

Volunteering and Communication

Studies from Multiple Contexts

International Service
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS
COMMUNITY CHOIR Nonprofit
Board Members AIDS SUPPORT
Housing Construction Hospice Care ADULT
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rs Service Learning Human Services
COMMUNITY ASSISTANT
Health Care

Edited by

Michael W. Kramer

Laurie K. Lewis

Loril M. Gossett

There is a growing interest in studying nonprofit organizations and volunteers as an alternative to studying employees in for-profit businesses and government agencies. This is driven in part by the recognition that volunteers make important contributions to society and the economy. This book is the first edited volume written primarily by communication scholars to focus on volunteers. It explores the experience of being a volunteer and managing volunteers through a focus on empirical examination of communication in volunteering. The contributors explore volunteers broadly and are divided into five sections which cover becoming a volunteer; learning about self as a volunteer; dark sides of volunteering; organizationally supported volunteering; and voice and dissent. The final chapter suggests areas of future research and application of the book.

An important focus of the book is its data-based, empirical studies. Although each chapter includes applications, those recommendations are based on systematic studies of volunteers rather than primarily on anecdotal evidence or previous literature. Furthermore, each chapter includes a brief field experience narrative written by a volunteer, as well as addressing a broader conceptual or theoretical issue of organizational studies. In this way the book provides more than just case studies of volunteers, but also addresses general organizational issues.

Michael W. Kramer (Ph.D., University of Texas) was Professor at the University of Missouri for nineteen years before coming to the University of Oklahoma in 2010 as Chair and Professor of the Department of Communication. His research focuses on the assimilation/socialization process of employees in transition but lately has focused on volunteers. He has published two other books: *Managing Uncertainty in Organizational Contexts* (2004) and *Organizational Socialization: Joining and Leaving Organizations* (2010).

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Advance Praise for Volunteering and Communication

“Volunteering and Communication is a rich and valuable volume for those studying the volunteer experience, working with volunteer programs, and orienting volunteers. This seminal work offers an excellent introduction to the topic, research on a fabulous array of non-profits (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters, CERT, Peace Corp, Red Cross), and applications of well-established theories (e.g., Uncertainty Reduction, Structuration Theory, social exchange theories), and concepts (burnout, belongingness). This is a superb volume on the volunteer experience that will spark new research ideas and inspire best practices.”

—Becky L. Omdahl, *Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis*

“A wonderful surprise! Here’s a book that volunteer management practitioners will find insightful and often practical, as well as grounded in scholarly research, which uniquely applies the perspective of communication theory to volunteering. The academics often were surprised at their findings about real-life volunteering in many settings; leaders of volunteers will be surprised at what this mysterious ‘communication theory’ stuff can do to strengthen our support of volunteers. I encourage my colleagues to explore how metaphors, narratives, relationship studies, and more can help us understand volunteer motivation and actions, and contribute to how we interview, place, orient, train, and work effectively with volunteers of all sorts. Don’t let this book sit on the shelf in the communications department. Find the right audience for each chapter and share the information widely.”

—Susan J. Ellis, *President, Energize, Inc., Trainers and Publishers in Volunteerism*

“This edited volume is a sterling and unique contribution to understanding how we can grapple with problems and potentials of volunteering and civic engagement in an era of considerable social, political and technological change. Instead of taking a standard theory-first approach to contemporary volunteering, Kramer, Lewis, and Gossett have compiled eighteen contributions that focus significantly on the experience of volunteering in a multitude of contexts. The studies themselves encompass a broad swathe of communicative issues such as uncertainty, dissent, belonging, socialization, voice, and risk. The result is thus a creative, comprehensive, pragmatic, and wide-ranging compilation that will not only shift the grounds of research for communication scholars interested in these issues, but will also be a substantial resource for students, non-profit and community organizations, policy makers, and crucially, volunteers themselves.”

—Shiv Ganesh, *Massey University Albany, Auckland, New Zealand*

Volunteering and Communication

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Volunteering and Communication

Studies from Multiple Contexts

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Michael W. Kramer
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To volunteers everywhere and to those who want to understand them better

Preface

We began working on this edited volume to fill a void in the scholarship. We noticed an increasing interest by communication scholars in nonprofit organizations. For example, a 2010 preconference at the National Communication Association Convention in San Francisco on nonprofit organizations attracted over 50 scholars. Occasional articles appeared on the topic in our major journals. Much of the scholarship considered important topics such as fundraising, networking with other nonprofits, and issues of organizational structure. As important as these issues are, we felt that too often the actual experiences of the volunteers were overlooked. This volume is designed to focus attention on the volunteers themselves.

When we sent out the call for chapter proposals, we worried whether we would receive enough solid proposals to fill the book. Two weeks before the deadline, we had barely enough proposals to fill the book and that was without considering the content of the proposals. We were overwhelmed when we received over 60 proposals. We then faced the problem of competitively selecting the 18 studies that would be included in the book. To the degree possible, given that we were familiar with the scholarship of some of the submitters, we conducted a blind review and then selected the ones that seemed the strongest. We are confident (and disappointed) that we turned away many good proposals, certainly enough for a second or third volume. We even informally proposed a volume on international volunteering at one point, but the idea was put on hold.

We hope that readers are impressed at the breadth of volunteer experiences represented in the volume. Of course, some of the volunteer activities are ones that you expect to read about, such as hospice or AIDS volunteers. Others are probably a bit unexpected, such as voluntourism or running as a volunteer with Back on My Feet. We can assure you that in the proposals that were not included there was an even wider range of volunteer experiences. We hope that readers are also pleased by the variety of research methods employed in the chapters from autoethnography, to ethnography, interview studies, textual analyses, quantitative, and mixed method approaches. We wanted to avoid methodological blinders and it was easy to do so because of the quality and breadth of the proposals. We expect that readers will be interested in the variety of theories used by authors. There are too many to list

here. We enjoyed the variety of theoretical perspectives and feel that the research on volunteers included demonstrates ways that focus on this population can help test and elaborate theories built primarily on examination of paid labor.

We hope that this volume will have some influence on future scholarship. We anticipate that it will stimulate additional research on volunteers. We will be pleased if it leads to an increase in university courses taught concerning volunteers. We will be disappointed if it does not assist leaders in volunteer organizations in understanding and accomplishing their vital tasks.

