

Management for Program Sustainability Amidst Rapid Volunteer Turnover

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## ABSTRACT

Program sustainability is a major issue for nongovernmental organizations. Sustainability depends on the ability of an organization to maintain its capacity, which can be severely hindered by high rates of personnel turnover. This is especially true for turnover in nonprofit organizations that offer volunteer-led programs and are consequently heavily reliant upon those individuals to carry out their missions. Creating a strong institutional memory for both tacit and explicit knowledge and properly managing volunteers are two critical elements in creating the capacity needed to maintain a high-quality program. This thesis analyzes the case of a youth center in Macedonia that is dependent upon its volunteers to function and is afflicted by sustainability and discontinuity issues in its programs due to a regular rapid turnover of its volunteers. The center promotes youth development through informal education of its participants, primarily high school youth. Interviews, participant observation and document analysis provided insight into the program sustainability issues present at the youth center. I present a series of scenarios that highlight the issues of volunteer management and institutional memory loss concerning volunteer turnover that I discovered in my analysis. I conclude by calling for better preservation of institutional memory, more targeted recruitment and training that emphasizes creating routines and establishing volunteer expectations to enable improved program sustainability.

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## List of Acronyms

CYC	Pseudonym for case study youth center
YACYC	Pseudonym for Youth Association CYC, governing office in Skopje, Macedonia
CPJD	Pseudonym for illustrative youth center
YIA	Youth in Action
EVS	European Voluntary Service
EC	European Commission
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPO	Nonprofit Organization
PC	Peace Corps
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are becoming increasingly important actors in nations around the world and Macedonia is no exception to that trend. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) NGO Sustainability index, Macedonia had an estimated 11,457 associations and foundations listed in the country's Central Register as of 2010, up from 9,830 in 2009 (USAID, 2011). They operate on the local, national and international levels in a variety of domains, including youth development. NGOs, especially in developing nations, often have a difficult time raising sufficient funds to support their missions or aspirations fully. Many therefore rely on volunteers to assist in carrying out their programs. In consequence, voluntarism is a very important issue for many civil society organizations. Indeed, successful volunteer training and management can have a direct impact on NGO efficiency and effectiveness. This thesis explores program sustainability practices and strategies at a Macedonian NGO that experiences frequent volunteer turnover.

As a Community Development volunteer in the Peace Corps, I worked with a nongovernmental organization to which I have assigned the pseudonym CYC, which operates as a youth center in the town of Kavadarci, Macedonia. The NGO experienced a high rate of volunteer turnover during my 22 months of service with it, creating program sustainability concerns. The NGO's volunteer cadre typically changed completely every 6 to 12 months, with new individuals arriving and those completing their service departing every three to four months. This analysis will focus primarily on CYC, but I will also draw some comparisons with another youth development NGO operating in the same town with a comparable mission and similar issues with volunteer turnover, but with a different mode of operating. I conducted interviews with local and foreign volunteers, as well as some staff members, primarily from CYC, to investigate volunteer management and program sustainability at both NGOs. During my process of observation and an accompanying review of the literature, I began asking questions about how CYC managed its volunteers and how those efforts affected its programs. I noticed that many of its offerings ended after the volunteer in charge of them departed and I began to ponder what could be done to eliminate or ameliorate that situation.

Although the issue of volunteer turnover and its implications for program sustainability is a fairly common challenge among NGOs, CYC relies especially strongly on volunteers, making this concern vital to the organization. In particular, the youth center relies heavily on foreign volunteers to help it conduct day-to-day operations. The center focuses primarily on the development of youths aged 13 to 25 and the promotion of youth volunteerism. This analysis uses CYC as a lens through which to explore several key management challenges that commonly confront NGOs that rely on volunteers to help deliver their services. As noted above, CYC Kavadarci is not the only youth center in the town, nor is it the only organization located in that community that participates in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) program.

I began my inquiry with a single question: How can an NGO that experiences rapid volunteer turnover create and maintain programs that are sustainable? This led me to two additional queries: What is program sustainability? How does volunteer turnover affect sustainability at CYC? I selected this case because of the NGO's reliance on and high rate of turnover of volunteers. This was a special environment and one that I was optimally situated to study as a Peace Corps volunteer serving the organization. I analyze three main topics in my literature review: voluntarism, volunteer management and program sustainability. I studied voluntarism because of the various forms it takes at the youth center. I chose volunteer management because I perceived that the way in which volunteers were being managed could have a direct effect on program sustainability. Lastly, I examined program sustainability in an attempt to understand what it was and what sorts of factors can affect it. This case and my analysis of it could be helpful for other organizations that rely heavily on volunteers, experience regular turnover of those individuals or suffer from inconsistent program quality or continuity.

This thesis is organized into six chapters, with this introduction serving as Chapter I. Chapter II provides a profile of the NGO I examine and an overview of its operating context. Chapter II also includes a brief description of Kavardaci and Macedonia, a more thorough sketch of CYC and the service on which the NGO relies for volunteers, and a portrait of the other youth center present in the town, which I have assigned the pseudonym CPJD. Chapter III reviews relevant literature on the topics of volunteerism, volunteer management and program sustainability in NGOs and suggests how this case fits into that literature. Chapter IV describes the research design and methods I employed to conduct this study. I present my analysis of my interviews, my principal findings and my recommendations to promote program sustainability in

that chapter. Chapter VI outlines my conclusions and suggests how those may become more broadly salient. It also recommends areas for further study.



## Chapter II

### Case Background: The CYC in Context

#### A. Macedonia

The Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked nation located in Eastern Europe. It shares borders with Greece to the south, Bulgaria to the east, Kosovo and Serbia to the north and Albania to the west. The capital, Skopje, is located in the northern part of the country. Macedonia gained its independence peacefully from the former state of Yugoslavia in 1991, but has, at times, had tenuous relations with some of its neighbors since. The nation is not a member of the European Union, although it has applied for membership. The country has an estimated population of 2.1 million, of whom 64.2% are Macedonians by ethnicity, 25.2% are of Albanian heritage, 3.9% are Turkish, 2.7% are Roma, and 4% come from other ethnic and national backgrounds according to the CIA World Factbook (2015). An armed conflict erupted in 2001 between the nation's government and Macedonia's minority ethnic Albanian population regarding perceived unequal treatment and economic inequality, but representatives of that population and the nation's government signed a peace agreement that same year called the Ohrid Framework Agreement (2001), establishing peace and outlining strategies to prevent discrimination in the future.



*Figure 2.1 - Macedonia Map*

Source: C.I.A. World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>

As noted above, Macedonia contains numerous governmental and nongovernmental organizations, both local and foreign in their origins. These entities address an array of topics, including social and economic inequality, environmental protection, healthcare, and youth development. The country has the fourth highest youth unemployment rate in the world, with 53.9% of men and women aged 15-24 without legal work (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). This figure may hide a significant group of individuals who in fact work, typically in agriculture, but whose employment is not formally documented. The high level of youth unemployment has spawned political concern and a growing effort to offer this demographic a range of services in the form of development centers. Several of these institutions participate in international youth programs organized by the European Union.

## **B. Kavadarci**

Kavadarci (indicated by the red star in Figure 2.1) is a city of approximately 35,000 residents located in the central southern region of Macedonia, just east of the city of Prilep, south of the city of Veles and situated adjacent to the Vardar River. The town is not very ethnically diverse as it is only 3% non-Macedonian. The city is located in the heart of the country's grape region, is home to a large winery and is also the location of the country's largest artificial lake. Kavadarci, which serves as the Kavadarci Municipal seat, lies in a large valley surrounded by mountains, with hills in between. The Luda Mara or "Crazy Mary" River flows through the center of the city.

At my site announcement ceremony, my Peace Corps Program Manager described Kavadarci to me as a place where people "like to curse and tell dirty jokes" (Personal Conversation, November, 2012). I found this to be true at times during my residence. People are typically friendly towards foreigners and there are various activities for both the old and the young. Kavadarci has a main street that runs from the "new" bus station to the municipality (government) building and then out of town. Another major road intersects with this thoroughfare in front of the government building. Both of these streets are lined with businesses and apartments. A large square is located in front of the municipal building and residents routinely gather there to talk. That plaza serves as a site for festivals and events throughout the

year. An outdoor market operates three times a week in a space adjacent to the square at which food, clothing and other small items are available.

Although unemployment remains a major problem, a German car wiring system parts manufacturer recently located a plant near the city and that factory presently provides jobs to hundreds of people from Kavadarci and its surrounding areas. Another major employer is the company FENI, which produces ferro-nickel. FENI also sponsors the town's gym and basketball team. Many of the area youths who are employed work as waiters or in other retail services, but most are unemployed or only temporarily employed. The city has three high schools, three middle schools and several elementary schools. Unlike American school systems, which operate roughly from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Macedonia schools offer two class shifts. The first occurs from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and the second from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Kavadarci's sports gym complex hosts basketball games and offers facilities for other recreational activities, including an outdoor field for soccer, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, rooms for martial arts and an outdoor track. A municipal pool, which reopened in 2014, is located across the street from the gymnasium and also acts as a nightclub on summer weekend evenings. In addition to the gymnasium, youth also like to play soccer and other sports at local parks and schools when classes are not in session. There are various bars and young people frequent two working nightclubs, too, in the evenings. Another popular way for youths to entertain themselves is to walk around the town and talk to one another for hours at a time. Finally, people of all ages attend a community movie theatre. It often plays current films, although usually a month or so behind other parts of the world.

Based on my own observations, I believe a community with a youth center remains a relative rarity in Macedonia, but Kavadarci actually hosts two such organizations. The older of the two, CPJD, was established in 1996 with the help of a Peace Corps volunteer, while the other, CYC, the principal subject of this analysis, was created in 2009 by two local men who had been members of CPJD. Both of these entities provide activities for youths and work to prevent teen and young adult delinquency.

### **C. CYC Youth Center**

The Youth Center CYC is part of the Youth Association CYC (YACYC), which has its main office in the capital city of Skopje. Both are dedicated to youth development. Its current

directors established the Youth Association CYC in 2007 in Skopje. That group created the Youth Center CYC Kavadarci two years later in 2009, which has since employed two different chief coordinators (or deputy directors), at least one co-coordinator and a large number of volunteers from throughout Europe through the European Voluntary Service (EVS) program, and four from the United States through the Peace Corps (PC) program (CYC, 2011). My own estimate is that four Peace Corps volunteers (PCVs) and between 30 and 50 long-term EVS participants have assisted CYC since it opened in 2009.

The youth center also has two presidents (sometimes also referred to as directors, but there is no board of directors or equivalent. As I experienced, although CYC has both paid staff and volunteers (both local and foreign), the vast majority of the center's activities are organized by foreign volunteers who are occasionally supported by area residents sharing their time. Some local volunteers occasionally have taken the initiative to organize and run workshops or other activities on their own without the aid or direction of foreign volunteers. This use and assortment of types of volunteers helped to guide me towards the voluntarism and volunteer management literature. During my time in Kavadarci, only one local volunteer established and led their own program, and that occurred at the behest of one of the paid staff members.

The presidents lead the organization and make all legal and financial decisions as well as organizational and managerial choices as necessary. They also oversee the offices and youth center in Skopje, which operates much differently than the Kavadarci location. The coordinator is in charge of managing the Kavadarci center's day-to-day activities as well as managing local, EVS and PC volunteers (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014). This person is in charge of paying bills, overall EVS volunteer management, including securing accommodations, acting as "counterpart" to the Peace Corps volunteer and approving/supporting volunteer-led programs. She/he is also in charge of youth membership, determining whether individuals will be allowed in the youth center and communicating with parents. The coordinator is responsible for addressing any disputes that may arise between youth members and volunteers. On the basis of my work at the organization, I also believe the coordinator serves as the "face" of CYC and acts as the spokesperson for most media opportunities. The co-coordinator's job is less well defined, but that incumbent typically aids the coordinator in whatever she/he is doing. The volunteers, foreign and local, but primarily from other nations, do the lion's share of program design work. They are responsible for maintaining the youth center, reporting to the coordinator

and engaging with the youth members. It was clear during my tenure that without its volunteers, CYC would not be able to function in its current form.

According to CYC, in its *Letter to Parents*, members must be between the ages of 13 and 25 (CYC, 2013). The youth center's promotions state that it does not discriminate against anyone based on ethnicity, race or religion. Indeed, CYC makes a point of addressing this issue because of Macedonia's past discrimination against the Roma throughout the country, including Kavadarci. Although not stated in any of its documents, the center is open to both males and females. In order to become a member, CYC requires that individuals complete an application signed by his or her parent(s) and present proof of age. Members also go through this same process to become youth volunteers to assist the center with special events (CYC-A, 2011). Judging from my experience, most members are in high school, although some are younger or older. Participants are about 60-70% male and vary widely in their educational attainment. The vast majority of registered members of the youth center are Macedonian, although some Roma children occasionally participate in youth center activities and programs.

In my experience, CYC's budget is difficult to understand and explain as it is not consistently formatted and reported, and relevant revenues and expenditures often go unrecorded. The center is funded through donations, usually by its directors, the European Commission (EC) via the EVS program to support volunteer projects, sporadic and often small amounts of government assistance and by hosting workshops and trainings through the Youth in Action (YIA) program, which is also a European Commission sponsored opportunity. CYC obtains financial support by hosting EVS volunteers (Youth in Action, 2013), a key motivation for hosting them. The youth center typically hosts anywhere from five to nine European volunteers at a time. The NGO is currently engaged in a measure of social entrepreneurship, too, (Billis, 2010) by developing an organic farm in an effort to become more financially independent. Ideally, center youths will tend the farm and sell its production in the local market with profits reinvested in the farm and youth programs. Volunteers (both local and international) as well as youth members are supposed to tend the farm. Involving the beneficiaries with fruit and vegetable production aids CYC in accomplishing its mission by allowing its leaders to use the experience to educate youth program participants in organic farming practices. This orientation helps to legitimize the endeavor in the broader community.

CYC's mission is sometimes not made explicit. Based on its "Info Pack" for new EVS volunteers: "CYC is a youth association for the support of creativity and active citizenship of young people. Its main aim is to assist the personal development of young people through engaging them in non-formal education activities" (CYC, 2011). One full time staff member I interviewed described the NGO's mission this way:

... In support of development of volunteering and youth work in Macedonia ... the idea of involving volunteers is also to raise the public awareness of volunteering and to improve the public reputation of volunteering to encourage young people to be active volunteers in society.

Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

In addition, on its European Youth Portal page, which is where CYC places its calls for EVS volunteers, the Center mission is articulated this way:

CYC is a youth association designed to support people's creativity and active citizenship. Its main aim is to assist the personal development of young people through engaging them in non-formal education activities... The work of CYC is devoted to young people and is based on the principle of non-formal education, learning-by-experience, and intercultural learning (Youth Association CYC – Kavadarci, 2012).

All three of these variations of the organization's mission suggest that the NGO is dedicated to youth development, active citizenship and to promoting volunteering. The following statements summarize its orientation and aims:

- CYC is a youth association dedicated to supporting creativity and active citizenship of young people by assisting in their personal development by engaging them in non-formal educational activities, learning-by-experience and intercultural learning (this is a combination of the first and third mission statements).
- The Center supports the development of volunteering and youth work in Macedonia by raising awareness of volunteering and improving the public reputation of voluntarism by encouraging young people to serve as active volunteers.

As a stakeholder in the organization, my understanding was that the youth center seeks to accomplish the first part of its mission by organizing and hosting youth trainings, workshops, and seminars that focus on various topics that affect young people or encourage their social

involvement. These gatherings may occur at the local, national or international level. Internationally and nationally, the EC sponsors workshops and training opportunities through its Youth in Action (YIA) program, which as of January 1, 2014, became a part of Erasmus+ (European Commission, 2014). These events bring young people from throughout Europe together not only to promote intercultural understanding, but also to provide knowledge and experience on a wide variety of subjects including democracy, youth unemployment, movie making, leadership, environmental protection, comic book design and many others. Typically, CYC will send paid staff to these gatherings, whether they are organizing the effort or simply involved in it. Local volunteers also attend these programs, but more often, they are participants and not serving as a volunteer for the organization (such as a chaperone), although they are informally expected to take on such roles if needed. Occasionally a foreign volunteer will also engage in these events, usually as a volunteer, but sometimes as a participant. CYC also offers a variety of local activities aimed at its targeted demographic, and at times they address many of the same topics as the international programs, just at a reduced scale. These informal education-based workshops and events make up the bulk of CYC activities. These efforts include language tutoring, summer camps, video games, sexual education, gender equality and a variety of interest-defined clubs.

All activities at the youth center are free (CYC, 2013), including workshops, tutoring sessions and sporting events. The only time an event is not free is when it is undertaken to raise funds or is a national or international activity, although a significant portion of the total cost of the latter is often reimbursed by the EU's Youth in Action program. Larger local events, such as summer camps, generally require a small participation fee as well.

In my view, one of CYC's greatest strengths is that it provides young people a space to create their own experiences and social interactions. In addition to the scheduled activities the youth center offers, it also provides many unplanned opportunities and serves as a space for youth simply to "hang out." In my experience, young people often sat and talked while drinking tea/coffee, spending time on the computers checking Facebook, or playing board/video games with each other or the volunteers. Usually they played board or video games with the EVS volunteers, as local volunteers do not work a specific schedule. That said, participants typically know the local volunteers much better than they know the EVS individuals.

The Center operates at different times, depending on the season of the year. During the school year it is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., but during the summer it is open from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. These hours are not typical for a youth center in Macedonia (they are far more extensive) and are based on the school schedule during the academic year. Many such entities are only open when they are sponsoring specific events and closed when they are not. By operating this way, CYC has sought deliberately to become a place where youths can come to socialize as well as learn new things.

The Center works to address the second part of its mission, encouraging voluntarism, through its active promotion and utilization of volunteers. CYC pursues international exposure and youth development by sending local young people on their own EVS experience for one to twelve months at an organization in another country. The European Commission's YIA program operates the voluntary service program (CYC, 2011). CYC receives volunteers, as I have noted, primarily through the EVS, but it has also hosted four Peace Corps volunteers in the six years since its founding. By both sending and hosting volunteers, CYC encourages youth participation in civil society and raises their awareness and understanding of voluntarism in Macedonia via their experiences.

Although CYC has three paid staff members, as outlined above, and sometimes a co-coordinator, the majority of its staff is comprised of volunteers. The two co-presidents are not usually active at the youth center as they are located at the main office in Skopje. The coordinator is the only paid staff member consistently present at CYC; the co-coordinator position depends on the NGO's financial ability to support it. Without volunteers, the youth center would not be able to operate daily and would have to become a project-based organization. Some volunteers are local and typically only help with special events while a small portion of them help with regular activities, such as classes or workshops. According to one staff member (Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014) there are two types of local volunteers:

- Member-Volunteers: These are youth members, currently in high school, that may help with a specific activity that the youth center is sponsoring, such as setting up a table and handing out pamphlets during a special holiday in the main square of the town. Outside of these activities they act like any other young person involved with CYC.
- Organization-Volunteers: Typically, this type of volunteer was once a member, but has



acquired enough responsibility to be entrusted with more technical/organizational tasks such as making promotional materials or organizing events. They are also usually out of high school or in their senior year and may be working or going to college, which limits their availability.

Although there are a few local volunteers, most of the center's unpaid staff comes from other European countries via the European Voluntary Service. CYC tries only to accept EVS participants who will stay for at least six months, but would prefer that they remain for nine months to a year. These volunteers help to run day-to-day activities, including facility upkeep, planning and carrying out events at the youth center and, most importantly, interacting with youth members. EVS program participants design the vast majority of activities, workshops and events at CYC with occasional help from local volunteers. They generally do not receive much input from the paid staff other than approval, unless they request it. It is not uncommon for paid staff to know of and approve an activity, but not know the details of its implementation unless it is an especially large effort that requires their supervision.

Foreign volunteers must sign an agreement with CYC that includes a code of conduct, an alcohol and drug policy, typical working hours, expectations of communication and other related information. Long-term volunteers are also required to submit weekly reports to help center staff monitor and guide them throughout their service (CYC, 2012). Since EVS participants make up most of CYC's international volunteers, they are the primary referent in this analysis when I discuss those assisting from other nations. CYC makes an effort to have as close to equal numbers of male and female EVS volunteers as it can obtain. However, during my time of service, there were significantly more female volunteers than male at the Kavadarci center. If the Skopje branch is included in the calculation, the numbers of men and women volunteers during my tenure were more equal than at Kavadarci alone, but still more female than male.

Based on my observations at CYC, short-term EVS volunteers are typically "youths with fewer opportunities." These individuals are usually between the ages of 16 and 19, are still in high school and are at some form of social risk due to various situations in their life. Some come from impoverished families, others come from orphanages and still others may come from "youth prisons," as one paid staff member described them to me. Although technically volunteers, they rarely complete such duties. Instead, they are usually more like members of CYC and are typically unfit to assume any program responsibilities due to their level of maturity,

ability and time commitment. They do, however, aid CYC in its mission by acting as clients, instead of as stakeholders, and by helping to establish partnerships whereby the center can send its own volunteers abroad through the EVS program (CYC has members who could be considered “youths with fewer opportunities” and “exchanges” these individuals with other nations’ sending organizations). Short-term EVS participants will occasionally help with activities at the youth center, but those typically are maintenance duties, such as cleaning up before closing or setting up for the day in the morning. For this analysis, I will treat short-term EVS volunteers because they are a part of CYC’s mission, but they are not a significant factor in program sustainability since they act more as beneficiaries rather than stakeholders.

CYC prefers to have long-term EVS volunteers because they are usually able to serve the organization better and their relative longevity of service allows the NGO’s leaders to plan for the future more effectively, on the basis of an assumption of a reliable and relatively well-skilled volunteer force. CYC’s leaders request that volunteers provide at least six months of service, but they prefer to have those assisting stay for nine to 12 months (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014). The Center established a policy of requesting that individuals interested in serving there sign on for a minimum of six months because the co-presidents realized that that time frame allowed for volunteers’ more thorough integration into the community, culture and organization. Because CYC had expressed such preferences for recruiting volunteers, I made it a priority to investigate this concern during my literature review. For the first two to six months of their tenure, volunteers are adjusting to their new culture and situation and usually provide support instead of leading any activities. Eventually these individuals will begin to exercise initiative and take on additional responsibilities, which CYC tries to encourage and develop in its volunteers. However some volunteers may never take on leadership roles. Long-term volunteers are also usually older than those serving for shorter periods. Technically, long-term EVS participants can range in age from 18 to 30 years (European Commission, 2013), but most CYC volunteers are between 18 and 23. The paid staffers at CYC prefer this age range because participants are closer to the age range of the NGO’s clients, which they believe creates a much better dynamic for interaction.

EVS volunteers do not usually come in groups to a hosting organization or country. At CYC, staff members attempt to stagger volunteer arrivals and departures to allow overlap between new and experienced volunteers. This allows for an easier transition into the

organization, fosters learning-on-the-job and can aid in program sustainability if done correctly. I observed one instance in which a large group of volunteers arrived at CYC while I was working there. That new group created a clique separate from the older volunteers. This resulted in a different working culture that hindered the transition of the new volunteers and resulted in poor performance, by the coordinator's standards. This instance revealed to me that training and transfers of information between groups of volunteers was a concern that I should research in my literature review. Short-term EVS volunteers are not typically overlapped, may come in groups of two or three and are only hosted at CYC sporadically, unless the organization sponsoring them is part of a particular initiative with the center.

Short-term and long-term volunteers are also hosted differently. Because those engaged for a short period typically need fairly heavy supervision and support, they live with a host family that looks after them and provides their meals (Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014). This structure yields a much different experience than that for long-term volunteers who, while at CYC, live together in an apartment or house and are responsible for their own wellbeing. The Center gives each volunteer a work schedule, but it is typically changed every time a new volunteer or group of volunteers arrives. Upon their arrival, they are given a tour and orientation of the organization and neighborhood. They are also introduced to the staff and youth members via a welcome party. While I was at CYC, upon a new volunteer's arrival, and usually the night after their welcome party, all of the international volunteers would also gather for dinner at a local restaurant to get to know each other better and only occasionally would staff or a local volunteer join us.

The youth center did not offer a structured or formal training or orientation during my service, which occurred from December 2012 to October 2014. In fact, those 22 months saw a total of three trainings for volunteers organized by the staff. This inconsistent occurrence of these efforts encouraged me to investigate volunteer training as a form of management. The three workshops provided focused on CYC-specific issues as well as some more general concerns, including teaching cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). I also offered two programs to prepare a select few local and international volunteers on how to be counselors for the organization's annual summer camp. Another volunteer staff member, who did not join the NGO until my final four or five months of service, designed and offered a one-time training for a program called "Street-Based Youth Work." Since my departure, a Center volunteer has offered this training

once more and the program is today operating only sporadically. This is likely due to the fact that every few months the individual responsible for this effort leaves the country for an extended period and the other volunteers who offer the program in that individual's absence begin to lose interest in its effective implementation. EVS and the Peace Corps staff offered trainings for their volunteers throughout their service, but neither organization's offerings, especially those provided by the EVS, were specific to working in a youth development-focused organization. Nonetheless, volunteers generally enjoyed these programs because they allowed them to address specific issues of concern.

The majority of volunteer training at the Center was fairly informal in my experience and I verified that perception through interviews with paid staff and other volunteers (Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014) (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014; Personal interview with K-D-LV14, 29 August 2014). There was rarely any training concerning how to conduct oneself at CYC; what one might learn in a workshop was mostly learned on-the-job. For example, there was never any formal training on how the Center expected volunteers to interact with its youth members. Instead, this was learned on-the-job by watching and working alongside more senior volunteers. The youth center leaders expect the volunteers and the youths served to interact and to do so routinely. This expectation encouraged me to investigate program sustainability strategies further as this standard predictably slipped with each new group of volunteers. There were multiple occasions during my service that the NGO's leaders held team meetings to discuss a drop in service quality because volunteers were never made explicitly aware of how they were expected to act and why, but were nevertheless perceived by CYC's coordinators as spending insufficient time with youth members.

From my observations and through conversations and interviews conducted with other volunteers, both local and international, as well as paid staff, program sustainability was an issue for CYC. Duties such as operating the "coffee bar" were easily transferred because they simply required an older volunteer showing a newer volunteer what to do. The Center's leaders used this same method for coaching volunteers concerning how to conduct workshops or other events, if they were taught at all. This strategy worked fairly well, but did not lend much to program sustainability or to assured and effective transfer of responsibilities. Volunteers would simply observe and then begin their own programs. Typically, whichever programs an EVS volunteer was working on during her/his service would cease when that person completed their tenure if

they were the sole actor in charge of an effort, which was common, unless special care was taken to transfer the program to someone else. Even when a volunteer was working alongside another participant, unless leadership or responsibility was then formally transferred to that assisting individual, the program would end.

Two main types of programs occurred at CYC during my tenure there. The first I refer to as finite as they operated for a limited period of time. Examples of these included workshops such as sexual education and special events, such as International Volunteer Day, a European Union sponsored holiday. The other type of program offered during my service I have dubbed indefinite offerings. These initiatives had no official/planned start and end date and occurred regularly or semi-regularly throughout the course of each year. Examples of such offerings included movie nights, which happened on a weekly basis, hikes, which occurred, or were supposed to occur, semi-regularly during the warmer months, and English Kids, which was offered every weekend throughout the year. There was often confusion about who was in charge of movie nights when the lead volunteer handling it departed, but local and active foreign participants often managed the activity cooperatively until those involved could name a new leader. For other such programs, restarting or continuing was often a much more difficult undertaking, either because no volunteer wanted to take it over or there was no one able to assume responsibility. Both of these types of offerings could benefit from a more refined approach to program sustainability and institutional memory, a concern that I explored in my literature review and discuss in Chapter V.

One major consequence of the youth center's informal approach to training was that CYC struggled with program sustainability. As I observed above, relatively simple activities such as sports or hiking adventures would end whenever the volunteer in charge of them departed, even if there were other EVS or local volunteers engaged with the program before that individual left. Occasionally, one volunteer would transfer leadership to another, but that scenario was very rare. In cases when a new EVS participant did restart a program, no one kept a record of what occurred during the activity or what had previously proved successful or unsuccessful. An offering was more easily continued or rekindled when a local volunteer was available to give a brief history of it, but that could only occur for programs in which such individuals were involved, which was certainly not all of them or even a majority of them.

