions made older people more likely to remain engaged in long-term volunteering. In addition to their involvement in formal volunteering through organizations, older adults also engage in informal volunteering and caregiving activities for family members and relatives, which are most often undertaken by older women due to the traditionally gendered nature of care work (Warburton & McLaughlin, 2006).

Thus, like other age groups, older adults engage in many different types of volunteering, carrying out numerous tasks on behalf of faith organizations, political groups, schools, and nonprofits, as well as engaging informally outside of organizations (Hank & Stuck, 2008; Hook, 2004; Taniguchi, 2011). In many cases, these activities reflect a lifelong commitment to civic engagement or long-term interest in volunteering. Research suggests that the likelihood of volunteering after age 65 (i.e. in retirement) is higher among those who volunteered during their younger years (Butrica, Johnson, & Zedlewski, 2009; Einolf, 2009). Undoubtedly, just like volunteering in the general population, volunteering among older Canadians is not a monolith; it encompasses a wide variety of unique experiences and approaches through which older adults choose to contribute to their communities and to society.

In addition to the societal benefits of volunteering at any age, research has demonstrated a link between volunteering and improved well-being and health outcomes, especially among older cohorts. Studies have provided quantitative evidence for the mental, physical, and social benefits of volunteering, leading researchers and practitioners to advocate for volunteering as part of a "positive psychology of aging" (Gottlieb & Gillespie, 2008: 404).[4] While the vast majority of quantitative findings are derived from US datasets, Canada-based research has provided rich qualitative findings to support these claims.

In a photovoice study with 30 older adults in Manitoba, Novek and Menec (2014) found that participants frequently photographed activities, including volunteering, to illustrate how these activities factored into making their communities "age-friendly." Likewise, Narushima (2005) conducted a qualitative study of older adult volunteers in several nonprofits in Toronto, concluding that the volunteers maintained high levels of well-being through their volunteering. With a specific focus on volunteering in Canadian community sports organizations, Misener, Doherty, and Hamm-Kerwin (2010) found that older people derived overall positive experiences, especially with regard to social engagement and a sense of purpose and identity.

Several theories have been suggested to explain the link between volunteering and well-being in older age, such as role theory, or the way in which volunteering may buffer against decline in older age by substituting for roles lost in retirement or with the cessation or changing nature of caregiving activities (Smith, 2004). In general, however, it seems that volunteering represents an activity that unites all four points in the "life-span diamond" (relational resources, physical well-being, positive mental states, and engaging activity) proposed by Gergen and Gergen (2001), suggesting that it can be a powerful part of positive aging for individuals and their communities. However, more research is needed to understand the role that volunteering plays in the lives of older people, what mechanisms might link volunteering with improved health and well-being among this age group, and how policy-makers and practitioners might go about supporting the volunteering of older adults to best promote both community and individual needs, motivations, and goals.

Volunteering among New Canadians and Immigrant Populations

Immigrants occupy a significant place in Canadian society: they represent approximately 22% of the population, with another 18% consisting of second-generation children of immigrants, according to the 2016 census. Between 2011 and 2016, approximately 1.2 million new immigrants arrived (Statistics Canada, 2017), making the "immigrant" population a mix of relative newcomers as well as more established households.

Although research is still limited, the role volunteering might play in the lives of new immigrants is receiving more attention. In the Canadian context, these inquiries tend to focus on the way in which volunteering functions as a means of integrating into the host society, as well as its role in providing avenues for economic advancement through the development of new skills and social networks. Employment considerations may be of particular interest in part because immigrant populations have been identified as vulnerable to labour-market exclusion (Fang & Gunderson, 2015).

Indeed, "the Government of Canada explicitly encourages new immigrants to volunteer," as noted by Wilson-Forsberg and Sethi (2015: 92). Given the level of discrimination and loss of status often experienced by immigrants in the workplace and in society more broadly (Dlamini, Anucha, & Wolfe, 2012), it is suggested that volunteering might be one way to overcome these barriers to economic mobility and social inclusion in Canadian society. Evidence seems to support this. According to a study by Volunteer Canada, approximately 39% of immigrants over the age of 15 in Canada participated in some form of volunteering in 2010 (Speevak & Hientz, 2012).