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We wish to thank Kevin Wright for recommending Mary Savigar, Senior Acquisitions Editor in Media and Communication Studies at Peter Lang Publishing. We thank her for guiding us successfully through the proposal process and then working with us through to publication. We wish to thank the copy editors and Sarah Stack, the production coordinator for the book, for bringing the book to publication. We thank our departments, peers, families, and friends for giving us the time to work on this project.

Most importantly, we also are extremely grateful to all of the authors whose work is included in this volume. We hope that they will reap benefits from having their work published here.

The Editors

Michael W. Kramer

Laurie K. Lewis

Loril M. Gossett

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Introduction

Chapter 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEERS

Laurie K. Lewis

Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey

In February 2011, a massive earthquake hit Christchurch, New Zealand. University students wanted to help in the cleanup and rushed to the scene. However, the official disaster responders were wary of these young volunteers and too stressed to figure out how to work with them and so they turned them away. Sam Johnson, the leader of these volunteers, reports that the students persevered and eventually thousands of students self-organized through social media and joined in the effort to aid the cleanup effort (Johnson, 2012). Johnson shares the story of the volunteer effort that through physical labor made a huge difference in the cleanup effort. The student leaders focused on safety, personal responsibilities, a team approach, having fun, connecting in personal ways to those who had lost loved ones and homes, and supporting each others' grieving process through service to the community. Along the way the students faced ambivalence and resistance from the bureaucracy of government response agencies.

This example serves as an illustration of the high complexity involved in the execution of volunteering in various contexts across our globe. It also reminds us that common stereotypes of the "candy striper" or elderly polling place volunteer are limited archetypes. Further, volunteering is more than an offer of "free labor" as many common definitions would imply. Behind the labor is a complexity of experience, motivation, needs, expectations, relationships, and political, spiritual, philosophical, and emotional expression. The outcomes of volunteering relate to the needs of those receiving direct service and benefits to the volunteers themselves, but also point to much deeper sociological effects on the formation and maintenance of civil society in terms of building social capital, breaking down racial, social, and intercultural barriers, and increasing participation in political systems.

The ability of organizations to make use of volunteer labor is largely dependent on the ways boundary spanners interact with volunteers, construct

and manage their roles and relationships, and interpret needs and interests of volunteers. This book is the first effort to capture some of this complexity through a focus on empirical examination of communication in volunteering. Before I introduce the sections of the book, I'll first highlight some key issues in the theory, practice knowledge, and research related to volunteering.

What is Volunteering?

Most scholars of volunteerism define volunteering as altruistic behavior and typically employ three criteria for defining a volunteer: 1) performs tasks with free will, 2) receives no remuneration, and 3) acts to benefit others (Handy et al., 2000; Musick & Wilson, 2008). Scholars also make distinctions between volunteering done individually (e.g., spontaneous kind acts typically referred to as “informal volunteering”) and through organizational service (typically referred to as “formal volunteering”). Conceptualizations of volunteering have tended to focus on explicating traditional volunteering that involves assuming a role and commitment to a schedule of performing tasks for a lengthy time (months if not years). Common treatments of volunteering are less sensitive in describing modern forms of volunteering particularly episodic volunteering which involves very short-term, perhaps single-event, donations of labor for an organization or cause that requires no lengthy commitment nor ongoing schedule of performance. This is problematic in light of the observation made by Hustinx, Handy, and Cnaan (2010) and others of a “shift from habitual and dedicated involvement toward more episodic or one-off volunteer efforts, more self-interested motivations, and weaker organizational attachments” (p. 79).

There are several controversies surrounding the definition of volunteering including questions about inclusion of stipended volunteers who get some financial support for their work; mandated volunteers (e.g., students volunteering for credit toward graduation, convicted criminals or welfare recipients fulfilling community service hours), and activists (e.g., protesters, those practicing civil disobedience for a cause, political advocates). Although the “free will” component of the volunteer act is disputable in some of these examples, as is the complete lack of payment, some expert practitioners have argued that these should be treated as cases of volunteering. Ellis and Campbell (2005) define volunteering this way:

To volunteer is to choose to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one's basic obligations (p. 4)

They further define volunteering as a “methodology for getting something done” rather than an act imbued necessarily with a restricted or particular set of ethics, philosophy, morality, or politics. Thus, “volunteering” may apply to both sides of a politically or morally charged issue or movement.

A plethora of alternate terms are used to describe volunteering including community involvement, pro-bono service, service-learning, corporate social responsibility, and lay ministry among many others. There are historical and contemporary debates about these and many other terms easily confused and misapplied in practice and in published work (see Ellis & Campbell, 2005, for detailed discussion).

Volunteering has been a historical feature of the United States since its founding. Ellis and Campbell (2005) detail the role that volunteers played in founding the first American bank, establishing the first libraries and museums, beginning youth sports leagues, and preserving Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks among other examples. These authors trace many examples of volunteers contributing to fulfilling civil society needs including news, public health, access to education, care for the poor, and social justice.

In the 1990s, Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (1995) described what he claimed was the deterioration of associational membership in the United States. Putnam and other scholars pointed out evidence of declining civic participation and community focus. However, other scholars noted the increase in participation through modern technologies enabled by the Internet. At the same time “bowlers” may have stopped meeting up, chat rooms, listservs, citizen journalism, and social networking online was on the rise. The birth of “virtual volunteering” enabled people to be in service through their Internet connections. “Most online volunteers engage in operational and managerial activities such as fundraising, technological support, communications, marketing and consulting” (UN State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011, p. 27).

Volunteering in the US: Numbers and Scope

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (US Department of Labor, Volunteering in the United States, February 22, 2012 report) about 64.3 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between

September 2010 and September 2011. The report established that the volunteer rate of women is at 29.9% and for men it is at 23.5%. Thirty-five to 44-year-olds and 45- to 54-year-olds were the most likely to volunteer (31.8% and 30.6%, respectively). Persons in their early 20s were the least likely to volunteer (19.4%). Among the major race and ethnicity groups, whites continued to volunteer at the highest rate (28.2%), followed by blacks (20.3%), Asians (20.0%), and Hispanics (14.9%). Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment engaged in volunteer activities at higher rates than did those with less education. Interestingly, employed persons (29.6%) tended to volunteer at higher rates than unemployed (23.8%) or those not in the labor force (22.5%). Among the employed, part-time workers were more likely than full-time workers to have participated in volunteer activities—33.3% compared with 28.7%.