The English Kids, in which I was a major actor, offered an example of this scenario. This program offered English classes to children who were at or below the minimum age for the Center. This was an attempt not only to teach English to children, but also to create a positive image of the youth center among parents and to introduce CYC at an early age with the intention that the children engaged would become members once they reached 13. I observed multiple instances of this successfully occurring. Before I arrived, CYC had asked a young EVS volunteer to restart the English Kids program after it had temporarily ceased operation when the previous individual in charge had finished his service and departed. When the new EVS participant attempted to restart the program, however, that person could not find any record of what had been accomplished in the past or what sorts of activities had worked well and which had not. This recognition was followed by a long interlude of trial and error before the offering began to operate efficiently. This period could potentially have been avoided (Personal interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014). When I began my service at CYC, I assumed shared responsibility for English Kids and together with a new EVS volunteer (alluded to just above) began to create materials, lesson plans, notes and what would constitute an institutional memory for the program. After the volunteer with whom I had partnered departed, I attempted to bring other EVS participants into the program to join me, but without success. Before I ended my service I trained another volunteer on how to lead the class, introduced that individual to the materials and coached her/him until I left. After my departure the program continued for four to six additional months before it ended for reasons I have been unable to ascertain. I will discuss more thoroughly the various scenarios and issues linked to program sustainability at CYC in Chapter V.

#### **D. The European Voluntary Service Program**

Because the Center receives the major share of its foreign volunteers from the European Voluntary Service, it is important to understand that program's background and how it operates. The European Union established the EVS program in 1996. In 2007, the EC consolidated the EVS and other youth-based initiatives, under the Youth in Action program. Seven years later, in 2014, the EC merged YIA with the ERASMUS+ program, the European Union's strategy for fighting rising levels of youth unemployment, developing social capital and providing organizations addressing these and their workers with training and team-building activities

(European Commission, 2014). The purpose of EVS is to develop solidarity and promote active citizenship and mutual understanding among young people. It addresses these goals by promoting youth mobility within and beyond the borders of the European Union, informal education and international exchange and encouraging the abilities and employability of young people irrespective of their educational, social or cultural background. EVS program service, also referred to as projects, can address culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment and/or development cooperation concerns (European Commission, 2013).

The EVS program separates the volunteer experience into three major components: the service, ongoing volunteer support and training and evaluation. During the service phase, an NGO hosts volunteers in a European or partner country outside their own and participants carry out a service that benefits that community. The ongoing support stage refers to the personal, task-related, linguistic and administrative support that each volunteer receives during his or her service. Volunteer training is also provided in the form of on-arrival and mid-term programs (mid-term is only available to those serving for six or more months). Each country has a national agency that offers these development opportunities. However, partner nation participants serving in that country must travel to a Program country with a national agency to gain access to these offerings.

EVS country participants fall into three categories: EU Program countries, non-EU Program nations and Partner countries. Both EU and non-EU Program nations are located within Europe, but those countries not part of the European Union are considered non-EU Program participants. Partner nations are those located outside of Europe, or European countries that the European Commission has not accorded Program status. Prior to YIA and EVS becoming part of the ERASMUS+ program, the EC considered Macedonia a Partner country, but on January 1, 2014, for reasons I have been unable to ascertain why the European Union reclassified the nation as a non-EU program nation with its own national agency (European Commission, 2014).

“Promoters” serve as key elements of the EVS program. These consist of the sending organization (SO), hosting organization (HO) and coordinating organization (CO). The SO recruits and sends volunteer(s) abroad. Representatives of these entities communicate with the HO throughout a volunteer’s service. This organization helps to prepare the volunteer for service and provides support to aid him or her as they readjust to their home community on their return.

The SO encourages the volunteer(s) to participate in opportunities to exchange and share their experience(s) with others. The volunteer carries out her/his service with the HO. That institution provides a mentor and a language tutor to help support participants as they adjust to their service. The HO also provides a well-defined set of tasks and work schedule, accommodations, monthly allowance (unless directly transferred into the volunteer's personal account), local transportation and help acquiring a Youth Pass at the end of an individual's service. Finally, the CO assumes the role of EVS program applicant and assumes responsibility for financial/administrative duties for a project's duration. It accomplishes this by submitting the application, bearing the financial and administrative responsibilities associated with conducting an EVS project and arranging a visa for the volunteer with the sending and hosting organizations. COs do not necessarily need to be a sending or a hosting organization, but may be either (European Commission, 2013). CYC usually serves as a coordinating as well as hosting organization for its EVS participants.

There are four types of trainings in which European Service volunteers may participate. If available, a participant may engage in a pre-departure training in which they learn about the program and what types of things to expect when they first arrive, enroll in introductory language or cultural courses and pursue other similar options. Following their arrival in a host country, they go to their initial training, which introduces them to their new temporary home, arranges for them to meet other volunteers and provides general support. For participants in partner countries, on-arrival training is slightly different because it does not occur in their host country. The program still addresses the same major topics, but without offering any information specific to their country, such as they would receive during a training opportunity in their own hosting country if they were in a Program nation. Partner countries do not have national agencies that host the trainings and therefore the volunteer must travel to a nation that does have them in order to gain access to them; this applies both to on-arrival and mid-service training. On-arrival training lasts about one week on average and allows participants to plan for their project. Mid-service training is usually about two and a half days long and focuses on evaluating a project's progress, analyzing the learning process and sharing experiences and ideas with other volunteers in the region. Last, EVS arranges an exit interview between the volunteer and their hosting organization to create a final evaluation of their service. At CYC the coordinator typically conducted this session during my tenure. After they return to their home country, former volunteers may be encouraged to participate in a variety of program-sponsored events that allow



them to share their experiences with EVS candidates and to bond with other former volunteers (European Commission, 2014).

Because hosting a volunteer can be costly, each hosting organization, and to a lesser extent sending organizations, receives an EVS program stipend. This support is meant to cover the cost of sending/hosting the volunteer, overseeing the volunteer's project, accommodations and so on. The HO will usually receive 80% to 90% of the EU stipend provided. For Macedonia, that stipend was 440 Euros per month for each volunteer during my service and it was routinely used for maintaining the organization, securing volunteer accommodations and sometimes also helping to defray the cost of materials for activities at the youth center. Each EVS volunteer also receives a monthly living allowance, which is determined by the cost of living of the country to which an individual is assigned. In Macedonia, that allowance was about 50 Euros per month during my tenure at CYC (European Commission, 2014).

An eligible participant can only volunteer once in her/his life, with the exception of those who do a short-term project of two or fewer months. In that situation, they are eligible to volunteer again for up to one year, less the time they spent in their original service. As noted above, individuals must be between the ages of 18 and 30, unless they are considered a "youth with fewer opportunities," in which case they must be between the ages of 16 and 19. Youths with fewer opportunities are individuals who would not, without the aid of the EVS program, likely be able to participate in any kind of international event, cultural exchange or training. These individuals come from very difficult backgrounds and often live in poverty. Many of these young people are given the option of undertaking a two-week to two-month EVS project in lieu of jail/juvenile detention. Authorities offer the volunteer service option in the hope that going abroad and seeing more of the world will have a positive impact on their development. A hosting organization must accept volunteers regardless of the applicant's background (eligible age, gender, education, race, etc.). Service is not meant to take the place of a paid position, become a period of study, vocational training, or vacation or be an unstructured, part-time service experience (European Commission, 2014).

## **E. CPJD**

This nongovernmental organization seeks to diminish all forms of asocial and delinquent behavior among young people in Kavadarci and its region. It addresses this goal through two

avenues: the nation's legal system and through youth-centered engagement. The NGO's legal program works to improve the position of juveniles within the Juvenile Justice system by promoting changes and improvements in it via legislation (CPJD, 2014). This method is not as publicly salient as its second focus, youth programs. CPJD's (Council) youth work, similar to CYC's development efforts, aims to organize the spare time of young people in Kavadarci and the surrounding region by providing them with various opportunities to become involved in non-formal education activities (such as through the EU's YIA program). Also like CYC, CPJD is a nongovernmental and nonsectarian organization with a similar target group (males and females between high school age and 30 years).

The organization first opened in 2000 and its first volunteer was from the Peace Corps (that individual was also the last Peace Corps volunteer to serve there). After that, CPJD has enjoyed support from foreign volunteers from Canada, Scotland, France and Germany. In 2002 or 2003 the organization hosted its first EVS volunteer and has relied on that program since. From 2003 until 2013, CPJD hosted roughly 37 EVS volunteers, both short-term and long-term (Personal Interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). Like the CYC, the Council rarely provides any organization-specific training for its EVS volunteers, but those serving there do participate much more often in YIA trainings than their Youth Center counterparts do. Although what is gained from these EU-sponsored trainings is rarely organization-specific, it can occasionally provide skills or knowledge that can be transferred.

CPJD's organizational structure is slightly different from that of CYC. The NGO's managing body consists of seven members who make the majority of the operating decisions for the organization. A few other volunteers serve very specific responsibilities, such as the Secretary General or President, at the pleasure of the board. There is also one paid staff member in charge of handling immediate organizational issues. This individual organizes trainings, is responsible for the operation of the center and oversees its local and foreign volunteers. Typically, this youth center has between 10 and 15 local volunteers that participate/aid in various local activities and events (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). In contrast to CYC, which usually has a large number of foreign volunteers (between six and nine on average), CPJD typically hosts two to four foreign volunteers at any given time.

The organization tries to structure its EVS volunteers so that there is always one long-term (usually for a year, but never less than nine months), and two short-term volunteers that

arrive as a group (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). Whereas CYC seeks to engage several long-term EVS volunteers through the year and periodically hosts a few short-term youths with fewer opportunities, CPJD has several short-term volunteers throughout the year, none of which, if my experience can serve as a gauge, were “youths with fewer opportunities” and only two or three long-term volunteers. Instead, their short-term volunteers serve for two months at most. The longer-serving volunteers help to run the Council and plan longer-term events whereas short-term supporters usually help with a specific activity, such as a training or youth exchange through the YIA program. Short-term volunteers may help with some activities at the center, but usually as an assistant to a long-term volunteer or paid staff member. Because short-term volunteers do not have a sufficient time to adjust to the culture naturally, which according to every interview with a staff member I completed, takes about five to six months (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014; Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014; Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 August 2014), one job of the long-term volunteer is to help those completing short-term stints adjust more quickly and feel comfortable in their new environment. The center tries to allow for some overlap between the long-term volunteers so that the more senior volunteer can share his or her knowledge and experiences with newer volunteer(s) during the course of a few weeks to a couple of months. There is no overlap between groups of short-term volunteers because trainings only occur a few times a year, and rarely back-to-back. There is no need for knowledge transfer from one group of short-term volunteers to the next because they are not directing on-going tasks

I observed that CPJD did not operate in the same manner as the CYC did. Instead of being open daily, it operated for specific events, such as a rehearsal for a program the Council would later present in the main square. For the majority of the week, the center was closed, and when it was open, it was because volunteers, local, international or both, were offering a specific activity. Whereas CYC relies more heavily on its international volunteers, CPJD relies, or is more able to rely, on local volunteers to accomplish tasks. Instead of local volunteers aiding foreign ones in designing and providing an offering, it is often the case for CPJD that an EVS participant is assigned to assist a local one. It should be noted, however, that the local volunteers organizing an activity are usually more active than the majority of other local volunteers and only a select handful actively donate their time to CPJD on a regular basis. The remaining local volunteers help only on a project-basis. However, many of the same sustainability issues occur.

When a foreign volunteer leaves, whatever program she/he was working on comes to an end when they depart. I treat this issue more fully in Chapter V.

## **Chapter III**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter explores the topics of volunteerism, volunteer management, and program sustainability to address the questions:

- How can an NGO that experiences rapid volunteer turnover create and maintain programs that are sustainable?
- What is “sustainability?” and
- How does volunteer turnover affect program sustainability?

This literature will help the reader situate the issues at CYC and place them in appropriate analytic context. I begin by defining volunteerism and outlining the different types of volunteers and the roles they play within organizations. I also explain the motivational theories behind why people volunteer. Following that review, I sketch what scholars have learned concerning the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing volunteers. Thereafter, the chapter analyzes volunteer management by examining the need for it, methods commonly employed to undertake it as well as training strategies for those providing their time and service. The fourth section of this chapter addresses the challenge of program sustainability and institutional memory and outlines the methods analysts have identified as fruitful for fostering it. The chapter ends by describing the relationships among these topics and how they relate to CYC.

#### **A. What is Volunteerism/Voluntarism?**

##### *1. Defining Volunteerism/Voluntarism*

Although at first glance voluntarism seems easy to define, that is not so. Indeed, analysts and various other interested parties have offered quite different interpretations of the phenomenon. In general, the public views volunteerism as acts by individuals who share their time and talents to aid in tasks without remuneration. A more scholarly definition states that voluntarism is “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or cause” (Wilson, 2000, p. 215). Connors (2012, p. 6) has argued that volunteerism is defined by four basic tenets: it implies active involvement, the act should be relatively uncoerced, it should

not be primarily motivated by financial gain and it should focus on the common good. Knutsen and Chan (2014, p. 966) have offered a stricter definition on the basis of research first conducted by Snyder and Omoto (2008):

The act must be voluntary, it is not a reflexive act of ‘emergency helping,’ it is delivered over a period of time and is not a one-time occurrence, there should be no expectation of reward or punishment, it involves serving those who want to be helped, and it is performed through established organizations.

Cnaan et al. (1996) have provided a similar description, suggesting that voluntarism must be undertaken freely, not involve compensation, take place in a formal organization and principally benefit others, as opposed to benefiting oneself.

Such strict constraints can make it difficult to categorize individuals as volunteers. Cnaan (1996) and Snyder (2008) have acknowledged that there are broader definitions available than those they have offered and that their own descriptions depict a “pure” form of volunteerism that is not often realized in practice (Knutsen, 2014, p. 966). Knutsen (2014, p. 966) cites an alternative view of voluntarism based on involuntary action developed by Freeman (1997). In this conceptualization, people volunteer because they are compelled by “conscience, good or activity.” This understanding also suggests that voluntarism may also fulfill a moral obligation sometimes demanded by social pressures.