Asking whether volunteering is an effective means to alleviate "the stress caused by relocation" among immigrants and to promote social and human capital, Handy and Greenspan (2009: 956) conducted surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews with immigrants recruited through religious congregations in Halifax, Regina, Toronto, and Vancouver. They found that participants volunteered at a very high rate (about 85%) and that they gained opportunities to connect with others, thus mitigating feelings of isolation. In addition, some participants shared anecdotes in which immigrants gained knowledge of their new country and employment opportunities as a result of their volunteer experiences (Handy & Greenspan, 2009: 972). Similarly, a study of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver (Guo, 2014) found they used volunteering as a means to gain

language and other skills that later facilitated their social and civic participation in the broader Canadian society; volunteering also helped them to feel that they belonged within a smaller, more localized community.

Although these studies point to the potential of volunteering to alleviate some of the social and economic strain of the immigration process, others critique such claims, questioning whether immigrants truly "volunteer voluntarily" (Wilson-Forsberg & Sethi, 2015). Contrary to the "unchallenged dogma" touted by the government, Wilson-Forsberg and Sethi (2015: 92–93) argue that volunteering does not so much improve immigrants' access to good jobs as perpetuate a "deficit model of difference ideology," in which immigrants are encouraged to conform to Canadian norms and expectations through whatever means necessary.

This perspective is reinforced by an earlier study of immigrant women volunteering and working within the Canadian immigrant-settlement sector (Lee, 1999), which found that volunteering did not typically yield secure paid employment; instead, immigrant women often reported that they felt exploited, dissatisfied, and undervalued by Canadian-born colleagues. Nevertheless, the possibility of gaining the invaluable line-item of "Canadian work experience" for their resumés motivated the women to endure these feelings and continue to volunteer or work in low-paying, temporary positions (Lee, 1999).

From a broader standpoint, Wilkinson (2013: 2) remarks that integration is "a non-linear … [and] uneven process that can result in significant success in some institutions, but failure in others." Wilkinson (2013) further points to the reciprocal nature of the integration process, noting that it is not only about the efforts of immigrants but also reciprocity of these efforts on the part of the broader community. As such, while volunteering may indeed benefit some immigrants, like all processes of community integration it is complex and varied, rather than guaranteed. Additionally, we must be willing to acknowledge and closely examine the ways in which measures of volunteering and other forms of "community engagement" on the part of immigrants have been used implicitly (and, at times, *explicitly)* as justification for nativist, xenophobic, and racist attitudes in Canada and elsewhere in the West (Kazemipur, 2011). Thus, these critiques should be taken into account when we think about current and future possibilities for volunteering and its role in immigrants' lives and in the broader Canadian society.

Volunteering and Public Policy

As volunteers take on more expansive and sophisticated roles in society and as governments seek to enhance the extent of volunteering, the role of public policy *for* volunteering and *in* volunteering has become more increasingly important, and increasingly complex. In this section, we discuss policies for organizations that engage volunteers, including those that protect volunteers and protect organizations from potentially unethical volunteers, and policies that seek to promote volunteering.

Public Policy That Protects Volunteers

Organizations are responsible for the quality and safety of their programs, services, and all actions undertaken in their name, and they are responsible for providing a work environment

that is safe and free from harassment and discrimination, whether for employees, students, community service participants, or volunteers. In recent years, such obligations and rights, which were originally designed to apply to paid employees within the public and private sectors, have been extended to those in the nonprofit and charitable sector and to volunteers. This includes legislation in areas such as human rights, employment standards, youth protection, occupational health and safety, access to information, and protection of privacy, disabilities, mental health, and labour law (Volunteer Canada, 2012).