The study's volunteers of both sexes spent a median of 51 hours on volunteer activities during the year. Median annual hours spent on volunteer activities ranged from a high of 96 hours for volunteers age 65 and over to a low of 32 hours for those 25 to 34 years old (US Department of Labor, Volunteering in the United States, February 22, 2012 report). According to the Corporation for National and Community Service US volunteers served 8.1 billion hours in 2010 valued at \$173 billion.

It is important to note that the concentration of volunteer work is another statistic that shapes the landscape of accounting for volunteering labor. Musick and Wilson (2008) analyzed independent sector data to see if volunteers share volunteer work evenly among themselves. They found that a “tiny minority (3.5% of Americans and 10% of the volunteers) contributed 39% of all the hours volunteered and just below 8% (or 25% of all volunteers) contributed 68% of all hours worked” (p. 27). A similar pattern emerged in Canadian data. Interestingly, they also found that the degree of concentration depended on the sub-sector of volunteer work. That is, in the fields of arts and culture, environment and animal welfare, and foreign and international activities, there was high concentration (reliance on a small number of highly committed volunteers). However, in other fields such as sports and recreation, education and youth, development and business, and professional associations and unions, the volunteer rate was more distributed (relying on a larger number of volunteers to divide the work).

Volunteers, like paid workers, may have more than one volunteer job with more than one organization. According to the 2011 Current Population Survey (CPS) special supplement on volunteering, 69.6% of Americans aged

16 or above volunteered their time to only one organization, 19.4% to two organizations, 7.0% to three, 2.2% to four and 1.4% to five or more (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). In 2011, the organizations for which the volunteer worked the most hours per year were religious (33.2% of all volunteers) followed by educational or youth service related (25.7%), and then social or community service organizations (14.3%) (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

According to the Department of Labor's (2012) Current Population Survey, volunteers spend the bulk of their time on fundraising (11%) and collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food (10.6%). Men and women tended to engage in different main activities. Male volunteers were most likely to engage in general labor (13.3%) coach, referee, or supervise sports teams (10.1%); or fundraise (8.9%). Female volunteers were most likely to fundraise (12.6%); collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food (12.5%); or tutor or teach (10.7%). Ellis and Campbell (2005) developed an extremely detailed list of contexts for modern volunteering including labor and employment, business and industry, communications, transportation, human services, health care, education, religion, leisure and recreation, justice, public safety, the military, international involvement, political and social action.

International Volunteering

According to the United Nations (UN State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011), "Volunteerism is not only the backbone of civil society organizations and social and political movements, but also of many health, education, housing and environmental programmes and a range of other civil society, public and private sector programmes worldwide" (p. 2). However, according to this report, "no comprehensive, comparative study of worldwide volunteerism exists" (p. 3). There are many challenges with assessing the degree and scope of volunteerism worldwide including disagreements about what to include and the best methodology to collect data about volume and value of volunteer action. There have been a number of initial and ongoing studies of volunteering within specific countries. Canada, the US, and Australia provide detailed ongoing studies of volunteering. "In 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General noted 15 country specific studies in developing countries" (UN, 2010). In 2010 the United Nations Volunteers identified 14 new developing country studies on volunteerism. Certainly a large issue in the gathering self-reports of volunteering involves the language used

to describe activities associated with volunteerism as well as cultural beliefs about the nature of and desirability of those activities. “There is variation in the meaning of volunteering in different contexts, and...many individuals that could, in essence, be considered volunteers...do not consider themselves as such” (Butcher, 2010, p. 92).

Stereotypes of Volunteering

Penner (2002) defines volunteerism as “long-term, planned, prosocial behaviors that benefit strangers and occur within in organizational setting” (p. 448). This definition focuses on common characteristics of traditional volunteering but it ignores many modern trends in volunteering (e.g., episodic, spontaneous, or virtual volunteering) and even discounts a vast array of volunteer roles involving service to membership organizations, professional associations, sports/civic/school organizations (i.e., serving those we know well), fine arts volunteers, and those with questionable social ethics (e.g., volunteering to support a hate-group’s efforts to spread stereotypes).

Further, many scholars tend to assume the volunteer term has nothing but positive connotations (e.g., helper, giver, good citizen). However, volunteering can be viewed as a pejorative term. In talking with practitioners, they suggest there is evidence of the volunteer role being thought of in negative, powerless terms (e.g., sucker, loser, unemployable, low status, meddler and do-gooder). In fact, some volunteers eschew use of the term and may in fact underreport work they label in different ways (e.g., pro bono, board member, coach). There may be sexism surrounding volunteering as well. For example, men who coach or provide professional pro-bono services may tend not to consider their donations of time as volunteering. Musick and Wilson (2008, p. 3) argue “although volunteers are widely admired because they give their time freely to help others, their work is devalued precisely because it is given away.” For some, use of volunteers is only a substitute for funding for a paid staff position. If you can’t afford “professionals” you have to rely on volunteers. “In a highly materialistic society devoted to the pursuit of economic gain, working for nothing is devalued, even stigmatized” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 86). This has become a sensitive point for some practitioners. Some organizations have noticed that the “v-word” is a problem for some (by invoking stereotypes, implying long-term commitments) and have tried substitutes such as describing needed help/tasks/roles and just not using the “v-word” (see Volunteergenie.org).

Other stereotypes focus attention on social service volunteers—particularly direct service roles—but ignore the wide array of volunteers in cultural, political, civic, and professional spheres. For example, classic examples of volunteers are those who care for the elderly, poor, or hospitalized. The archetype of the “candy-striper,” depicted as a middle-aged female volunteer with time on her hands, is a common cultural image in the US. The Mother Theresa image is likely more common worldwide. There also exist stereotypes of the challenges of managing volunteers including that they tend to be unreliable, unskilled, and unaccountable for the quality of their work.