Based on these differing definitions, the most common issues of divergence among views of voluntarism in the literature are the degree to which such service may be considered truly compulsion and compensation free. In fact, in practice, volunteers may appropriately be characterized as working along a spectrum or range of possibilities of free will and obligation (Bussell, 2002; Cnaan, 1996). A volunteer can donate their time and skills freely, as a consequence of their own personal motivations or they can be mandated to engage by an organization, such as a club requirement or a court sentencing (which many might interpret as not “volunteering” at all since it is required, while others argue that such individuals must be considered volunteers because they may choose between community service or detention). One may conclude that what “free will” means in the context of volunteering is subject to a range of interpretations.

Scholars also disagree concerning whether an individual may be considered a “volunteer” and receive any sort of compensation for their service. Moreover, remuneration can range from

“none” to “stipend or low pay” (Bussell, 2002; Cnaan, 1996). One example would be receiving no compensation of any sort after volunteering for a church event. On the other hand, an example of receiving remuneration for volunteer activities would be the sum that volunteers receive after completing long-term volunteer service, such as is the case for individuals who serve in the U.S. Peace Corps. In the case of the Peace Corps, payment is aimed at providing support to a volunteer temporarily while she/he readjusts to life post-service and not for services rendered. In this situation in any case, volunteers receive remuneration only after freely sharing their time and skills.

In light of these differing conceptions, I stipulate that a person cannot be considered a volunteer if they are required to provide their time and skills while also being remunerated. Volunteers can share their skills freely or by obligation so long as they are not receiving a reward of any kind. If they are receiving payment, they must be offering their skills and time without mandate or requirement.

Volunteerism is also often viewed as providing service solely for altruistic reasons, but this is a misconception. Volunteers can donate for self-rewarding, egoistic or selfish reasons as well. A person may volunteer to gain a skill or make contacts with people in her/his career, which would be self-regarding reasons, as opposed to the person who is volunteering principally to help someone else in need, which would be an altruistic impetus. According to a 1998 University of Minnesota study of 61 hospital volunteers about their motivations for volunteering, those who volunteer in the United States for more selfish reasons tend to remain in an organization longer than people who exhibit more altruistic motives. A possible explanation for this could be that those volunteering for more egoistic reasons are more likely to remain involved with an organization in order to accomplish their self-serving goal(s) even if they become dissatisfied, whereas a person who volunteers for more altruistic reasons can find another institution that serves their values if they become unsatisfied (Winerman, 2006).

## *2. Types of Volunteerism/Voluntarism and Volunteering*

Thus, volunteers are individuals who give their time and talents to assist others in some way. However, as the scholarly debate outlined above suggests, such a simple definition does not do justice to the large number of types and classifications of volunteers. The length and duration of service is one of the main defining characteristics of a volunteer experience. Volunteering can

be long-term, short-term or episodic (Connors, 2012). Long-term typically involves several months or years of engagement with a project or organization, such as donating one's time as an accountant to a nonprofit entity that otherwise could not afford to hire such a professional. Short-term volunteers typically regularly provide services for a finite duration of time. These individuals offer a dependable source of labor on which an organization can call when needed. Episodic volunteering, on the other hand, is typically undertaken for short-term projects with which an organization needs help. An example of this form of engagement could be individuals who help build a home for Habitat for Humanity for a few hours every day during the course of a few weeks. Voluntourism is a popular type of episodic involvement that has emerged as a “growth industry” in the field of volunteering in recent years (Connors, 2012).

Worth (2012, p. 219) has classified volunteers on the basis of two sorts of work: those who serve as members of a nonprofit organization’s governing board and those who help provide its programs and services. Although the author does not give the first form a specific name, he does label the second type “service volunteers.” Connors (2012) has offered another way of denominating volunteers. She has divided donated work into two types: direct and indirect services. In general, direct service finds individuals working with clients. This sort of volunteerism is highly visible and NGOs generally exhibit vigorous demand for those people so engaged. Indirect service volunteers, in contrast, often support nonprofits, for example, by planning, advising, recruiting and managing volunteers. The organization is the focus of this form of involvement, as opposed to individuals. Such roles are not usually externally salient as most of this work occurs behind-the-scenes.

Worth (2012, p. 227) has outlined three additional classifications of volunteers. The first two categories, which he dubs spot and regular, are very similar to Connors’ time-based definitions. Spot volunteer participation is episodic and casual. An example could be an individual deciding to help an organization fix a roof for a retiree after seeing a posted flier concerning the project while walking along a street. Regular volunteers make a commitment to an organization or activity within it and typically receive some form of gratification or sense of accomplishment from the work; they have a vested interest in it. Worth’s third class of volunteer is rooted in an individual’s form of motivation. A “pressured” volunteer donates time as a result of employer or peer group insistence, an educational requirement or other coercive factor that



does not arise from the individual. Worth's taxonomy underscores the fact that what constitutes "voluntary" action may assume a number of quite different forms.

International volunteerism is a growing form of engagement involving various governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Connors (2012) has distinguished between international and local volunteers and has suggested the latter form is most often episodic and/or spontaneous in character. It may be undertaken in response to a natural disaster in a foreign country or perhaps as a form of vacation. Local volunteerism of whatever sort is generally less episodic, but is not necessarily defined by that characteristic alone.

Last, Knutsen (2014) has created a hybrid classification of volunteers by recognizing that paid staff may donate a share of their time to the same organization for which they work. The author has further divided such individuals into paid staff who perform unpaid overtime, paid staff who perform the work of volunteers, those who are recognized as volunteers and paid staff and those who take work home or assist clients at their homes after business hours, due to the character of the specific service rendered.

As these classificatory taxonomies suggest, volunteers play diverse roles. These individuals may be laborers, managers, skilled professionals or board members of a NGO. Volunteers can and do often provide leadership and direction to the entities they assist. Nongovernmental organizations often cannot afford to hire a significant portion of their staff and therefore rely on volunteers not only to fill in to assist with labor-intensive duties, such as fundraising or distributing promotional materials, but also with professional responsibilities, such as marketing or program management. Volunteers can indeed serve as leaders in organizations. One may begin, for example, as a volunteer nurse, but later become the manager of that program.

### *3. What Motivates People to Volunteer?*

There are many reasons not to volunteer. Volunteering can be time and resource consuming, stressful and can take away from participating in other activities with friends and family. Yet, despite these facts people have continued to volunteer across history and throughout the world. Motivations to volunteer are quite diverse across demographic groups and are comprised of several factors (Clary, 1999). It is important to understand the motives for volunteering in order to manage, retain and recruit volunteers. This section explores the various theories that have been developed to explain what motivates voluntarism.

Volunteers are often motivated by a combination of factors instead of a single force. This is important for managers to understand in reference to volunteer retention. The Unidimensional Factor Model of voluntarism (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p. 281) claims that, “volunteers act not from a single motive or a category of motives, but from a combination that can be described overall as 'a rewarding experience.'” These analysts have also proposed that people volunteer for what they perceive to be meaningful reasons. This theory was supported by a study of 258 volunteers and 104 non-volunteers from human service agencies using a factor analysis on 28 items gathered from a literature review on volunteer motivations (Okun, 1998). Those who do not find their engagement fulfilling will stop volunteering at an organization and may either stop volunteering altogether or find a new location at which to donate their time and energy.

According to Paul and Michele Govekar (2002), scholars have developed four additional models to explain the motivations of people who volunteer: the Collective Goods Model, the Private Goods Model, the Influence and Search Model and the Job Skills Model. In the Collective Goods Model, people volunteer because there is a demand for it; when such is not evident, people do not share their time or talents. The Private Goods Model claims that individuals donate their time because they will get something out of it. This could include prestige, skills or connections. The Influence and Search Model argues that people volunteer to change a condition or situation. In this view, as a person's ability to influence an output increases, their willingness to volunteer will also rise. Finally, individuals who are looking to acquire job skills or increase their ability to earn higher wages fall into the Job Skills Model. They volunteer because they believe doing so will help them in their careers.

The Two-Factor Model postulates that people may have both altruistic and egoistic motives for volunteering. A study by Frisch and Gerrard (1981) of Red Cross volunteers supported the view that altruistic and egoistic motives were separate and distinct. Another study by Latting (1990) of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization provided further support of these competing claims for voluntarism. Finally, Clary and Snyder (1991) have argued that several different forms or types of egoistic motives exist (Okun, 1998). Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) created a 22-item scale that included altruistic and egoistic motivations, which they named the Motivation to Volunteer Scale (MVS), as a part of their Unidimensional Factor Model (Bang, 2009).

Perhaps the most widely referenced research on volunteer motivations within the United States is a study conducted by Clary (1999). Based on functional theorizing about the reasons, motivations and purposes underlying human behavior, Clary (1999, p. 157) divided volunteer motivation into six categories, which together he called the Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI):

- Values: Individuals volunteer to express or act upon an important value. An example would be that the individual holds a religious belief that it is her/his duty to feed the hungry and therefore volunteers at a food shelter.
- Understanding: The volunteer seeks to learn more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused. For example, an individual joins an international nongovernmental organization (INGO) to fight disease and by doing so learns more about those afflicted by that infirmity.
- Enhancement: She/he desires to grow and develop psychologically through volunteer activities. Volunteering is often perceived as a way to help one mature and/or learn more about one's self.
- Career: Volunteering has been connected to career improvement/establishment. Volunteering helps to create social networks, establish entry into an organization or field and helping to grow skills. Often individuals will volunteer to improve themselves or their resume.
- Socialization: Individuals who volunteer make friendships and social connections with others. Volunteering can also help one feel useful and part of a community.
- Protective: The individual uses volunteering to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems. An example of this would be someone who is afraid of rising crime in their neighborhood (a personal problem) becoming a volunteer sheriff to help protect her or his community.

Clary et al. (1996) found this six-factor theory superior to unidimensional or two-factor theories of volunteer motivation. Across age groups and other demographics, the six VFI dimensions appear to capture motivations for all kinds of people who volunteer. In general, younger individuals are more likely to volunteer for career development (Winerman, 2006) while older people are more likely to volunteer on the basis of their values or understanding (Okun, 1998).

Bang and Ross (2009) developed another inventory specifically for those who volunteer at sporting events called the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS). Overall, this seven dimension model was very similar to Clary et al.'s VFI (Bang, 2009, p. 61):

- Expression of Values
- Community Involvement
- Interpersonal Contacts
- Career Orientation
- Personal Growth
- Extrinsic Rewards
- Love of Sport

Another explanation of volunteer motivation, referred to as Goal-Setting theory, as explained by Yavorosky (2014), suggested that people volunteer on the basis of aims they wish to achieve. For example, a goal could be “feed the hungry” or a less altruistic objective could be “improve a skill.” In this view, developed by Locke and Latham (1990), the aspirations an individual possesses when joining an organization will determine the goals that influence that person's behavior. Weick (1979) has offered a contrasting conceptualization that suggests that goals emerge retrospectively when individuals assign meaning to actions and outcomes after they have occurred. Regardless of when they emerge, it is important to understand that motives can change over time. A goal at the beginning of a service can be replaced by something else during that involvement and emerge as something altogether different by its close.

Goals or motivations can change due to changes in personal beliefs or for uncontrollable reasons such as age and the different life experiences and demands that come with it. In a survey conducted in 1991 within the United States by Marriott Senior Living Service, researchers postulated that retirees (ages 65 and older) have three major motivators for volunteering: to help others (83%), to feel useful or productive (65%) and to fulfill a moral responsibility (51%) (Okun, 1998, p. 608). Unlike younger individuals, older volunteers are significantly less likely to volunteer on the basis of career enhancing factors because this demographic is usually already in their vocational trajectory or they are retired. Younger members of society, as well as unemployed or underemployed individuals, are more likely than seniors to donate their time and skills with the expectation that doing so will help their ability to improve their careers. This motivation for younger volunteers reflects the Job Skills Model or the Enhancement and Career factors highlighted in the VFI (Clary et al., 1999).

#### *4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Volunteerism/Voluntarism*

There are both advantages and disadvantages to utilizing volunteers and they affect those seeking to serve as well as the organization with which they are involved. As sketched above, for the volunteer, donating one's time can create opportunities for personal and professional development as well as allow for pursuit of altruistic and egoistic goals (Connors, 2012). Volunteering can improve an individual's social standing, instill a sense of pride and may also become a way to meet other people. In the case of the European Voluntary Service (EVS), voluntarism is used to foster cultural exchange and to mitigate and prevent racism and xenophobia. Volunteering for the EVS can also give individuals from otherwise relatively disadvantaged nations or groups opportunities to which they would not otherwise enjoy access, such as living and learning in a foreign country (European Commission, 2013).

For NGOs, volunteers constitute a "cheap" source of labor, without which many could not survive (Connors, 2012). The EVS program also provides income to a participant's hosting organization (European Commission, 2013). Volunteers can also allow an NGO to expand its programming and capacity. Volunteers can relieve high-value staff of more routine tasks, freeing them to address more specialized responsibilities. Engaging volunteers, particularly local ones, can improve community relations by providing area residents with opportunities to learn new skills, thereby increasing the legitimacy of, and developing advocates for, NGOs (Connors, 2012).

Volunteering also has disadvantages. Individual volunteers may have to bear financial burdens, such as living without a source of income or, depending on the character and duration of service, being asked to defray travel or living expenses. Such individuals often dedicate their time to NGOs, a fact that implies real opportunity costs. Last, some volunteers may experience emotional distress or burnout in their roles, a very real possible outcome of service for those individuals so affected and a potential disadvantage to voluntarism per se as well. At times, these burdens can become too much for a person to bear and she/he will terminate their service early. Even when the person does not have negative experiences, most volunteers will eventually end their engagement with a NGO.

Volunteer turnover is a major issue for nongovernmental organizations, especially for NGOs that are heavily reliant on such individuals to carry out their mission. Volunteer departures can create discontinuity in NGO programs and affect the quality of their service

provision. Moreover, hosting a volunteer creates costs for nonprofits, as these organizations must provide such individuals the resources and support necessary to permit them to carry out their duties. Nonprofits may also have to dedicate paid staff time to managing volunteers, who may bring their own challenges, including variable reliability and commitment. In addition, organizations with volunteers that also have paid staff can experience tensions between the two groups (Connors, 2012). Paid staff members may fear that they will eventually be replaced by a volunteer and lose their jobs, for example.

Volunteer recruitment can also be difficult for NGOs, which must identify and successfully attract talented individuals for targeted roles while ensuring that their own aims as well as those of those they seek to attract are met. Unmet expectations are a major cause of volunteer turnover (Vaughn, 2013).