Concerns over liabilities while volunteering have grown in recent years. In terms of shielding volunteers from such claims, Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada that has a Volunteer Protection Act, enacted in 2002. This legislation was designed to protect volunteers from personal liability for incidents that occur while volunteering, excluding "willful or criminal misconduct or when the volunteer was operating a motor vehicle" (Department of Justice, 2001). The act covers only those activities that fall under the scope of the volunteer's regular activities, however, leaving some room for interpretation and gaps in application.

Volunteer Resource Management Practices

Nonprofits and charities are moving toward an integrated human resource management system in response to the legislative interpretation that does not differentiate between paid employees and volunteers. With the exception of (volunteer) recognition and (employee) compensation, volunteer resource management practices include job design, risk assessment, recruitment strategies, applications, interviews, reference checks, police record checks or vulnerable sector checks (when appropriate), orientation, training, supervision, evaluation, and recognition. Resources for volunteer resource management practices include:

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

The Screening Handbook

The Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering

The Value of Volunteering Wheel

Assurances that volunteers act in an ethical manner has led to a long-standing practice of volunteer screening. Volunteers working in positions of trust with vulnerable[5] populations have to undergo a "vulnerable sector check" through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Since 2018, mandatory digital fingerprinting is part of this process. While these electronic files must be deleted upon completion of these checks, some prospective volunteers remain uncomfortable with such information being collected. In addition, a credit check – on the assumption that someone with a poor credit rating is more likely to engage in fraud or theft – has become increasingly common as part of a screening process, particularly for volunteers applying for positions that have signing authority or access to money and other assets. Again, many have questioned this assumption and consider a credit check to be an invasion of privacy. Whether increased screening, in a more radically transparent, digital society, actually deters people from volunteering, however, is an open question.

Beyond specific requirements for engaging volunteers, broader questions arise involving the relationship between volunteering and the labour movement (Calvert, 1985; Thacker, 1999). Specifically, how do we ensure that volunteering does not erode paid employment? There have been efforts to develop a protocol that would, for example, include that volunteers do not a) replace or displace paid employees (i.e. do not undertake a task that has been done by a paid employee in the past 12 months), b) enter the workplace during a strike, and c) work more than 12 hours per week (Volunteering England, n.d.). In unionized environments, all new volunteer assignment descriptions must be vetted by the union to ensure that they do not include tasks that are part of a bargaining-unit position. In addition, there has been some confusion between volunteer roles and unpaid internships. In Canadian jurisdictions, unpaid internships need to be connected to an educational program whereby the intern contributes their time and skills to an organization and the organization attends to their specific learning objectives.

Public Policy That Promotes Volunteering

The policy interests of federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments include promoting citizen engagement, reinforcing resilient communities, and supporting vulnerable populations. Governments have sought to promote volunteering through "soft" policies, such as promoting a culture of volunteering and service programs that match volunteers to opportunities, and through mandatory requirements for students, social service recipients, or those in the criminal justice system, with a view that such experiences produce ongoing interest.

While some may see a natural connection between these policy interests and volunteering, others may view governments' interest in promoting volunteering as a means of downloading government services. This tension played out most acutely in the UK's 2010 Big Society program that supposedly sought to give greater power to communities and encourage people to be more engaged but that was accompanied by austerity measures, so it never gained widespread sector support (UK Conservative Party, 2010; Macmillan, 2013). Across Canada, various strategies have been used by different orders of government, including volunteer service awards, volunteer promotion campaigns, funding programs that support volunteerism, and volunteer service programs such as the Canada Service Corps, launched in 2018, that seeks to "engage and inspire" youth (Government of Canada, 2018).