Ellis and Campbell (2008) provide a detailed breakdown of volunteering in a wide variety of settings (see earlier for list) that call into question some of our common stereotypes. They remind us of those who provide volunteer service to all of us (even if we aren’t poor, hospitalized, or aged) including travelers aid, concession booth staff, museum and zoo docents, professional association officers and organizers, firefighters and police reservists, trail maintenance workers, parade and civic celebration, polling place staff, artists/performers/organizers, USO performers for military, artistic and historic demonstrators/re-enactors, consumer advocates, political activists, condo and neighborhood association officers/committee members, weather watchers and reporters, citizen journalists, school PTO, community sports coaches/referees/organizers among myriad others. The wide variety of contexts of volunteering combined with cultural stereotypes of what it means to be a volunteer certainly affect the ways in which people self-report their volunteerism. Providing a service, expertise, support, labor, etc. without expectation of payment or benefit to those in need is something many more people engage in regularly than most realize.

Some scholars have attempted to ground the definition of volunteering in public perceptions. Net-cost theory was developed to explain how people judge the degree to which a volunteer is “pure.” The net-cost of any volunteer situation is the “the total cost minus total benefits to the volunteer” (Handy et al., 2000, p. 45). Scholars who embrace this perspective suggest “what is understood as volunteering is a matter of public perception” (Hustinx et al., 2010, p. 74) and argue that those perceptions are based largely on assumed motives of the volunteer. Musick and Wilson (2008) explain net-cost theory this way, “Purity of motivation becomes the template against which individual acts are compared and volunteer status is denied to those motivated primarily out of self-interest” (p. 17). To test net-cost theory researchers used a survey methodology to present hypothetical volunteers with

their motivations stated. Respondents were asked to judge the degree to which they would consider each case as volunteering (“definitely a volunteer” to “not a volunteer”). Examples receiving low ratings as volunteer acts included “an accountant charged with embezzling who accepts a sentence of community service in lieu of prosecution,” “the individuals who agree to offer services at the symphony in exchange for a free ticket to the concert.” On the high end of ratings for pure volunteer acts were things like “a teen who volunteers to serve a meal at a soup kitchen,” and “an adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister” (Handy et al., 2000). These examples presume motivations that may not exist in all cases. For example, the volunteer may do so in order to get an “item” on a resume.

Trends in Modern Volunteering

Although traditional long-term, high commitment, face-to-face volunteer roles are still very much a part of the volunteer landscape, there are new trends in how volunteering is accomplished. I highlight four modern trends here: Episodic volunteering, virtual/online volunteering, voluntourism, and corporate volunteering that have been often noted in the practice and scholarly literatures (Brudney, 2005b; Culp & Nolan, 2000; Hustinx et al., 2010).

Episodic Volunteering

Many individuals who want to volunteer have few free hours and demanding work and life schedules. To satisfy interests in providing services to worthy causes, participate in civic activities, and develop relationships and experiences that come from volunteering such individuals often seek episodic volunteering opportunities. This term is often defined as “individuals who engage in one-time or short-term volunteering” (Cnaan & Handy, 2005, p. 30). Macduff (2004) developed a typology of episodic volunteering identifying three distinct types: 1) temporary episodic volunteers who give a onetime service; 2) occasional episodic volunteers who volunteer for one activity, event, or project for the organization, but at regular intervals; and 3) interim volunteers who serve on a regular basis but only for a short period of less than six months. Further, Handy, Brodeur, and Cnaan (2006) distinguished between 1) habitual episodic volunteers whose volunteering occurs over multiple episodic opportunities on a continual basis, and 2) genuine episodic volunteers who volunteer for two or fewer volunteer episodes a year.

Many scholars and practitioners have recognized this as a trend in modern volunteering that nonprofit organizations are learning to incorporate into recruitment and management of volunteers. For example, the Hands On Network's "Cares" program as well as VolunteerMatch.org and Points of Light help episodic volunteers find one-time volunteer opportunities. Volunteers can check websites in their area for specific needs, organizations, and events to which they can devote a few hours or make lengthier commitments.

Statistics on episodic volunteering are scarce, but some research has shown an uptick in this type of volunteering. The AARP state volunteer survey in 2010 showed that "while the rate of traditional volunteering (i.e., volunteering through or for an organization) has held steady, the amount of time volunteers spend in service has declined as volunteering becomes more episodic" (Williams, Fries, Koppen, & Prisula, 2010, p. 2). This study found that almost two out of three volunteers (63%) spent less than 10 hours a month volunteering. Further, Cnaan and Handy's (2004) study of 1,320 adults in North America found that almost half their sample (47.9%) reported performing both episodic and traditional types of volunteering and a fifth of the sample reported to be involved only in episodic volunteering. Brudney's (2005a) study using data from the independent sector found that 31% of American volunteers could be described as episodic.

In a study comparing episodic volunteers with traditional volunteers at a Ronald McDonald House, Hustinx, Haski-Leventhal, and Handy (2008) use net-cost theory to help account for differences between those with lower net-costs (episodic) with those with higher net-costs (traditional). These authors argue that those with higher net costs will likely inflate their report of rewards in order to off-set perceived costs and that they will be more likely than low net-cost volunteers (episodic) to seek rewards and recognition for their volunteering. Further, they hypothesized that high net-cost (traditional) volunteers would be more altruistic in motives for volunteering given the high costs of engaging in volunteering compared with low net-cost (episodic) volunteers. Their study found that both types of volunteers reported similar levels of satisfaction, and that episodic volunteers are more frequently motivated by social incentives (e.g., someone asked them to volunteer) and more driven by civic or religious sense of duty. Traditional volunteers were more likely to be motivated by meeting new people and being close to other volunteers. In contrast to hypothesized relationships, their data found that episodic volunteers were more idealistic in motivations to volunteer than were traditional volunteers. They also found that traditional volunteers

placed higher importance on appreciation by staff and families, attending volunteer appreciation events, free meals, and free parking than did episodic volunteers. However, they found that both sets of volunteers placed very little emphasis on receiving tangible rewards.

Virtual/Online Volunteering

Virtual volunteering is the term coined to “describe the use of information and communication technology to permit some part of the volunteer process to be carried out at a distance from the organization” (Murray & Harrison, 2005, p. 31). Some scholars consider virtual volunteering a special case of episodic volunteering. For some, virtual volunteering concerns only the means of locating volunteer opportunities (such as the VolunteerMatch Internet site noted earlier) and in other cases involves the doing of the volunteering, and in some cases both apply. Virtual volunteers also go by the names of telementors, teletutors, and online mentors, and may be described as providing cyber service (Cravens, 2006). Examples of mentoring include HighTech Women; Ask the Employer.com; Nursing Net; and MentorNet.