## **B: What is Volunteer Management?**

### *1. Introduction to Volunteer Management*

NGOs often pursue their missions with limited resources and therefore seek to make their operations as efficient as possible. As a general concept, volunteer management is the process of nonprofits overseeing individuals who share their time and talents with them to help them attain their aims (Connors, 2012). Different contextual factors, such as organizational aims, resources and environments may call for different management approaches. This section sketches explains the need for volunteer management, describes its history and outlines various methods of practicing it.

### *2. The Need for Volunteer Management*

Why is volunteer management important? The answer includes at least two major component parts. First, management creates more effective volunteers. Second, the better those individuals are at addressing their responsibilities, the higher the quality of the programs with which they are engaged are likely to be. Those supporting volunteers desire increased professionalism among them as well as improved management of their experience and of their individual efforts and accountability, especially to the organization hosting them (Worth, 2012; Connors, 2012; Lewis, 2007). Volunteer management typically involves three primary elements:

volunteers, the programs with which those individuals are involved and the broader organization in which the volunteers are serving.

Analysts during the last few decades have suggested that effective volunteer management begins with recruitment and matching individuals carefully with an organization and its programs. Once recruited, maintaining the quality of volunteers' experience is vital for their retention (Bang, 2009). Typically, volunteers will leave if their motivations or expectations are not met. Understanding the aims behind engagement are important as they help a manager match a volunteer with programs within an organization. Managers who seek to reduce turnover, especially among volunteers key to the organization, need to be aware of such individuals' motivations throughout their time with an NGO (Clary, 1998). Turnover can cause major problems in an organization and losing a high-performance volunteer can be devastating, which is why their retention is so important.

Programs can become very dependent upon volunteers. Initiatives served by untrained or under-resourced volunteers cannot deliver high-quality service (Cassidy, 2006). However, a well-equipped volunteer with appropriate capacities and resources can deliver a quality program. A volunteer manager must know what volunteers need in skills and resources, which requires understanding the program with which they are engaged and communicating effectively with those sharing their talents. Making sure that individuals remain engaged is imperative and by advocating for them, a manager can ensure they are integrated into a program effectively (Connors, 2012).

Preparing an NGO, especially its paid staff, to receive and manage volunteers is also essential. An organization whose staff members resist volunteer involvement will be hampered in its efforts to provide high quality services. Bringing volunteers into an organization, especially in a professional capacity, can create tensions between those individuals and employees. Creating policies that guide the expectations of staff/volunteer interactions in such situations is one important means to mitigate this concern (Vaughn, 2013, p. 317). Creating job descriptions and assessing the need for volunteers can result in a well-organized strategy for their involvement and help to address this challenge as well (Worth, 2012). The more flexible and open a nonprofit organization is in utilizing volunteers, when it chooses to engage them, and the more proactive it is in integrating them into its activities, the more successful it is likely to be in managing those individuals.

### 3. *The Evolution of Volunteer Management*

Tracy Connors (2012) has traced the evolution of volunteer management during the last 30 years. The first major work she treated was Naylor's (1967) *Volunteers Today: Finding, Training and Working with Them*. Naylor focused on the importance of recruiting volunteers, analyzing the work to be done, placing those willing to assist in appropriate roles and developing effective approaches for handling their decisions to leave. Naylor argued that volunteers were adult learners and she created standards for training and teaching methods based on that understanding. She also separated volunteers into "program" and "administrative" groups. She was perhaps the first person to describe volunteer management. She divided that responsibility into seven components (Connors, 2012, p. 8):

1. Inventory of jobs
2. Inventory of volunteers
3. A recruitment plan [for volunteers]
4. A selection and placement process
5. Induction and supervision
6. A comprehensive and unified training program
7. Provision for volunteer mobility, specifically for dealing with volunteers leaving the organization

Four years later, Boyce (1971) developed the ISOTURE Model, to provide a framework to guide those managing volunteers. Boyce emphasized volunteerism as a form of leadership development and the nongovernmental organization leader's role in relation to volunteers and any programs developed for them. The ISOTURE approach stressed the need for nonprofit leaders to address certain imperatives if their organizations were to use volunteers effectively and efficiently (Connors, 2012, p. 9):

1. *Identification*: The process of finding people who have the competencies and attitudes essential to fill the position.
2. *Selection*: The process of studying the backgrounds of potential leaders.
3. *Orientation*: The process of orienting those chosen to the expectations of their position.
4. *Training*: The process of stimulating and supporting the leaders' efforts to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will improve the quality of their performance.



5. *Recognition*: The process of recognizing and rewarding sound performance.
6. *Evaluation*: The process of determining the results of leader performance.

Boyce saw leadership as an opportunity to increase one's ability to influence the behavior of other members of a team and voluntarism provided one vehicle to do so. As a result, in his view, volunteer program evaluation should be less about the volunteer and more about how well the person assisting the volunteers is developing as a leader. Boyce's work formed the basis for much of today's understanding of volunteer management.

Wilson (1976) highlighted the role and significance of the salaried volunteer manager and stressed the importance of the organizational climate that those volunteering experience. She suggested strategies aimed at influencing the character of that atmosphere and created a taxonomy of organizational culture types, which she dubbed: achievement, affiliation or power-oriented. Each climate had a different set of goals and required that leaders act in different ways to manage volunteers. She also highlighted the importance of volunteer motivation and the significance to NGOs of identifying the factors that shaped individual engagement. She understood that volunteer motivation should be linked closely to management functions and that together these contributed to whether an organization's climate was supportive of volunteers (Connors, 2012, p. 10).

Connors (2012, p. 11) also highlighted Penrod's work (1991) in her analysis. Penrod offered a model of volunteer management that she called LOOP and that focused on the interconnected concepts of Locating, Orienting, Operating and Perpetuating volunteers and volunteerism. Locating referred to matching an organization's needs and the various opportunities it could provide with a volunteer's skills and interests. Orienting highlighted the importance of educating new volunteers, both formally and informally. For Penrod, only formal education is under an organization's control and such orientations usually include discussions of a nonprofit's mission, policies, rules and procedures amongst other topics. Operating processes focus on encouraging vigorous volunteer involvement by helping those so engaged understand how they are making an impact in the community while also experiencing opportunities to develop personally. The final factor in Penrod's model, perpetuating, refers to the need for NGOs constantly to evaluate volunteer experiences and to recognize those individuals' service and contributions. Her framework also called for constructive feedback from managers not just at the end of a project, but also throughout a volunteer's engagement.

Like Wilson (1976) earlier, Fisher and Cole (1993) stressed the importance of professionally trained volunteer managers. Volunteerism was growing rapidly at the time they wrote and they argued that such swift change demanded more considered and systematic management of volunteers. In their view, NGO leaders needed to address the personnel and program management dimensions of voluntarism. Recalling that those providing their talents without compensation constitute important human resources suggested the need for nonprofits to define their volunteer roles clearly and to prepare their employees carefully to work with and engage such individuals. This orientation also implied a need to create a budget to manage volunteer programs. Volunteers joining organizations bring with them differing levels of abilities and knowledge, and therefore often must be trained to serve in specific roles. And importantly, such efforts imply an allocation of resources to support them. Finally, volunteers have different needs, motivations, expectations and interests that must be considered when designing a strategy to supervise them (Connors, 2012, p. 12). Nonprofits must assign such responsibilities to appropriate leaders and staff members to ensure that volunteer characteristics and needs are addressed.

Two years after publication of Fisher and Cole's work, Stepputat (1995) again highlighted the role of the volunteer manager. She contended that educating and preparing NGO managers appropriately to supervise volunteers provided a strong avenue for their development. She also argued that organizational policy development and implementation were critical to effective volunteer programs. Stepputat suggested, too, that volunteer managers should advocate for volunteers and volunteerism inside and outside of their organizations. In practice, this orientation suggests that NGO managers engage in a range of ongoing efforts to ensure that volunteers are involved in appropriate organizational activities. Stepputat also created a list of ten organizational activities necessary for effective volunteer management (Connors, 2012, p. 14):

1. Recruitment
2. Application, interview, and screening
3. Orientation and training
4. Placement
5. Supervision and evaluation
6. Recognition
7. Retention

8. Record Keeping
9. Evaluation
10. Advocacy

The last authors I highlight in this brief sketch of the evolution of the volunteer management literature in recent decades are Culp, Deppe, Castillo and Wells (1998). These scholars developed the GEMS (Generating, Educating, Mobilizing, Sustaining) model of volunteer administration. Generating meant conducting a needs assessment, writing position descriptions, and recruiting, screening and selecting volunteers. These analysts argued it is critical to prepare an organization for volunteers and to make sure that such individuals were necessary and their talents employed appropriately. The second part of their model, educating, advocated for orienting, protecting, resourcing and training volunteers systematically. In their view, effectively preparing volunteers for work in an organization is imperative to their successful integration. Culp et al. used mobilizing to describe engaging, motivating and supervising volunteers. They explicitly predicated this portion of their analysis on Wilson's earlier volunteer management model. The last phase of the GEMS framework for volunteer administration involved sustaining voluntarism. The authors highlighted the need for effective volunteer evaluation, recognition, retention, redirection and disengagement. GEMS, unlike earlier conceptual frameworks, including Penrod's LOOP model (1991), did not presume linearity among its factors. Culp and his colleagues self-consciously assumed that a volunteer could join an NGO at any point in the GEMS management cycle, as appeared appropriate.

#### *4. Methods of Volunteer Management*

NGO leaders may take either a universalist or conditional approach to their volunteer management challenge. A universalist strategy assumes that effective management requires a specific set of policies, skills and program evaluation techniques to be effective and that these can be used across all organizations and contexts. Advocates of a conditional approach, which Paull (2002) has also called the Contingency Approach, claim that the universalist view is inappropriate and that effective management must ultimately be rooted in a specific organization and its particular environment. In this view, adaptability is key to managing volunteers (Brudney, 2014). As previously stated, volunteer management efforts affect those sharing their talents, the programs in which they participate and the nongovernmental organization as a whole.

I turn now to a discussion of various methods of volunteer management. Worth (2012) has cited another author, Denhardt (2002) and his contention that NGO managers should focus particularly on how they interact with volunteers. According to Worth (2012, p. 221), Denhardt argued:

1. Managers should be reflective and proactive about their own motivations.
2. Managers should be aware that what motivates them is not necessarily what will motivate others.
3. Managers should have realistic expectations about the extent to which they can influence the motivation of others.
4. Managers should participate in setting clear and challenging goals.
5. Managers should think about the salience of various rewards.
6. Managers should be honest with people about what rewards are possible and what rewards are not.
7. Managers should treat people equitably and fairly.
8. Managers should make the work satisfying and meaningful.
9. Managers should think about the stages of life of the people they work with and offer appropriate support.

The first four suggestions focus on understanding the motivations of volunteers to become involved in an NGO in the first place. The next five recommendations highlight the personal development of volunteers and how best to achieve the goals that both they and their host organizations wish to attain.

Different types of volunteers (local, international, episodic, etc.) can also benefit from targeted forms of management. International volunteering is becoming increasingly popular and easier through globalization and communications technology. This form can take place in two ways: in-person and virtually over the Internet. Connors (2012) has suggested some methods aimed specifically at managing international volunteers. She has argued that institutional capacity to host volunteers must be taken into account, including, especially, resource management, training, and supervision capabilities. The demands implied by hosting volunteers (including some combination of personnel, housing, meals, transportation, etc.) should be considered and clearly communicated between the organization and its volunteers. When utilizing international volunteers, Connors (2012, p. R.7) has suggested that NGOs be mindful of the following factors or organizational needs:

1. Recruitment and appropriate screening
2. Mission and organization orientation for the volunteer
3. Training in culture, language, and traditions
4. A needs analysis
5. Fostering personal relationships
6. Allotting vacation or “down” time for the visiting volunteers
7. Suitable liability coverage for both the volunteer and organization
8. Establishing timelines for the volunteer (such as scheduling, goal deadlines, etc.)
9. A termination policy and procedures
10. An exit interview that focuses on reflection, evaluation, cultural observations and overall debriefing.

Hyde (2014) has contended that in addition to developing specific policies for international volunteers, episodic volunteers also warrant separate managerial attention. This type of volunteer is often necessary when large numbers of individuals are needed for an event for a short period of time, and often for a single, specific task. Hyde has developed the EVER (Episodic Volunteer Engagement and Retention) Model to encourage retention of such individuals. This approach assumes that these individuals can be developed into longer-term volunteers through guidance during the three critical phases of the voluntarism life cycle: novice, transition and sustained engagement. The novice stage refers to an individual with very little experience with donating their time and abilities; individuals in the transition phase have between two and four years of such involvement and people in the sustained stage have five to six years of familiarity of regularly sharing their time and talents with an NGO. Orientation and training are important during the novice stage and can occur through various media. For both the novice and transition phases, establishing a shadowing program or “buddy” system can aid individuals as they move to the sustained engagement stage.

An organization that is not ready for volunteers, whether because they do not have the work for such individuals, do not possess adequate processes for working with them or because existing staff members are resistant to the idea (or some combination of these), will not function effectively if volunteers are introduced into its processes. In such cases it is better to wait until the NGO is properly prepared before recruiting volunteers. Otherwise the volunteer will suffer, the programs will suffer, or both of these outcomes will occur. The organization must develop policies and have them in place and staff should be trained on how to work with volunteers

before recruitment occurs. As a part of those efforts, special care should be taken to alleviate any fears or concerns that staff members may have about working with volunteers.