Do these efforts actually increase volunteering? The policy rationale is that by showcasing volunteers through awards programs, others are inspired to volunteer and that such recognition increases volunteer retention, although research has been inconclusive (Walk, Zhang & Littlepage, 2019). Government campaigns that encourage people to volunteer are often met with mixed reactions. While funding programs that support volunteer programs can provide a boost to individual organizations or neighbourhoods, they require infrastructure to recruit, train, supervise, and recognize volunteers. And it can be challenging to sustain the level of activity if funding is short-term. Follow-up studies with participants of government-run international volunteer placement programs indicate that people are more likely to volunteer at home upon their return (Lough & Tiessen, 2018). In sum, while the rationale for volunteer promotion programs seems compelling, their ability to actually enhance volunteering depends to a great extent on the specifics of policy implementation, and particularly on ensuring adequate capacity of charities and nonprofits to host an influx of well-meaning volunteers.

Mandatory community service programs that are associated with education, social assistance, or the criminal justice system seek to *promote citizenship* (a sense of belonging and responsibility), *develop skills* to help people gain experience and (re)integrate into the community or (re) enter the workforce, or *make restitution* by repairing damage done or making amends for a wrongdoing. While these objectives may seem worthy on the surface, evidence on their effectiveness in promoting continued volunteering is mixed (Sagan, 2015), and they pose ethical and practical challenges. In particular, vigorous debate continues as to whether making volunteering compulsory in high school has a positive impact on the lifelong propensity to engage in volunteering and other civic behaviours. For example, Gallant and colleagues (2010) found that university students' perceptions of the quality of their mandatory volunteering experiences during high school were a significant positive predictor of civic participation and attitudes toward social responsibility. These findings suggest that there may be a link between volunteering in youth and future volunteering, regardless of whether the volunteering is mandatory. However, as the authors point out, this link is predicated on the ability of community organizations, in partnership with public schools, to generate the resources and support needed to provide "high-quality" opportunities to youth volunteers – a task that is easier said than done (Gallant, Smale, & Arai, 2010). Thus, the implications of mandatory volunteering programs – not only for the youth, but also for the community organizations that host them – must be taken into account when developing policies at the provincial and territorial levels (Brudney & Russell, 2016).

For all types of mandatory community service, nonprofit and charitable organizations may not have the capacity to host increased numbers of community-service participants. Resources are needed for intake, training, and supervision. In addition, the mandatory nature of these programs, particularly to gain social-assistance benefits or reprieve from further criminal justice sentences, are often perceived as coercive and potentially humiliating for participants. In British Columbia, for instance, social assistance recipients can apply for a "community volunteer supplement" (CVS), receiving an extra $100 per month (Volunteer Canada, Code for Volunteer Involvement, 2017). Whether this practice is coercive or beneficial to participants beyond the financial incentive is up for debate. Community-service orders are also administered by provinces and territories, when deemed appropriate, as an alternative to prison sentences that are less than two years. Though the guidelines vary between jurisdictions, the common rationale is that "by performing community service the young person/adult offender not only repays the community for the harm done but has the opportunity to find outlets in the community for developing skills, new interests and abilities." The question remains, however: if such programs are mandated by school and government policies, should they still be considered volunteering?

Another set of policies includes those pertaining to community service learning – which is voluntary but also increasingly compulsory. Community service learning is a curriculum-based assignment or course that allows students to meet their learning objectives through service in the community, as a complement to, or in place of, classroom learning and reading. For example, this might include serving as a program assistant for a social skills group for people with autism in order to learn about group dynamics or about how autism may affect social skills, or being a record keeper at community association meetings to learn about governance and leadership. At the college and university level, more institutions are incorporating community service learning assignment options, community-service graduation requirements, or co-curricular transcripts that list community service activities.

Summary and Conclusion

In this analysis, we have assumed – as so many do – that formal volunteering through organizations is a good thing in society. This normative judgment is something we ask readers to reflect on. Think about what makes it easy for some people to volunteer and what hinders others. Does having resources of human capital and social capital promote volunteering? Yes: research is very clear on this. If volunteering has benefits in the labour market (for both getting jobs and getting *better* jobs), as well as for health and well-being, then those left out of the formal volunteering space because of the lack of human and social capital are disadvantaged. In this age of rising inequality, should we ensure that policies promoting volunteering include opportunities for marginalized groups? And if so, what should these policies be? How would such policies affect nonprofits that seek skilled volunteers to promote their missions? How would such policies affect individuals, who may view such interventions as coercive or exploitative, forcing them to give up their time for others? Such questions are difficult to answer, but if we agree that a high rate of formal volunteering is a sign of a healthy society, they cannot be ignored.