As of 2004 complete virtual volunteers were still quite rare (Murray & Harrison, 2005). Although this volunteer trend appears to be growing, few reliable statistics are available on the popularity or scope of this volunteering. The United Nations Volunteers manages an online volunteering program (www.volunteermatters.unv.org). Launched in 2000, it connects NGOs, country governments, and UN agencies with people who wish to volunteer through the Internet and mobile communication devices. “Some 10,000 volunteers from 170 countries complete an average of 15,000 online assignments each year” (UN Report, 2010, p. 27). Among the advantages of online volunteering, volunteers can overcome the barriers of time and distance, reduce social barriers to giving and receiving help, be enabled to volunteer despite physical disabilities, and adapt to flexible schedules. Examples provided by the UN Report include, social media used for recruiting, organizing, increasing awareness, fundraising, and communicating with decision-makers.

Voluntourism

“Voluntourism” is another form of episodic volunteering. “In 2008, the market for volun-tourism in Western Europe had grown by 5 to 10% over five years, with Africa, Asia and Latin America as the most popular destina-

tions” (UN Report, 2010, p. 31). College students and adults typically spend a few days, a couple of weeks, or a month involved in activities like education, training, construction, and working with children. They typically mix tourism with service projects. Volunteers who opt for these opportunities tend to be attracted to the idea of gaining a deeper understanding of the places they visit (Hustinx et al., 2010). These experiences are now commonly marketed as “ecotourism,” “mini-mission,” and “volunteer vacations” among other names, and have become similar to the mass-marketed tourism packages. Further, numerous nonprofit and for-profit organizations market voluntourism and mission trips to religious and civic groups.

Benefits of the voluntourism model include increases in awareness and sources of funding for the host site (given that volunteers tend to stay in touch after the return home and even fundraise on behalf of communities they serve). The UN Report also discusses some of the drawbacks or critiques of voluntourism including that volunteers often lack training and relevant qualifications and they can typically only take on simpler and small-scale tasks with minimal impact.

Research on voluntourism has only been a focus of scholarly study since the early 2000s. Most studies have focused on describing voluntourists’ profiles, motivations, behaviors, and experiences; their interactions with host communities; their environmental and social attitudes and values; and aspects of self and cultural identity as well as the qualities of sponsoring organizations that bring voluntourists to host countries (Holmes, Smith, Lockstone-Binney, & Baum, 2010; McGehee & Andereck, 2009). McGehee and Andereck (2009) argue that most research has ignored or uncritically examined the impact of voluntourism on what they term the “voluntoured” or those who receive contact of the volunteers in the host country. Case studies dominate volunteer tourism research including examination of organizations specializing in volunteer tourism, individual projects, or types of volunteering in particular locations (Holmes et al., 2010). The Mize Smith chapter (Chapter 10) in this book details an experience of voluntourism.

Corporate Volunteering

The corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement has given rise to a corporate trend in promoting various sustainability and voluntary efforts across the globe. “It means that private companies have moral, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, in addition to the obligation to earn a fair re-

turn for investors” (UN Report, 2010, p. 33). One important impetus to CSR is the UN Global Compact that was launched in 2000 to promote human rights, environmental and anti-corruption principles in the private sector. The UN Report notes that the number of companies in the Global Compact has grown from 47 in 2000 to over 8,700 in 2011 across 137 countries. One of the goals of the Global Compact is to encourage companies to mobilize volunteers. Another driver of the move toward corporate volunteer programs is the increased interest in employees in working for a company that is a “good corporate citizen” (Pajo & Lee, 2010).

Corporate volunteering, also known as employer-supported volunteering, has become a strong trend in the United States and worldwide. Pajo and Lee (2010) suggest that research indicates that such programs are among the fastest growing philanthropic activities in the UK, Western Europe, and North America. Often employers incorporate volunteer programs into human resource programs to enhance recruitment of employees, boost morale of existing employees, and increase the company’s public image and reputation. Over 90% of Fortune 500 companies report having formal employee volunteering programs (UN Report, 2010). Benefits of the programs to employee volunteers are touted to include developing leadership and other skills, enhancing visibility with supervisors, and increasing work productivity and satisfaction (Pajo & Lee, 2010; Tschirhart & St. Clair, 2008).

Programs for corporate volunteering vary considerably. For some organizations, group events are planned where employees volunteer together during work hours. In other programs, employees are granted paid or unpaid time off periodically to volunteer as an individual to an organization of their own choosing. In some cases, corporations release employees to volunteer full-time for lengthy periods of time (e.g., loaned executive programs). Other programs involve matching donations for employee volunteering hours.

Critics of corporate volunteering initiatives have questioned the coercive nature of some programs in which companies expect employees—especially executives—to volunteer as part of their performance expectations in the company. “Corporate volunteering may address the willingness to volunteer—by encouraging employees to do so; by making volunteering an organisational norm and expectancy; by creating peer encouragement or pressure; or, in a more extreme scenario, forcing employees to volunteer or making it part of their evaluation and promotion criteria” (Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, & Hustinx, 2009, p. 148). Further, issues that erode the purity of these volunteer efforts concern the choice of organizations that employees may give their

time, and the degree to which work-mandated volunteering may decrease individuals' felt needs to participate in civic society as a private citizen. Tschirhart and St. Clair (2008) report on two case studies of large nonprofit companies with volunteer programs and identified four major areas in which the employees believed their employers had "crossed the line or are close to crossing the line of appropriateness" (p. 207) including: encouragement of participation, recognition of participants, use of program to promote the company image, and flexibility in choice of program activities. Their interview data revealed some negative reactions at felt pressure to volunteer:

Before I was involved in the program, the CEO at an all-employee meeting made a comment about the fact that volunteerism is part of your job and that you are expected to do it. I have worked for three years to try and say that is not how we operate and that's not what he meant. Employees had a totally negative reaction to it. (Tschirhart & St. Clair, 2008, p. 207)

Other employees interviewed in their study raised the point that mandated or expected volunteering is not volunteering by their definition. Employees in this study also raised issues of overemphasis (or lack of emphasis) on recognition. Some employees felt it was inappropriate for their employer to get credit for their own personal volunteering. Others raised concerns that individuals were using their volunteering for their own personal gain (e.g., promotions, positive job evaluations, tangible awards, and rewards) that seemed to run counter to the philosophy of volunteering. Volunteers also critiqued the restrictions on what sorts of volunteering and the types of organizations that employers would "count" (Tschirhart & St. Clair, 2008).