Connors (2012, p. 55) has offered some suggestions for preparing a nongovernmental organization to accept volunteers. Among those is that paid staff should be involved in designing volunteer programs in order to reduce possible resentments and to ensure that as many key actors as feasible are supportive of such initiatives when they begin. Much of the volunteer management literature in this review suggests that NGOs should have a well-structured volunteer program that reflects the organization's mission. Depending on the situation, volunteer programs may need to be centralized and controlled by the head office, or be decentralized so that participating departments can control their own volunteers. Several analysts also have suggested that NGOs should create leadership roles to manage volunteers. Importantly, these individuals need not necessarily be paid staff members. Creating a set of guidelines concerning roles and duties of salaried staff and volunteers can help establish expectations for all concerned about what each should be doing. Those policies can and should evolve over time as organizational circumstances and needs change. NGOs should also establish policies for recruiting and accepting as well as terminating volunteers. Whatever their aims, these organizations must ensure targeted training and education services, as needed, for the stakeholders they serve (Connors, 2012). A volunteer with nothing to do uses resources instead of contributing to their host organization. NGO leaders also should be sure their organizations are able to support the work they envisage for volunteers (Worth, 2012, 233)

Having such formal structures in place may be very beneficial, but if an NGO is not ready for such structures and processes their imposition could cause morale problems. Less formal organizations may resist following such "professional" methods, for example. In such cases, staff may oppose highly structured steps to manage volunteers, but so may the volunteers themselves, who may view their engagement as informal (Cuskelly, 2006, p. 159). Faced with such a situation, volunteer management policies either need to be adjusted to fit the working culture of the organization or staff/volunteer changes need to take place either in the form of trainings or, if necessary, in the form of finding new staff willing to work with the new conditions. The latter alternative represents a last resort.

Programs carried out by ill-prepared volunteers will not only not work effectively and efficiently, but may also have additional negative impacts such as deterring clients from

participating in future programs. Depending on the offering, such efforts may also cause liabilities for the NGO. Having regular trainings, open communication among managers and volunteers and taking active steps to prevent turnover, are three of the major factors that positively influence the degree to which a program is carried out effectively.

Hager and Brudney (2004, p. 1) have outlined several management practices that can aid in effective service implementation:

1. Thoughtful volunteer supervision and active communication between staff and volunteers.
2. Matching volunteers according to their skills and motivations with needed services and their related programs.
3. Regular evaluations of volunteer involvement.
4. Recognition of volunteer contributions.
5. Training and professional development for volunteers.
6. Training for organization staff concerning how to work with volunteers.

Volunteer turnover can disrupt the operation of an organization and negatively affect the provision of its services. This can threaten the quality of service provided by the NGO and signal that the experience offered by the organization is undesirable, deterring future volunteers from serving (Hager, 2004). Giving volunteers the experience that they expect is key to retention. Knowing and understanding a person's motivations for volunteering and then working to make sure those aims are met, when appropriate, reduces turnover and creates more engaged and satisfied volunteers (Bang, 2009).

Two authors have identified some key factors in volunteer performance (Ferreira, 2014; Hager, 2004). Those concerns are: recruitment and selection, training and adequate and appropriate rewards. Ferreira (2014) has hypothesized two ideas linked to these factors. First, that there is a positive link between these management concerns and volunteer satisfaction. Her second hypothesis was that there is also a positive relationship between management factors and a volunteer's intention to continue to assist an organization. She found that as recruitment, selection, training and rewards supports are provided to volunteers, both their satisfaction and retention improve, which also results in higher quality service provision. Overall, volunteer management affects not only volunteers, but also the services an NGO provides. The more appropriate the character and organization of such management efforts to an NGO's context and

culture, the better its performance is likely to be.

#### *4. Methods of Training Volunteers*

Ferreira (2014, p. 894) has employed McCurley's (2005) definition of training as "the process of instructing volunteers in the specific job-related skills and behaviors that they will need to perform in their particular job." I find this definition of training too limiting because it does not include other effects of such efforts, including their implications for volunteer retention and confidence. Well-designed training not only improves the quality of service and the capacities of volunteers, but it can also increase these individuals' satisfaction and reduce their turnover rates (Cuskelly, 2006, p. 157). Costa (2006) has argued that training not only improves volunteer capacities, but can also foster a stronger relationship between them and their host organizations. Moreover, more robust relationships with staff members and organization clientele can increase volunteers' dedication to their roles. Additionally, with the ever-increasing demand for professionalism in nonprofit organizations, many NGOs cannot afford to treat their volunteers as amateurs. They must provide them with the wherewithal to ensure they behave as excellent service providers. Often, this reality finds NGOs treating their volunteers as unpaid staff (Ferreira, 2014).

There are dozens of international volunteer organizations throughout the world. Instead of recruiting and utilizing volunteers for their own programs, these entities provide NGOs, schools and other organizations with such assistance. Three such organizations are the Peace Corps, based in the United States, the European Voluntary Service and the United Nations Volunteers. Another common source of volunteers are religious organizations that send people throughout the world on various good will and mission projects. Most of these institutions provide some form of training for their emissaries. For example, the Peace Corps offers its volunteers (PCVs) training prior to their departure from the United States called "Staging," in which they are oriented to their sponsoring organization. Once they have arrived in their host country, PCV's spend their first three months learning about that nation's culture and language and acquiring relevant technical skills. The Corps also provides its volunteers in-service trainings and a "Close of Service" workshop in which they learn about readjusting to the United States and sit for a final exit interview just before they complete their service.



Trainings take various forms. The Peace Corps offers technical training for performing a very specific task (such as learning how to insert a needle to draw blood) or more general capacity building efforts, such as learning about various methods of assessing organizational impacts. Peace Corps team-building exercises that improve relationships between staff and volunteers or that build trust are also capacity building efforts. All of these programs can improve the quality of an organization, its volunteers and/or the services its representatives provide.

Training is important because the volunteers' enjoyment of their experience often depends on their sense of competence and how effective they perceive themselves to be in their role. An increased sense of efficacy fosters retention and confidence; a lack of a sense of capacity has the opposite effect. Training is also important because it gives the volunteer not just confidence, but additional capacities that can be applied to the organization's mission. Much training occurs at the beginning of a volunteer's experience and it must be done effectively because everything after it will be affected by how well or poorly it was conducted (Costa, 2006).

Connors (2012, p. 227) has described orientation trainings as "meetings or events where introductory information is given to individuals starting something new." Traditionally, such sessions begin before a volunteer is placed in their assignment, but sometimes they occur very soon after they are assigned to a specific organization and role (by either an international assistance organization or their host NGO), as is the case for the EVS program (European Commission, 2013). Some orientations can be very formal and may even occur in a classroom, while others are less prescribed. In some cases, orientations do not occur, but individuals learn as they tackle the responsibilities of their assigned role.

Scholars have argued that NGOs should provide their volunteers with orientations that cover not only practical matters such as skills, but also organizational culture and mission (Worth, 2012, p. 233). Orientations typically include at least one if not all of the following elements: cause orientation, system orientation and social orientation. In cause orientations, volunteers are given an understanding of the mission, vision, purpose, history and future plans of their newly adopted organization. A system orientation provides information about how the NGO operates. The trainer(s) share policies to explain how business is conducted at the organization. Those leading this program will also seek to ensure that volunteers feel welcome and confident.

During this form of (social) orientation, volunteers meet other staff, volunteers and perhaps clients as well as learn about the NGO's working culture. Finally, orientations may also provide some specialized training aimed at preparing volunteers for their roles (Connors, 2012).

Development opportunities that occur during a volunteer's service are commonly referred to as in-service trainings. These are similar to continual learning programs for other professionals. They can be used to remind volunteers about policies, share new knowledge and to encourage individuals to use capacities that are not usually exercised or to learn new skills. Analysts have argued that this stage of training should work towards the overall development of the volunteer. Connors (2012) has suggested that trainers should strive to be mindful of volunteers' different learning styles. Peace Corps in-service trainings provide volunteers opportunities to refine their language capabilities, learn new skills or improve existing ones and to debrief their experiences to that date. EVS mid-service trainings are similar and allow that program's participants opportunities to share their experiences with others while learning about subjects such as culture shock (Personal interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014).

The end of a volunteer's service can also include some training, including familiarization with reverse culture shock upon returning home from their country of service, lessons learned while abroad and how to harness skills obtained while a volunteer in the workforce. Some NGOs offer specific benefits to help volunteers adjust to their post-service life or as a thank you for their service. A major part of this final training may also be an exit interview which helps the volunteer and the staffers conducting it, to make sense of their service, its impacts and its purport for their personal development. Many of the authors cited in this chapter have expressed the need for such final wrap-up conversation/reflection opportunities (Connors, 2012; Brudney, 2014; Ferreira, 2014).

In addition to attending trainings designed for specific moments of a volunteer's service, such individuals may also require different types of capacity building help depending on the character of their assignments. Long and short-term volunteers may benefit greatly from more formalized and structured forms of training, whereas an episodic volunteer may not serve long enough to receive anything more than an orientation. The EVS program does not offer mid-service training to volunteers serving less than six months because that program's leaders have concluded the cost of providing such opportunities would exceed the benefits they are likely to produce (European Commission, 2013). Episodic volunteers are usually trained on-the-job and

learn about the NGO with which they are involved as well as their roles within it informally. These individuals are also usually given an abbreviated version of an orientation, if they are provided any such program at all (Connors, 2012).

For any sort of training, it is prudent never to assume that volunteers know, understand or comprehend what seems otherwise obvious to the existing members of an organization. Things that may seem commonplace to a trainer or staff members may not be the case for volunteers. Connors (2012, p. 246) has argued that NGO leaders should consider the following factors when designing training programs for their organizations' volunteers:

1. What knowledge or abilities does the volunteer need to perform their role?
2. What set of skills is the training designed to offer?
3. What kind of learning experiences can be incorporated that will give the volunteer opportunities to practice the taught skills?

Group size matters, as a combination of too many trainees and too few trainers can dilute the effectiveness of knowledge sharing. Indeed, according to Connors (2012, p. 247), the more difficult or complex the material presented in a capacity building effort, the smaller the participating group should be. In addition, Connors (2012, p. 247) has argued that providing volunteers an opportunity to practice the capacities being shared can make a major difference in their grasping the material or behaviors desired.

The way in which individuals absorb information should also be taken into account when designing a training program. Three common styles of learning are visual, auditory and kinesthetic; these individuals learn by seeing, hearing or by doing respectively. Connors (2012, p. 238) has highlighted several other types of learning styles:

- Experiencing: This form of learning involves engaging in activities that directly relate to duties/tasks
- Publishing: Where people share with others what they have learned
- Processing: Group discussion that reinforces learning activity
- Generalizing: The transition state from theoretical discussion to application
- Applying: The move from generalizing to doing.

Analysts have also argued that NGO professionals responsible for training programs should be sure to take into account how long it may take for trainees to master the materials

presented. People learn at different rates and this fact should guide program developers so they can both prevent some trainees from being left behind and not spend undue amounts of time addressing any one topic. Debriefing and follow-up sessions may be necessary to ensure that volunteers understood the new information a training had sought to provide (Connors, 2012). Next, I will change from the topic of volunteer management to the subject of program sustainability and explore various method of fostering program sustainability, including how it relates to volunteer management.

## **C: What is Program Sustainability?**

### *1. Defining Program Sustainability*

Program sustainability is imperative for an NGO that aims to deliver high-quality services. This section defines program sustainability and institutional memory, explains the need for the first listed and concludes with various methods to foster it. According to Scheirer (2005, p. 321) a program maybe defined, “as a set of resources and activities directed toward one or more common goals.” NGOs must keep sustainability in mind as they build their programs. This includes being mindful of the resources necessary to continue to provide an offering as well as ensuring appropriate individuals are charged with carrying out the initiative at the level of quality needed. These factors comprise an organization’s capacity. In a general sense, capacity can be defined as “the inputs necessary to carry out a program” (Cassidy, 2006, p. 149). It can also be referred to as the number of clients an NGO can serve with the resources it can mobilize. Organizational capacity must first be built before it can be employed. Capacity building efforts address how organizations use the different forms of capacity they may possess efficiently and effectively. Leadership, management, funds and other resources and staff abilities are used to create an NGO’s programs and are important factors in maintaining the sustainability of its services.

There are several definitions of program sustainability. Cassidy (2006) has suggested that sustainability exists when elements vital to a program’s effectiveness continue to operate over time at a stable or increased organizational and service capacity. This definition implies that even if a program is well funded, if its quality of program service is erratic, it will not be sustainable.

Another working definition of sustainability is, “a set of durable activities and resources dedicated to program objectives” (Pluye, 2004, p. 121).

A common model of program sustainability offered by several different analysts (Barab et al., 1998; Goodman et al., 1989; Goodson et al., 2001; Pain-Andrews et al., 1996), is called the Stage Model. It depicts sustainability as a linear process. Typically, a Stage Model assumes the continuation of what has already been implemented (Pluye, 2004). Although each author’s approach is slightly different, the typical elements of these models appear below (Scheirer, 2005, p. 322):

1. *Initiation*: A social entrepreneur, NGO leader or staffer conceives a program idea
2. *Development and Adoption*: Members of an NGO design the effort.
3. *Implementation*: The organization implements the initiative.
4. *Sustainability*: The NGO finds ways and means to continue a program’s components even after initial funding has ended.
5. *Dissemination*: Program results are collected and distributed to stakeholders.
- *Evaluation*: This stage varies from scholar to scholar (the reason it is not given a number).

Scheirer (2005, p. 322) has suggested that program evaluation should occur after every stage.

There is some debate in the voluntarism literature concerning the validity of this model. Pluye et al. (2004) have contended that this analytic approach does not take into account the reflexive manner in which development and learning occur in NGOs. These analysts have also argued that the boundaries assigned each phase are arbitrary and do not necessarily occur in the ordered way the model implies. Indeed, these scholars have suggested that sustainability begins with the conception of a program and is a process that moves back and forth among the phases outlined in the stages approach. Critics have also argued that this framework is too heavily based on financial viability and undervalues other factors, including service quality.

## 2. *Defining Institutional Memory*

One method of fostering program sustainability is systematically to create and retain institutional memory. As I will focus on this process later, I introduce it here. Institutional memory concerns the storage and retrieval of information about an NGO or its program(s) that is

key to its effective functioning. Some of this knowledge is used frequently and can be referred to as “high touch” and includes policies, strategies, email passwords and much more. “Rare touch” information is infrequently accessed, but is still vital to the functioning of a program or organization. This form of information may include website infrastructure (Gibbs, 2008, p. 50).

Institutional memory can be divided into two forms of knowledge: tacit and explicit. Tacit knowledge is often retained without conscious awareness. Examples include understanding the political environment of an organization, reasons why past programs have succeeded or failed and the different types of relationships an NGO has with its various stakeholders. Often, this knowledge is not easily recorded and is commonly conferred through conversation and social encounters. Explicit understanding, however, is usually easily recorded in a physical format, such as in policy documents, emails or databases. These two types of knowledge can be imagined as two points along a continuum along which differing degrees of understanding fall and are recorded (Parker, 2011, p. 32).