The scholarship we have briefly reviewed has raised interesting questions on what we consider to be formal volunteering. Perhaps it is time to reconsider our definitions in a world where technology has allowed many new ways for people to choose how they can help others. Traditional forms of volunteering have given way to new kinds of volunteering that can happen through workplaces or educational institutions, can take place virtually or face to face, and can last from very short to very long time periods. Furthermore, helping others may not involve organizations at all. Does such "informal" volunteering promote similar benefits to "formal" volunteering? And who is more likely to engage in informal volunteering, and why? Are the motivations underlying both sets of volunteering similar? If not, what are the implications in the promotion of one over the other at both the individual and the policy level?

Among Canadians there are distinct profiles of volunteers that reflect where they are in their life cycles. Students and retirees volunteer but are very different in what they choose to do and in the costs and benefits they experience when they volunteer. While there is much written about mandatory community service vis-à-vis students and the benefits of such "enforced" volunteering, longer-term effects on these students now entering adulthood still need to be documented and analyzed. Similarly, there is much written on older adults who retire out of paid employment into retirement but much less about those who must face retirement out of volunteering. If there are increasing benefits to volunteering, what happens when they must quit volunteering? Other groups of people who may also benefit from volunteering need to be studied, and although there is some scholarship on this, further studies need to document the experiences of newcomers to Canada, those who are other-abled, those living in poverty, and others in the volunteering space.

If public policy is to promote volunteering among all Canadians, regardless of where they live and their socioeconomic status, then we need to gather better data and reflect on both the good and the bad of volunteering, and not take it for granted by blindly promoting all volunteering. What volunteers bring to the table often depends on the organization where they are engaged and on volunteer management practices. Good volunteer management has a great impact on an organization's mission, as seen in the study of hospitals in Ontario, where volunteers contributed

millions of dollars (Handy & Srinivasan, 2004). Moreover, CEOs of hospitals, when asked if they would replace their volunteers if given enough money to hire paid labour to do volunteers' tasks, resoundingly said no (Handy & Srinivasan, 2005). Nevertheless, volunteer management practices should be scrutinized to ensure that volunteers do not feel exploited or coerced and that paid staff who work alongside volunteers do not feel that unpaid labour might threaten their employment status,[6] regardless of whether volunteers are considered to be employees under the law and the protection offered to them.

Volunteer management can be ad hoc in smaller organizations, but in larger organizations, such practices cannot be downplayed because volunteers are not paid. Nevertheless, human resource management in larger organizations is focused primarily on paid labour and much less so on volunteers. Arguably, managing volunteers is more difficult, as they can simply quit if they are unhappy, and without much cost. Hence, recruiting and retaining volunteers takes significant skill and planning. Furthermore, as volunteers come in for a few hours a week or month and vary in the skills they bring, it may take more resources to train and manage volunteers than paid employees; this makes the management of volunteers challenging and non-trivial. Not to be downplayed is the importance of ensuring that nonprofits' paid staff and volunteers complement each other in their roles, rather than being seen as interchangeable.

Another important function of volunteers in organizations is their role in governance. Canadian nonprofits are by law governed by boards of directors who are themselves volunteers: one in three Canadian volunteers hold positions on boards and committees (Statistics Canada, 2009). The common-law and legislative duties of directors require them to act as fiduciaries and in good faith in the best interests of the organization and exercise care, diligence, and skill, thus placing a heavy burden on the volunteers undertaking this role. Given that the governing function of the board must be separated from the management function, and all nonprofits are subject to a non-distribution constraint, ensuring that surpluses are spent on the mission, governance volunteers perform an important task of ensuring that a nonprofit is meeting its mission in the best possible way. Thus, volunteers on boards of nonprofits assume a key role in the nonprofit sector. Their skills, talents, and efforts shape, to a large extent, Canadian civil society as we know it.