Meijs and Roza (2010) characterize the bulk of research on corporate volunteering as focused on outcomes for businesses and that studies often document that these programs contribute to marketing and reputation-building and enhance human resource goals. Much less light has been shed on the perspectives of employees volunteers themselves (Meijs & Roza, 2010). Tschirhart and St. Clair (2008) described the research on corporate volunteering at that time as having "a strong normative tone and rarely include identification of challenges in the implementation and design of programs" (p. 206). Some research has questioned whether promotion of civic-mindedness and social altruism is a typical by-product of employee programs. A study by Peloza, Hudson, & Hassay (2009) of motives of employee volunteers found that "altruistic motives were not found to be predictive of positive attitudes or ensuing propensity to volunteer for company-sponsored

initiatives” (Pajo & Lee, 2010, p. 469). Research continues to indicate that there are a variety of motives for participation in employee-supported volunteer programs (Palo & Lee, 2010) and with a variety of outcomes for individual employees (Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005). The Pompper chapter (Chapter 14) in this book provides a perspective on corporate social responsibility volunteering.

State of the Art: Research on Volunteering

Systematic empirical study of volunteerism is relatively new (Musick & Wilson, 2010). However, many social sciences including economics, political science, sociology, public administration, leisure studies, communication, and psychology have contributed scholarship. Explanations for volunteer behavior range from cost-benefit analyses, to expressions of community solidarity and cohesion, to personality traits. Much of the research and theory has focused on detailing who volunteers are and their motivations (Hustinx, Handy, & Cnaan, 2010; see review in Musick & Wilson, 2008). For example, a commonly accepted conclusion of volunteer research is that people with higher social and economic status tend to volunteer more (Wilson, 2000).

The motivation literature suggests that people volunteer in order to meet needs and goals (Clary & Snyder, 1991) and a variety of personal motives (Clary & Orenstein, 1991; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Musick and Wilson (2008) review a number of approaches to theorizing about volunteer motives including functional theories suggesting that people volunteer because doing so will serve important psychological functions for them. The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) suggests six separate volunteer motivations (values, enhancement of self/skills, social acceptance/belongingness, career related benefit, protection of inner self, and ego-enhancement/personal growth). Empirical investigations of the use of these motivations in recruiting volunteers (Clary et al., 1994; Clary et al., 1998) found that appeals for volunteers work best if they are couched in terms that speak directly to an individual’s needs at the time (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Further, some literature has identified qualities of the organizations through which volunteering occurs as an important predictor of continued motivation (Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Davis, Hall, & Meyer, 2003).

Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) note other common topics of volunteer research including rewards (Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994), satisfaction

(Field & Johnson, 1993), volunteer retention and turnover (Blake & Jefferson, 1992; Cnaan & Cascio, 1999; Cyr & Doerick, 1991), effectiveness of volunteers (Golden, 1991), and expectations of volunteers (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). Research also describes who volunteers are and what they do in terms of tasks (Musick & Wilson, 2008) and outcomes for volunteers (Clukey, 2010) among others. In general, the research supports the positive benefits of volunteer activity for the volunteer. For example, Kumar, Calvo, Avendano, Sivaramkrishnan, and Berkman (2012) found evidence for the correlation between self reported health and volunteering in 139 countries. "Results of... analyses in 139 countries suggest that associations of social support and volunteering with self-rated health are consistently positive across different cultural, economic and geographic settings." (p. 701). Conversely, some research has documented negative outcomes of volunteering including burn-out due to over-commitment (Clukey, 2010; Glass & Hastings, 1998) and lack of work-life balance for volunteers (MacDonald, Phipps, & Lethbridge, 2005). The Cruz chapter (Chapter 13) deals with the issue of burnout.

To the extent that we have scholarship on volunteer experiences or management of volunteers it has tended to focus on socialization (cf. Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008; McComb, 1995). For example, the Volunteering Stages and Transitions Model (VSTM) "portrays the process of volunteering, its stages and transitions that occur during the organization involvement of volunteers" (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 95). The model is built for examination of traditional volunteering and in that context volunteers experienced deep emotional ups/downs, shifts in attitudes and perceptions and relationships with others. In another model, Kramer's (2011) multilevel communication model of voluntary socialization focuses on how communication experiences influence socialization of volunteers as they move among various membership statuses (prospective, new, establish, former, and transitory). The model also calls attention to how membership in various other groups, such as family and work, influence and interact with individuals' membership and socialization. On a third level, the model recognizes that "simultaneous memberships of multiple individuals across multiple organizations influences their socialization experiences in a particular volunteer organization" (p. 250). In contrast, we have less understanding of the development of volunteer identity and roles over the life span (see Kulik, 2010, as an exception for research on older volunteers and their life history in volunteering) or about multi-role volunteering (e.g., people who occupy multiple volunteer roles simultaneously).

Studies of volunteer management often have focused on discerning best practices for volunteer recruiters and coordinators in nonprofits. This research has documented somewhat unsurprising findings in many cases such as volunteers want to be treated fairly (Wuthnow, 1998); desire to be recognized and rewarded for good work (McClintock, 2000); and dislike proliferation of rules, protocols, and paperwork and lack of job autonomy (Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 2002).

Relationships between paid staff and volunteers have been a focus of some research (Daniels, 1988; Kieffer, 1986; Simpson, 1996). These studies tend to document tension and dysfunctional relationships between the two groups and typically point to resentments that paid staff have toward volunteers (Musick & Wilson, 2010). McCurley and Lynch (1996) suggest that resistance that paid staff have toward volunteers may stem from feeling threatened by experience, expertise, and credentials of older volunteers. Ashcraft and Kedrowicz (2002) have called attention to the status differences between paid staff and volunteers. Netting, Nelson, Borders, and Huber (2004) reviewed the historical context of social work which at its founding was a volunteer activity. The struggle for the professionalization of social work/ers may still play a significant role still in tensions between volunteers and paid staff. The issue of professionalism in volunteering has been raised elsewhere in the communication literature (Ganesh & McAllum, 2012; McAllum, 2012). "Most analyses have assumed that volunteers are not professional because, unlike elite occupational groups, volunteers receive limited training, possess no disciplinary knowledge, and have little power even if their work has significant social consequences" (Ganesh & McAllum, 2012, p. 153). The Onyx Chapter 17 in this book deals with some of these issues of rules and professionalism as they pertain to volunteering.