Parker (2011, p. 37) has defined institutional memory as, “the use of experiences to modify actions.” This knowledge is inherently tacit in nature and may be difficult to pass on. Feldman and Feldman (2006) have also embraced this definition, arguing that institutional memory is a collective act of remembering and sense making by members of an organization. It is not a physical object; instead, it is scattered throughout an organization among individuals and groups in the form of experiences.

Ward (2007, p. 10) has defined institutional memory as, “the body of knowledge, formal as well as informal, that is essential to the continuous and effective functioning of [an] organization.” NGOs must preserve knowledge in order to function. Information is necessary at all levels of an organization, making it everyone’s responsibility to maintain it. It is also important to discard outdated, incorrect or irrelevant information.

Another term scholars have used for institutional memory is “knowledge management.” Although this is typically a phrase used in business, I want to contend that it is also applicable to third sector organizations due to the increased demand for professionalism among NGOs. Knowledge management is comprised of processes and tools used to share understanding among staff in an organization. This information can be stored either formally or informally (Parker, 2007) and may be comprised of data, documents, judgments, opinions and experiences; it is both tacit and explicit in character and requires both forms to exist. Knowledge management involves

the creation, implementation and review of activities that improve the development, dissemination and application of knowledge that is essential to an organization's effective functioning (Ward, 2007, p. 11).

Subramanian and Soh (2009) have argued that organizational knowledge management takes place in two forms: as a repository or as a social network. Repositories are easier to maintain than networking systems, although the latter emphasize connectivity and can contextualize knowledge better than a physical repository can. Information and knowledge warehouses perform well when storing explicit learning, but social networks work better to retain and disseminate tacit knowledge. Subramanian and Soh have argued that scholarly understanding of knowledge management has progressed in three phases. The first generation focused on recorded information contained in the form of documents, data networks and other physical formats. Thereafter, analysts emphasized the social learning process and management of human resources essential to effective knowledge management. The current generation of scholarship centers on social change, interactions and dialogues between and among organization groups on the assumption that memory transfer results from such interactions (Parker, 2011, p. 43). In section 4, *Methods of Fostering Program Sustainability*, I review literature that describes and provides examples of how to proceed with developing physical and social institutional memory.

### *3. The Need for Program Sustainability*

Program sustainability is essential to ensuring stakeholder satisfaction and high quality and effective service. Maintaining or expanding the capacity of a program, while also ensuring its effectiveness, is a major challenge for many NGOs. Providing quality service is impossible without necessary organizational capacity (Cassidy, 2006).

By definition, only sustainable programs can operate for long periods. Program duration is important because many NGO initiatives may require considerable time before their effects become measurable. It is not uncommon for programs that are perceived as unsustainable to lose investment (in the form of donors or client participation) and therefore to fail. Discontinued programs can disillusion participants and create distrust, resulting in difficulties the next time a NGO tries to mobilize the community (Pluye, 2004, p. 122).

Institutional memory helps NGOs avoid "reinventing the wheel," which can help prevent wasting resources (Ashkenas, 2013). Needlessly redesigning older programs, for example, can

drain reserves, diminish service quality and reputation with clients and much more. In the for-profit sector, institutional memory gives those corporations that possess it a strategic advantage over those organizations that do not. Such knowledge is particularly vital for drawing on individuals' organizational experience, and for facilitating further learning and teaching (Parker, 2007).

#### *4. Methods of Fostering Program Sustainability*

Cassidy (2006) has argued that downstream, upstream and midstream factors shape program sustainability. Downstream factors directly affect implementation. These include local demand, resources and staff. Upstream factors include funding, the ability and willingness of clients to pay for a service (when it is not wholly subsidized), and related resources. Midstream factors include the primary characteristics of the organization operating a program, including, particularly, its capacity to offer a service. Cassidy has also suggested that sustainability exists when an NGO effectively manages its operations for an extended period, it implements its programs in conformity with stakeholder expectations and it is able to develop new or expanded initiatives.

Program routinization is one way to create sustainability. Citing organizational learning and neo-institutional theories, Pluye et al. (2004) have contended that routine and standards promote both structural and temporal sustainability. These scholars have described two structural factors and one temporal dimension that promote sustainability. Routinization is the primary structural process conducive to sustainability. A routine is a regular process and these are integrated through the memory of those implementing them. Routinization allows for program performance evaluation and fosters institutional memory, adaptation and policy creation. Routinization also ensures that activities are implemented in durable and consistent ways. Those participating in the routines retain the knowledge they represent both tacitly and explicitly.

The second structural factor linked to sustainability is standards. Creating standards helps NGOs foster routinization, reinforcing the first proposition. Standards are institutionalized through norms, laws, rules and policies and can also take the form of social expectations. A negative aspect of standards, however, is that they can constrain an organization too much, reducing its flexibility. Standards can also be used to intervene to improve a program not working as intended. The final proposition is temporal and is predicated on the view that



implementation processes are concomitant, meaning that specific factors and events influence sustainability while others simultaneously influence implementation. Routinization and standardization can occur concurrently (Pluye, 2004).

Scheirer (2005) has sketched a five-part routinization framework aimed at fostering program institutionalization. The first element is the budget; a sustainable program survives annual allocation cycles and develops funding sources beyond its initial endowment. The second part of this conceptualization concerns personnel, including both paid staff and volunteers. Program operations are a part of staff/job descriptions and they can survive personnel and leadership turnover. In addition, this component assumes key staff members are promoted from within. Scheirer's third contention is that programs must be appropriately supplied and maintained; old equipment or materials must be replaced as needed. The fourth part of this framework is training. This factor suggests that personnel are regularly acquainted with everything they must know to facilitate their program's effective delivery. The last factor in this framework is organizational governance. This dimension recognizes a specific program as something permanent and integral to an organization.

This same author has also argued that three major types of factors shape program sustainability: aspects of project design and characteristics, factors within the organizational setting and influences in the broader community environment. Project design and characteristics include the nature of the program conception process, including who was involved in it, whether it can be changed, how long an initiative has existed and the source(s) of its financing. There are five factors within the organizational setting: the program can be modified over time, a "champion" is present to lead/oversee the effort, it fits within the mission of the organization, its benefits are readily perceived and stakeholders provide support. The broader community environment includes the stability of external socioeconomic or political factors and the availability of resources from outside of the organization (Scheirer, 2005, p. 320). Knowing what influences are present can help an NGO more accurately construct a program that will become sustainable over time.

In addition to understanding influences that promote program sustainability, it is equally important to acknowledge the elements that can negatively affect it. Staff turnover is a major disruptor of program services as it can cause changes in quality of service, leadership (or the champion) support and overall continuity of a program. Leadership changes can cause an

initiative to be overlooked if priorities change with a new executive. A low level of implementation early in a project can mean that a program has very little support (Scheirer, 2005, p. 340).

Institutional memory plays key roles in creating program sustainability. Institutional memory, whether it is explicit or tacit in character, can, and often does, play a part in routinization, standardization and program design. These are concerns I address for CYC in Chapter V.

Similar to the work of Subramanian and Soh (2009), Ward (2007) has suggested that organizations establish and maintain institutional memory as a response to personnel turnover. Her arguments provide additional methods for the creation of institutional memory and how to proceed with its development. Suggestions for creating or retaining institutional memory or knowledge management can fall into both tacit and explicit categories. Some general knowledge management strategies include (Ward, 2007, p. 54):

- Transferring knowledge from one human to another through non-tangible or “tacit” methods, such as social networking.
- Capturing and storing knowledge in explicit form, as in written documents or recorded videos.
- Providing locating and identification tools such as indexes, codification systems, or search software.
- Sharing and applying prior knowledge to current work.
- Reevaluating, validating, modifying, or destroying knowledge when it becomes obsolete or erroneous.

Ward (2007) has cited four resources for sharing explicit knowledge. Creating repositories of knowledge in the form of a database from which staff can recall information, developing processes for accumulating, refining, managing and disseminating that knowledge, fashioning roles within the organization that have the responsibility of executing and managing that process and using information technology to support the repository.

In her analysis, Ward (2007, p. 20-21) also observed that state transportation agencies (STAs) within the United States are implementing strategies to foster the transfer of tacit knowledge. Unlike the strategies mentioned previously that are intended to preserve and store memory in an explicit, physical format, these aim to aggregate and store the social aspects of

institutional memory. First, these agencies are retaining former staff as consultants. Second, they are using retired personnel to transfer information and to train new recruits. Finally, before an individual retires, they attempt to have the new and old staff member overlap so that the incumbent can share her/his knowledge and experiences. These are only a few of about forty techniques that STAs are employing to foster the transfer of tacit knowledge and diminish overall institutional memory loss due to turnover. Although these methods were utilized for paid staff, several, but not all, of these same techniques could also work for volunteers. For example, a nonprofit organization may not be able to pay a volunteer to stay longer and train a replacement, but that individual could be asked to assist their successor before their service ends, such as through a shadowing program.

As previously explained, staff turnover can create problems for an organization as it seeks to carry out its services. Plans for succession in posts that require it, such as leadership, oversight or management roles, should be created and built into an overall sustainability strategy. Any staff transition requires support from the remaining members of an organization to take on the responsibilities of the individual who left. There are three stages of transition: preparing for change, uncertainty as new personnel become part of the NGO and a fresh beginning when new individuals begin to offer ideas or leadership (Parker, 2011). Understanding these phases and considering them when personnel change helps leaders manage turnover and avoid or mitigate its potential negative effects.

A successful transition requires that new staff members are provided, or are able to obtain, the information they need to do their jobs (such as the history of a position or project, known successes and failures, etc.). For such to occur, personal experiences, knowledge, documents, etc. need to be available in a single location (Parker, 2011). Special information repositories need to be the focus of top-level officials so that they are not forgotten, which can happen easily with “rare touch” information. There should be some form of calendar reminder that will alert staff when something important, but atypical, is about to occur or is due (Gibbs, 2008). This is more easily accomplished when information technology is utilized and there are resources available to operate such a system and may not be feasible for an organization with limited resources. Finally, building a strategy concerning how to create and maintain the repository, and who is responsible for it will greatly aid in its formation and maintenance (Gibbs, 2008).

Ashkenas (2013) has outlined several methods to build institutional memory. First he has suggested that NGOs create a formal strategy for maintaining memory. Next, he has argued it is necessary to identify what information managers want staff to know (or wish to access themselves). This dissemination can take place in orientations and continual-education formats. Finally, he has suggested that NGOs use technology to create processes through which team members may capture and lead institutional knowledge.

However, Parker (2011, p. 11) has warned that institutional memory cannot be captured by technology alone. He has highlighted two methods of managing knowledge: codification and personalization. Codification is the capture and storage of explicit knowledge in the form of words and numbers. Personalization refers to tacit knowledge based on intuitions, experiences and problem solving skills. This can take place through social networking or recording stories. Assuring the availability of both of these for new personnel will aid in their integration into the organization and promote overall program sustainability.

The leader/champion is a key stakeholder in fostering such tacit knowledge through the creation of social networking opportunities. By building social ties with followers, she/he can create more opportunities to exchange experiences. Staff, too, can share tacit information through social interactions. By personally knowing others who possess tacit information, leaders may call upon them to share that knowledge. Those individuals thus serve as decentralized repositories of tacit experiences. Fostering an open culture of knowledge within organizations encourages greater access to important institutional memories (Parker, 2011).

Some methods for knowledge sharing are inherently people-centric, some emphasize tacit knowledge being turned into explicit data in the form of documents, while others suggest using technology to identify and codify institutional memories. A people-centric approach is a useful tool for community building; observing and questioning, coaching and mentoring, fostering conversations and creating narratives that reflect tacit organizational knowledge (Ward, 2007, p. 3). Using technology allows for quick and easy access to information. A searchable database should be created whenever possible. If one is going to store tacit information in an electronic or physical database, it must be accompanied with context and detail to inform future readers of what happened previously and how to apply that knowledge. It should be noted that some view this form of management as a type of control that hinders informal interactions and sharing, but it is a good alternative when informal interactions are unavailable. This is especially true for

NGOs without the resources to create formal managerial structures. Nonetheless, paid staff and volunteers may reject such processes as unduly intrusive (Parker, 2011, p. 46).

Much like program sustainability in general, several negative influences can discourage the creation of institutional memory. When people leave, they take whatever knowledge they possess with them thereby reducing the collective memory of the organization. When a leader introduces an idea that does not build on previous work it can cause confusion and mission drift (Ashkenas, 2013). Introducing a program into an organization that is outside of the context of the mission or abilities of the existing workforce can cause problems within the workforce. A way to prevent this is to make sure that paid and unpaid personnel are aware of an organization's or project's purpose and/or history. Apathy towards knowledge sharing, knowledge hoarding and the belief that "knowledge is power" can create a negative culture toward sharing. Differing working languages, in both a literal sense of language and as a professional vocabulary can also cause confusion and discourage disclosure. Finally, holding on to obsolete or incorrect information can prevent an organization from moving forward; such information must be discarded if an NGO is to move ahead (Ward, 2007).

## **D: Conclusion**

I have discussed three topics in this literature review that are important to program sustainability at CYC: volunteerism, volunteer management and program sustainability. Chapter V examines how these concerns affect the daily operations of the youth center. Each subject has a major influence on the center, but not everything discussed in this review is relevant to the Center. Some methods discussed are not feasible, others are already being implemented to a degree and others, with some adjustments, could offer the NGO major benefits. The literature treated here is important to understanding and addressing the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter and in order to understand the discussion in Chapter V.

CYC depends strongly on volunteers to carry out its mission. Without these individuals, the youth center would have to close its doors and cease operation or completely change the way it operates. CYC enjoys the support of international and local volunteers, but what types of volunteers are active there and how are they engaged? What implications do these various volunteers have for the NGO's mission and programs? The literature on volunteerism provided

various examples of different types of volunteers and the different roles they perform. Motivations for volunteering are clearly an important dimension or factor in volunteer management. This literature will help me to address the forms of voluntarism present at CYC and their implications for effective management.

Volunteer management is a major concern in an organization so reliant upon the services of such individuals. Volunteers constitute the lifeblood of the youth center and it is important for the NGO to foster their development as much as the development of the youths served. Does the youth center already manage its volunteers effectively? Do volunteers need more training to operate the youth center? Volunteer management plays an important role in program sustainability. This literature will help me analyze and understand the practices that CYC has already utilized and which strategies are not now being employed, but might be beneficial in encouraging program sustainability.