In this respect, the answer to an earlier question we posed – whether formal volunteering is a sign of a healthy society – is yes, especially considering the role of volunteers on boards (and committees) of charities and nonprofits. This raises another question: who are the volunteers who serve on boards? This is generally seen as a prestigious job, often awarded to the elite in society – certainly the case for large nonprofits (such as universities, art museums, hospitals, etc.). There are arguments for such appointments, as members of boards are often required not only to give of their time and talent, but also to donate generously to the nonprofit and fundraise among their networks. Their elite reputation also often acts as collateral in enhancing the trustworthiness of their nonprofit.[7]

Undoubtedly, in promoting a public policy of encouraging volunteers, many issues arise from the heterogeneity of volunteering. Hence it is impossible, even with the breadth that we have covered, to ensure that all the various questions that may arise in designing public policy have been fully engaged. The ways of volunteering and engaging individuals are limited only by the human imagination and rapid development of technology, and we expect that in the next couple of decades, volunteering, as we write about it now, will have undergone big changes.

So, we end by raising a few questions for you the reader to consider. We believe these are fundamental questions that require public debate, that will in turn lead to more effective policy related to volunteering. As with any policy, it comes with a price tag: its opportunity cost – that is, what else might we do with those resources? Hence, we need to be clear about the benefits and challenges that might arise if we choose to promote volunteering. In this vein, we ask the reader to consider, among those already raised, the following 10 questions. We intentionally do not provide answers to these questions, as there are no right and wrong answers, but we want to encourage readers to discuss them with their peers and engage in a productive public debate as volunteering in Canada moves forward.

1. How would Canadian nonprofits function without volunteers providing services, sitting on boards, et cetera?

2. What would Canada look like if formal volunteering as we know it now disappeared?

3. Should we actively incentivize the giving of time like we do the giving of money? What might be the downside? Should employers give their employees incentives to volunteer?

4. What is the line between giving individuals an opportunity to gain experience and the expectation that they provide unpaid labour in return? Would it be different with paid internships in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors?

5. If you were to write a protocol to guide the relationship between volunteering and paid labour, what would it include? How would we put a value on a volunteer's time, if it is unpaid? What is the cost to the organization of using volunteers? What are the net benefits to the organization?

6. Who should nonprofits appoint to their boards of trustees? Why does it matter who sits on volunteer boards?

7. How do the roles of an individual as a formal and informal volunteer add to building a healthy Canada? Is one more privileged than the other?

8. How will technology change the distinction between formal and informal volunteering?

9. Will promoting volunteering in Canada increase inequality or decrease it? Will changes in technology help more or fewer people to participate?

10. What policies should we put in place so that all segments of the population can participate in volunteering? Is volunteering to be considered an entitlement?

Appendix A

Activities: Reflecting on Chapter Themes

This chapter provided an overview of volunteering in Canada, including current trends and future directions for research, policy, and practice. Two overarching themes of the chapter are the way in which volunteering is defined and the role that volunteering plays in the lives of individuals and society as a whole. These two themes are related, as our definitions of volunteering reflect our understanding and preferences for when, why, and how individuals and groups should volunteer – as well as our expectations about who should volunteer, and who "counts" as a volunteer. These factors play a significant part in shaping research questions, organizational practices, and policy agendas around volunteering in Canada and elsewhere, which in turn influence the volunteer experience. In other words, how we think, talk, and learn about volunteering as a phenomenon has real-life implications.

Whether you are a student or instructor of nonprofit and voluntary studies, a volunteer administrator or nonprofit practitioner, or just someone with an interest in volunteering and the Canadian nonprofit sector, this section is designed to help you reflect on the chapter themes and think more deeply about the topics and questions raised throughout the chapter. We offer some guidance, but we encourage you to bring your own knowledge, viewpoints, and critiques to each activity.