Although a good deal of research has documented the characteristics and motivations of volunteers, much less insight has been gained into the process of volunteering, the organization of volunteer work, behaviors of volunteers, interaction of volunteers with other stakeholders, and the management of volunteers and volunteer work. As Hustinx et al. (2010) argue "As yet, the organizational and institutional context of volunteering remains ill-understood" (p. 6). Some scholars are starting to recognize the limitations of the trends in research on volunteering and are calling for more attention to consider multiple levels of analysis (individual, interpersonal, organizational, and broader societal level) and different stages in the life course of volunteers (Hustinx et al., 2010; Omoto & Snyder 2002).

There is considerable research about some contexts and types of volunteers such as board members and social service providers, and service learning, but much less about others including coaches, pro-bono professionals, mandated volunteering, volunteering in the context of membership organizations (e.g., professional associations, clubs, schools, children's activity groups) that may be less about altruism and more about paying the dues of belonging to the organization or participating in the activities enabled by the organization. In some ways, our study of volunteering has been subject to stereotypes of the altruistic volunteer in a traditional social service role (e.g., candy striper), and so ignores the large number of volunteer roles that have nothing to do with solving social problems or addressing poverty.

In terms of popular conceptualizations and understandings of volunteers/volunteerism, there has been a dearth of exploration about either large cultural or individual and personal messages individuals receive or send. There is a range of popular images—some express pride and positive images and some depict volunteers in a negative light (or suggest it is an unreasonable or undesirable thing to have to do). CNN Heroes is an example of a popular image that is positive. Internet searches on “volunteer/volunteering, news” produce stories about unusual, fun volunteering opportunities, and especially self-sacrificing volunteers (e.g., long-term volunteers or those who have sacrificed a lot to volunteer). However, a recent news story about a neighborhood watch volunteer, George Zimmerman, who shot and killed a “suspicious” teen in a gated community is an example of a story shedding negative light on a volunteer. Searches on “volunteer controversy” call up stories on volunteer and paid staff conflict (e.g., firefighters). Searches on YouTube and IMDB reveal images in TV sitcoms that have long made fun of “bad” volunteering from *Seinfeld*, to *Desperate Housewives*, to *Sister Sister*. However, the range and prevalence of such images—and competing images—and the degree to which they impact real life beliefs about volunteers and/or intentions to volunteer are unknown.

Communication Research on Volunteering

Research about volunteers and volunteering has not been a major focus of communication scholarship. In 2005, I called for more research on NPOs and included an agenda for the study of volunteers (Lewis, 2005) and in a recent *Communication Yearbook* chapter, Shiv Ganesh and Kirstie McAllum (2009) analyzed academic discourses about volunteers/ing. These and other

calls for research from a communication perspective have grown in recent years—especially through conferences (e.g., National Communication Association, and International Communication Association) and a recent special issue forum on nonprofits in *Management Communication Quarterly*.

It is difficult to discern trends in volunteer research within the communication discipline. Approaches to the topic of volunteers/ing vary considerably. Most work to date has focused on dyadic interpersonal relationships between paid staff and volunteers or among volunteers (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Adams, Schlueter, & Barge, 1988), and on issues related to agency, power, emotion, self-efficacy, and other psychologically-related outcomes and dynamics (Carlyle & Roberto, 2007; McAllum, 2012; Thornton & Novak, 2010; Wittenberg-Lyles, 2006) as well as study of important communication dynamics in which volunteers participate such as decision making (Petronio, Sargent, Andrea, Reganis, & Cichocki, 2004; Stirling & Bull, 2011; Zoller, 2000). Clearly, there is a great deal more to do and these scholars have started to forge a useful path for others to follow.

The Organization of this Book

There are many ways in which we could organize the chapters in this book. We chose to emphasize some less typical ways of viewing volunteering. In doing so, we hope to highlight some areas of research and research potential that have yet to be fully realized. This book is organized into five sections. Each section clusters together a set of empirical studies that examine an aspect of the volunteer experience from a communication perspective.

Section one provides insight into becoming a volunteer. These chapters reveal aspects of how individuals are introduced to volunteer roles and take on the associated identities/tasks, and how organizations socialize volunteers.

The second section of the book deals with learning about self. In this section, chapters provide empirical examination of volunteer experiences that allowed for individuals to explore themselves and develop new ideas of self through volunteering. In some cases, these were experiences involving growth, for others struggle, and for some conflict.

In section three, the chapters focus on dark side issues of volunteer experience. Here our authors explore stressors and negative aspects of volunteering such as managing risk, negotiating stereotypes, and coping with burnout.

Section four includes two chapters that highlight volunteering wherein the degree of choice that volunteers had in participating was less than typically true in many volunteer studies. One chapter deals with corporate social responsibility and another with service learning.

Our final section of empirical chapters provides glimpses of volunteers coping with issues of voice and dissent in their organizations. Here the authors explore the latitude that volunteers have and perceive they have for dissenting or complaining, as well as how organizational rules can be constraining on volunteer expression.

The final chapter reflects on both the research to date and the research presented in the earlier chapters providing the reader with a capstone for consideration for empirical work and theoretical conceptualization. We also reflect on lessons that might be derived from these chapters for practitioners.

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Section 1: Becoming a Volunteer

Chapter 2

BLOGGING FOR PEACE: REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW STRATEGIES FROM THE 21ST CENTURY PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

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On March 1, 2011, the Peace Corps celebrated its success as the longest standing Foreign Service organization in the United States. Over the past 50 years, more than 200,000 volunteers have served in 139 countries around the world. During the 1960s, the organization touted its slogan, “The toughest job you’ll ever love,” as volunteer numbers reached all-time highs with more than 15,000 volunteers in service per year (Fast Facts). In 2003, the Peace Corps, in keeping with the millennial shift and to reinvigorate volunteer submissions, created a new slogan, “Life is calling. How far will you go?” (Public service advertising). The Peace Corps slogan has shifted its appeal to an ever-changing volunteer population. What was once an idealistic statement about the difficulties of volunteer life coupled with the rewards of service is now a statement of great adventure and a call away from everyday life.