Activity 1: Defining Volunteering

Review the following examples of the tasks and motivations for community involvement. Based on the definitions offered in the chapter, comment on each one as to whether or not you consider it volunteering, mandatory community service, pro-bono service, or something else:[8]

- High school graduation requirement of 40 hours of community involvement
- 50 hours of volunteering in order to apply for a college program in social services
- 17 hours of community service in order to receive social assistance benefits
- Volunteering in a school to improve your chances of being accepted into its faculty of education
- Volunteering to write articles for a non-profit organization's newsletter to build your portfolio for a future job search in communications
- Volunteering in a food bank to get a character reference for a job
- Volunteering in a drop-in centre, while you are unemployed, to have something on your resumé corresponding to that period
- Volunteering in a shelter to make a case to a sentencing judge for a lenient sentence, after being convicted of a crime
- A lawyer writing the bylaws for an organization and not charging a fee
- A marketing company giving an organization a discount on its services
- A newcomer volunteering to improve their English or French
- A stay-at-home parent volunteering to transition back into the paid labour force
- A person with a limited social network volunteering to increase their contact with others
- A person whose family received support from a hospice who volunteers to give back
- A person who has received a large buy-out package from a down-sizing high-tech firm who volunteers as a way of networking to start their own consulting firm

Activity 2: Types of Volunteering

The chapter talks about new trends in volunteering. Technological advances, globalization and policy shifts, and even the changing nature of work all contribute to when, how, and why people volunteer. Previous definitions of volunteering may no longer be sufficient to capture the range and nuance of volunteering as a phenomenon. But why is this important? First, from an administrative standpoint, it is important to recognize volunteering in its many forms to make the best use of human resources – that is, the available time and talents of each volunteer – and to think of new and creative ways that volunteers can be involved in the organization's activities and mission. Second, from a policy and research standpoint, an expanded definition of volunteering allows us to acknowledge the many ways in which individuals get involved in their communities, to examine systems of power that often act as barriers to involvement for certain groups, and to critique our commitment to volunteering as a positive form of civic engagement. Thus, reflecting on the various types of volunteering can help us to understand the micro, meso, and macro factors at play in influencing the past, present, and future trends in volunteering.

For this exercise, think of an activity that fits within each of the volunteer types described above:

ongoing or long-term volunteering, employer-supported volunteering, skills-based volunteering, pro-bono services, micro-volunteering, virtual volunteering, episodic volunteering, short-term volunteering, surge volunteering, individual social responsibility, and informal volunteering/ helping.

Activity 3: Viewpoints on Volunteering

As we have discussed throughout the chapter, volunteering usually evokes a positive response, with both policy-makers and researchers touting its numerous potential benefits for society and individuals. However, we have also touched on some of the ways in which volunteering can be controversial. For example, we have talked about whether volunteering can become coercive or exploitative for certain groups such as youth and immigrants. We have also talked about the tension that can sometimes arise between paid staff and volunteers. The following activity is a role-playing exercise designed to get you thinking more about these issues and can be used in a classroom or professional workshop setting. It can also be used as a starting point for thinking critically about the different views and perspectives of certain groups and individuals on volunteering and its place in the community.

Scenario

A nonprofit community centre functions as a site for numerous educational services and activities, which are provided free or at subsidized rates, including after-school programming for elementary and middle-school children, early preschool education, and adult education classes, including English and French language instruction for new immigrants and basic computer instruction for adults of all ages. Last year, they launched a peer mentoring program to pair community members with individuals looking to improve or obtain employment opportunities. The program has been well attended and received a lot of positive feedback from both clients and volunteer mentors. Historically, the community centre has employed professional staff to implement and facilitate programs, including training and oversight for volunteers. Some of these employees belong to a local teachers' union. Up until now, the majority of volunteers have worked in the mentoring program, with some parents volunteering for special events and activities related to after-school and preschool programming on an episodic basis and a few other professionals offering pro-bono expertise in the adult education programs.