In addition to the change in slogan, over the past decade, Peace Corps Volunteer blogs have become increasingly popular as an unofficial means of recruiting future volunteers. Before committing to service, potential volunteers visit the Internet to read volunteer accounts of life in service. The volunteer blog, as a tool, may do as much for Peace Corps recruitment as the organization does on its own. Therefore, analyzing blogs not only provides insight into the life and perspective of the volunteer but also illuminates a new medium for recruitment. This study explores how independent and unofficial volunteer websites simultaneously complement and offer an alternative to the official recruitment rhetoric posed by the Peace Corps, in the form of realistic job previews. These independent volunteer blogs compete, however unintentionally, to tell the “true” story of volunteer life, often times altering the message sent by the organization.

This study explores the tensions between the Peace Corps' official approach to volunteer recruitment and the role of current and past volunteer blogs in creating realistic job previews (RJPs) for prospective volunteers. The study finds that volunteer blogs offer RJPs to prospective Peace Corps volunteers which complement the traditional recruitment work offered on the official organizational website.

Literature Review

It should be noted that the literature referenced in this study largely refers to employment outside of voluntarism (Kramer, 2011). The Peace Corps is unique in that it is not a temporary voluntary position in addition to permanent employment. Because it is a full-time commitment with responsibilities, it is like the employment referenced in the noted studies.

Realistic Job Previews

In this study the concept of realistic job previews (RJPs) provides a theoretical framework by which the emergent blog themes may be contextualized since the categorization of volunteer themes does not capture the tension between the organization's recruitment information and training procedures and volunteer stories of life in the field. Realistic job previews, as noted by Reeve, Highhouse, and Brooks (2006), provide new employees with a sense of the complexities of a job prior to full integration into a company or group. According to Gardner et al. (2009), "RJPs encourage employees who represent a poor fit with the firm to select themselves out prior to employment" (p. 438). In the case of the Peace Corps, RJPs have long been a part of the organization's training pedagogy but only after the volunteer has been recruited into service, during the training phase.

Jablin (2001) asserts that job seekers typically rely on two sources of information to make employment decisions: organizational literature and interpersonal interactions with employees (p. 743). The same can be said for Peace Corps volunteers, as they primarily rely on literature produced by the organization and information gathered from current and past volunteers. While Jablin further dissects those two means of information gathering, for the purposes of this study, the broadly defined categories of organizational literature and direct volunteer experiences will be analyzed. Realism reduces turnover in that it minimizes the disappointment of expectations left unmet (Wanous, 1980). Using RJPs as a measure by which this study explores re-

recruitment practices allows a comparative study between the organization's website and the volunteer blogs specifically. This study contends that the volunteer blogs are the most accurate source for RJPs available to volunteers today, prior to entering into service.

Peace Corps Organizational Website

Serving as the primary means of recruitment for the 21st century volunteer, the Peace Corps website contains a wide variety of information, including the history of the organization, current statistics on volunteer numbers, stories and videos of volunteer experiences, photo galleries, and information for the friends and family of prospective volunteers. The Peace Corps has invested a considerable amount of attention to its web presence. For the purposes of this study, a brief analysis of the emergent themes related to the Peace Corps' official web recruitment strategy was conducted in order to set the stage for comparing it against the volunteer experience as illustrated through volunteers' personal, unofficial blogs.

As far as recruitment is concerned, the organization relies heavily upon positive selling strategies, minimizing the challenges of service. Organizations tend to oversell the positive aspects of the employment experience, ignoring the unattractive or challenging parts of the job (Wanous, 1980). On the official Peace Corps website, very little information is presented about specific countries of service and all information is presented positively. Wanous (1980) argues that in order to select a compatible organization, the seeker needs "complete and valid" information (p. 25). A recruitment website such as that of the Peace Corps cannot possibly address all of the varied experiences a volunteer might encounter. However, the organization does address, very broadly, concerns about safety and security, offers generic job previews, and highlights tangible benefits of volunteer service (small monetary living allowance, deferment of student loans, readjustment stipend at the end of service, and potential graduate school and job prospects post-service). The intangible benefits of service are mentioned in a short paragraph at the end of the section entitled *Benefits*. The Peace Corps website states,

The Peace Corps requires serious commitment and hard work. Volunteers leave the comforts of home and what is familiar, immerse themselves 24/7 in another culture, apply technical skills, and learn a new language that must be used every day to shop for food, obtain transportation, develop friendships, and conduct work. The unique challenges of Peace Corps service make for a tremendous growth experience. Prac-

tical skills are gained, and intangible benefits come with making a difference in people's lives and relying on oneself to respond to the needs of others.

Aside from the mention of intangible benefits, the Peace Corps has added many more volunteer accounts to their official website in the past five years, advancing the notion that volunteer rhetoric supports recruitment efforts broadly. These volunteer statements tend toward the generic and support the overall design and approach of the organization, modeling the "Life is calling. How far will you go?" slogan. The site relies heavily upon volunteer excerpts that speak to the variety of volunteers in service. For example, on a web page entitled *Who Volunteers*, an interactive collage of 30 volunteer images allows a user to click on the face of a volunteer and either read a short quote from the volunteer or watch a short video of the volunteer speaking about his or her service. A volunteer in Ukraine, Jeffery Janis, represents the gay and lesbian volunteer population, stating "I had to balance my identity with the culture I was serving in. I always kept in mind that advancing cultural exchange, which brings greater acceptance of diversity, trumped my desire to wave a rainbow flag" (Peace Corps website).

Another section of the Peace Corps official website hosts a video of volunteers speaking about the training program. In this particular clip, three different volunteers describe the basic format of all training programs. Although individual training programs vary from country to country, the overarching training protocol remains consistent. Volunteers live with or amongst host country families and attend daily training within a particular community prior to being assigned a town or community of service. As stated in the video, "Pre-service training, or before you get to site, is about a three month long process. And, you go through a lot of language training in the local language. You also go through safety and security training and medical training and what to look out for on both of those fronts" (Peace Corps website). In the same video, another volunteer references the realities of training, stating "with training, they teach you a lot of things, but nothing is like when you go out there and you first get in your community. That's really where, they say, the rubber meets the road" (Peace Corps website). The Peace Corps' use of pre-service training modules hints at their belief in realistic previews. However, in the experiences expressed by volunteers, the pre-service training can never adequately provide a preview of life as a volunteer after training.