However, the executive director is facing a dilemma with this year's budget: a grant the centre has received for the past 10 years through a private foundation is no longer available, leading to a significant shortfall in the budget. The board of directors, which is made up of diverse and prominent community members, has tasked the executive director with finding ways to avoid cutting programming at all costs. In looking at operating costs, the executive director notices that they spend more money on personnel costs than other community centres doing comparable work at a comparable scale in other parts of Canada. Thus, the executive director suggests laying off several paid staff and replacing them with volunteers. The executive director cites a prominent nearby university and several local high schools, with community service requirements, as possible sources of new volunteers. One of the board members, who immigrated to Canada 15 years earlier and who participated in language and professional development classes at the centre, suggests that immigrants might welcome opportunities to be more involved at the centre as volunteers.

With these ideas in mind, the board and executive director prepare a new strategic plan and announce the changes in a memo to staff and other stakeholders. Recognizing that the proposed changes will incite backlash, the board decides to invite the various stakeholders to a special open-door meeting to help them decide how to proceed and, hopefully, to deescalate any tensions. They give each group the opportunity to share their opinions on the situation. Each group speaks for five minutes about how the proposed changes will affect them and concludes with recommendations for how the organization should proceed.

Stakeholders/Roles

- Executive director
- Board of directors
- Paid staff
- Immigrants
- Students
- Clients
- Representative(s) of Local 32 teachers' union

Questions to Consider

1. Prepare a five-minute presentation to share your assigned role's perspectives on this scenario. Explain why you are for or against, or neutral toward, the proposed changes.
2. If you are working individually, consider how each of these stakeholders would respond to this situation. What are the pros and cons for each group?
3. What is the relationship between volunteers and paid staff at this organization? How will the proposed changes affect this relationship going forward? Will the changes strengthen or weaken the organization in the long run?

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Notes

[1] Value of Volunteering Wheel (2018).

[2] Environics Institute (2017). Canadian Millennials Social Values Study

[3] The Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering is published by Volunteer Canada and available at https://volunteer.ca/code-esv

[4] For a comprehensive overview of evidence for the link between volunteering and well-being, see Siegel and Pilliavin (2015). For a meta-analysis of the benefits of volunteering in older age, see Wheeler, Gorey, and Greenblatt (1998).

[5] A "vulnerable person" is defined in the Canadian Criminal Records Act as "Persons who, because of age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, are in a position of dependence on others or; otherwise at greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them."

[6] Studies on Canadian nonprofits found there is a two-way street on the interchangeability of paid and volunteer labour, where volunteers did tasks often undertaken by paid staff and vice versa (Handy, Mook, & Quarter, 2008).

[7] Prince Philip, a volunteer board member of World Wildlife Fund, endorses WWF by providing his reputation as collateral. "Prince Philip has too much to lose by being associated with a shady organization." Thus, volunteers as trustees passively legitimize their nonprofits (Handy, 1996: 294).

[8] This exercise is based on an activity that was part of a workshop called Defining Volunteering hosted by Volunteer Ottawa in 2001, then revised in 2015 for the Master's of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program.

Biography

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Allison R. Russell is a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Social Impact Strategy at the University of Pennsylvania. Allison's research and teaching centre on the nonprofit and voluntary sector, including volunteerism, nonprofit HRM, ethics and equity in organizational decision-making, and the role of nonprofits in social welfare in the US and around the world. She holds a PhD in social welfare from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice.

Paula Speevak, Volunteer Canada

Paula Speevak serves as president and CEO of Volunteer Canada and is an adjunct professor at Carleton University in the School of Public Policy and Administration. Powered by passion and facilitated by local volunteer centres, she sees the evolving nature of volunteering as a vehicle for inclusion, social justice, skills development, and community resiliency.

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