Turnover is an inevitability for CYC with its current model of management. How can it operate with such turnover? Are there ways to create program sustainability in such an environment? What are the roles of local versus international volunteers in the context of institutional memory? The literature on program sustainability has provided several examples that can help me address these questions. I will use this knowledge to create a framework to investigate the consequences of rapid turnover for CYC's program sustainability.

Based on the literature, I think it is pertinent to investigate the presence and implications of institutional memory in both tacit and explicit forms for the Center's operations to ascertain how the NGO could better utilize and inform its volunteers. Overall, I will use the information treated in the literature review to understand volunteerism, volunteer management, and program sustainability from the perspectives of local and foreign volunteers as well as the staff at CYC and CPJD.

My original questions as I began this inquiry were: How can an organization that has rapid volunteer turnover create and maintain programs that are sustainable? This led me to two additional queries: What is program sustainability? How does volunteer turnover affect sustainability at CYC? This review of the literature has raised a variety of additional questions, which I have stated above, that I will address in my analysis of the youth center's use of its volunteers in Chapter V.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This thesis examines a youth center in Macedonia, CYC, confronting the challenge of managing program sustainability amidst rapid volunteer turnover, a situation that volunteer-dependent nongovernmental organizations frequently face. I also use a similar local youth center, CPJD, located in the same community, as a convenient way to test the conclusions I reached by exploring CYC's operations in detail. This chapter outlines the research design and methods I used to collect relevant information for the study presented here. In brief, I used semi-structured interviews, participant-observation and information gathered from the organization's documents as the primary sources for my inquiry. I used this information to explore

- How CYC manages its volunteers, the types of volunteerism present at the youth center, and the strategies for promoting program sustainability the youth center utilizes, if any.
- What effects those choices have on the services the youth center provides.
- Strategies for developing and maintaining program sustainability at the youth center.

I asked such questions as “Does the CYC have program sustainability issues?” If so, why? And, further, “If so, how might those concerns be addressed effectively?” Overall, I wanted to understand whether and how program sustainability might be attained in an organization that experiences rapid volunteer turnover.

#### **A. Case Study**

The purpose of this analysis was to identify and explore the program management issues that arise for program sustainability when an NGO that depends strongly on volunteers to pursue its mission must address a consistently high volume of turnover in that cadre. The literature review, offered in Chapter III, addressed volunteerism, program sustainability and volunteer management. This thesis describes the forms of volunteerism present at CYC and the sustainability issues the NGO confronts due its disproportionate dependence on short-term international volunteers. The Center provides an opportunity to explore this issue since the concern is so central to the organization's capacity to pursue its vision and mission. Interviews with key organization stakeholders allowed me to examine whether and to what extent the

NGO's leaders were successfully managing the entity's volunteer cadre for program sustainability. The organizational documents to which I enjoyed access as a Peace Corps Volunteer working at the center, offered additional specific insights into how the NGO sought to manage the issue of volunteer turnover.

I selected CYC as my case for analysis for two main reasons. First, the Center exhibited high volunteer turnover, which seemed to affect the continuity of its various programs and activities and thus appeared to be a particularly auspicious site for analysis. Second, I was assigned to CYC for a period of 22 months as a Peace Corps volunteer, so it was convenient for me to investigate the issue of how the NGO has sought to manage its volunteer turnover challenge. My service allowed me to establish relationships with leaders, staff and volunteers to obtain their perceptions of the volunteer turnover issue as well as to help me gain a sense of how the organization has sought to address it.

My Peace Corps post allowed me to be an observer, and as such, I was able to see the interactions among staff, volunteers and the NGO's beneficiaries. I was able to observe how CYC sought to carry out its mission and identify the issues affecting the quality of its service. I also was able to understand the responses I received in the interviews I undertook more deeply because I knew the organization quite well. My position gave me a special opportunity to gain insight into the NGO that otherwise might not have been available to me. I made regular field notes in the form of a journal throughout my service. In those entries, I recorded both regular and special events/activities that took place at the youth center as well as my reflections on those pertinent to the subjects of volunteerism, program sustainability and volunteer management. I also recorded my personal reactions to events at CYC as they unfolded. I coded my journal and that effort and the themes and issues it highlighted helped me as I created the interview questions I used.

I used a constructivist approach to extract meaning from my interactions between my experiences and my ideas. I gained knowledge by comparing interviews (interactions) with my emerging views. I observed a phenomenon at the youth center and then sought to understand it better by interviewing volunteers and paid staff members. I understand that as a participant observer I ran a risk of "seeing" my biases instead of the truth. Bias can occur when the researcher selects the case study method to advocate for a particular issue (Yin, 2009, p. 72). I sought to protect against that eventuality by investigating an issue and being open to contrasting



responses to it from different interviewees. I also conducted interviews with distinct “generations” of volunteers and from two different, but similar, organizations in order to gather information from a diverse pool. In most cases, I recorded the interviews using my own video recorder. In one of the ten instances a stakeholder responded to my interview questions in writing.

According to Yin (2009, p. 47), in situations when a single scenario or institution represents an extreme or unique case, it is appropriate to study that phenomenon or organization alone. Although not representative of a typical NGO (in this example) perhaps, such cases often allow the analyst to capture the circumstances and conditions of a common situation in an extreme setting. Yin has contended that when selecting such a case study, the researcher must have access to data from interviews, documents and records and be able to make observations while in the “field” Yin (2009, p. 26). I was able to meet all three of these criteria from my position within the organization.

I also used my own evolving knowledge and experience with NGOs and volunteer management to create a working heuristic to help me make sense of daily events, which I then supplemented and formalized, as I read the relevant academic literature. The scholarship concerning program sustainability and volunteers and their effective management helped me to understand better what elements were at play that were affecting the youth center’s programs and their continuity. Further study via interviews and documents analysis enabled me to identify more precisely how exactly each of those factors operated within CYC. I used this tripartite framework to help me make sense of my daily observations and to design my interviews with stakeholders.

CYC has 6 to 10 international volunteers arrive and depart each year, and as these individuals are the major organizers of events and workshops critical to implementation of the center’s mission, their effective management is a major concern to the organization. This analysis focuses disproportionately on long-term international volunteers because they bear primary responsibility for carrying out the key programs that address the NGO’s mission. I also included local volunteers in my analysis, but they are not as significant overall to the CYC, as most such individuals serve in supporting roles rather than in central programmatic posts. CPJD also has a high rate of turnover, but it confronts a different strategic situation *vis-a-vis* its volunteers. Whereas CYC has a high rate of long-term volunteer turnover, CPJD experiences

strong short-term and low long-term volunteer turnover. This creates a similar situation of program instability, but with quite different management and program delivery implications. Again, I investigated CPJD briefly for broad comparative purposes and did not conduct a full analysis of its programs and activities.

The Peace Corps volunteer who served before me at the Center shared a collection of CYC documents with me as he oriented me, and these proved a very helpful introduction to the aims and structure of the organization and to its mode of operating. The documents he provided included the center's Volunteer Handbook, which he helped the youth center staff write, past schedules of events and activities, "House Rules" and other operational details, such as membership forms and letters to parents and a recent CYC strategic plan. He also described his own experience as a volunteer at the youth center. In addition to this information, I was able to examine a range of documents created during my tenure that addressed similar concerns. I used this information to create a profile of the organization and to understand CYC and its approach to volunteer management better. The documents gave me a picture of how the Center was and was not prepared to address the negative consequences of their persistent turnover. The records also provided insight into how formally CYC had structured its volunteer management efforts.

A case study must evidence validity and reliability. According to Roberts (2009) there are two types of validity applicable to a descriptive case study: construct validity and external validity. This case study has construct validity because it utilized multiple sources of data (interviews, documents and personal observation) and a clear protocol for collecting evidence that can be traced. I will seek to demonstrate external validity in later chapters by suggesting how my findings can be applied to other NGOs experiencing similar circumstances. I sought to ensure reliability by obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for my study. This approval provided third-party oversight to ensure interviewee consent and to verify the appropriateness of the method of interviewing and types of questions that I used in my interviews. This protocol helped me be consistent in the questions that I asked, which assisted with ensuring a stable and consistent interview process for all of those with whom I spoke.

## **B. Interviews**

I conducted interviews for this study with key informants from CYC who could assist me in understanding better how the NGO manages its volunteers and programs, especially those individuals from other nations. I developed two sets of questions, one for the paid staff of the organization and one for its volunteers. While I sought analytically to distinguish between local and foreign volunteers, I nonetheless asked the same, or appropriately similar, questions of individuals in each group. Overall, the interviews proved enlightening and revealed that CYC's leaders were aware of the organization's sustainability issues. My interviewees also suggested that volunteers were particularly affected by the organization's lack of institutional memory.

I conducted a total of ten interviews; seven with individuals associated with CYC and three with leaders and volunteers from CPJD. I interviewed two paid staff members, three EVS volunteers, and two local CYC volunteers. I chose these individuals to sample the perspectives of three main groups of stakeholders at the youth center. The CYC's paid staffers have been with the NGO either since its creation in 2009 or for at least five years, providing a longitudinal perspective. In addition, as well as being key stakeholders in the overall success or failure of the organization, they are its principal decision-makers. The Center's staff members prefer long-term EVS volunteers to short-term ones, because those serving for lengthier periods design and carry out the majority of activities at CYC. From an organizational perspective, they are the ones most affected by program sustainability.

I also sought to conduct interviews with EVS participants from three separate cadres or "generations" of volunteers. I determined these groups on my own by when volunteers arrived, with whom they interacted and how they conducted themselves at the center. For example, four volunteers all arrived within one week and failed to integrate with the more senior volunteers. These two factors separated them as one generation, which created a second generation. This method of choosing whom to interview allowed for a more longitudinal understanding and reduced the likelihood of recording an anomalous experience during their service, which could have skewed my interview results. Finally, I selected local volunteers because they have been both members and volunteers, and therefore have a unique perspective to share. They have been affected by program management at the youth center as members and then later once more, as someone working there. One of the local volunteers with whom I spoke had been a member from

a young age and slowly grew into his role as a volunteer, while the other was a more sporadic member and became more active at the youth center once he began volunteering there.

I interviewed one paid staff member, one local volunteer and one EVS volunteer at CPJD. I interviewed a staff member because I wanted to understand better their program sustainability issues from a management perspective and learn about the background of the organization as well. I selected both volunteers to allow me to explore how their organization dealt with program management and training from a volunteer's perspective. I again chose long-term EVS volunteers because of the role that these individuals play for CPJD. Because there is only one such volunteer at any given time at the Council, his or her role may carry even more importance in terms of program continuity than long-term volunteers at CYC. For example, if she leaves without orienting an incoming volunteer thoroughly, a wealth of knowledge and experiences will be lost to the organization and future volunteers as well. The local volunteer with whom I spoke was never formally a member of CPJD, but was nevertheless a very active presence at the organization and displayed a subtle understanding of how voluntarism operates within it. I chose this individual to interview because this youth center utilizes its local volunteers more frequently than does CYC, making her experience a valuable source of information.

Considered as a group, my volunteer interviewees, local and international, included men and women. All were between the ages of 18 and 30 (see Table 4.1 for more details). Both volunteers I interviewed at CPJD were women, while at CYC three interviewees were women and two were men. All of the EVS volunteers with whom I spoke were women, while two of the three local volunteers I interviewed were men. Paid staff subjects were somewhat older than the volunteers I interviewed (25-35) and included two men and one woman. I did not choose to speak to some volunteers due to language barriers. While most EVS volunteers had a very good understanding of English, a minority had very poor English skills and were not able to participate in an interview with me. While local volunteers and paid staff were all from Macedonia, the EVS volunteers were from various countries throughout Europe. Those volunteers that did not speak English or Macedonian to a sufficient level had significantly different experiences than did those who spoke one or both languages fluently during their service.

Table 4. 1: Interview Inventory

<b>Code Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type of Stakeholder</b>
K-A-S14	CYC	Female	Paid Staff
Y-D-S14	YACYC	Male	Paid Staff
K-D-LV14	CYC	Male	Local Volunteer
K-B-LV14	CYC	Male	Local Volunteer
K-N-FV14	CYC	Female	International Volunteer
K-M-FV14	CYC	Female	International Volunteer
K-K-FV14	CYC	Female	International Volunteer
S-P-S14	CPJD	Male	Paid Staff
S-R-LV14	CPJD	Female	Local Volunteer
S-V-FV14	CPJD	Female	International Volunteer

I knew most of the people I interviewed from CYC personally because I worked alongside them. Indeed, I knew all of the subjects from that center except one EVS volunteer who had left the organization before I arrived. I was able to contact her via email and meet with her later in person during a visit she made to Macedonia. I also was acquainted with the long-term EVS volunteer at CPJD as a result of some meetings between our two organizations. That individual helped me contact the other two individuals from CPJD with whom I spoke. I initially contacted volunteers via email and then met in person or via Skype for the interview.

I conducted the majority of interviews in person, either at the respondent's organization, in their office off-site or at a nearby café. I recorded the interviews using a handheld camera or photo camera with a video option. I completed two of the three interviews that I did not conduct in person via Skype and recorded those using a handheld or photo camera with a video option. One volunteer completed the interview by answering my questions in writing and returning the resulting document to me via email. I interviewed all subjects once with only a few follow-up questions for a select few after our initial meeting. I conducted follow-ups through email, in person, or through Facebook© messenger. I transcribed the interviews into an electronic document for later analysis. No translations were necessary because all subjects had a good grasp of English and only two requested explanations concerning specific questions. On average, interviews with paid staff lasted about 90 minutes and interviews with volunteers, both local and international, averaged approximately 30 minutes. I also wrote field memos immediately after each interview to aid with analysis later. Memos addressed my initial impressions of the interview, interviewee and points of interest they made during the interview and any possible questions or themes to look for in future or already completed interviews.

Before I conducted the interviews, I gave each participant a copy of the recruitment form, IRB protocol, confidentiality agreement and interview questions a minimum of one week prior to our meeting. Just before the interview began I reminded them about the protocol and asked if they understood it and if they had any questions concerning it. I did not begin interviews until I secured the written consent of those with whom I was to speak. During the interview, I followed the list of questions on the interview script. When appropriate, I would go off-script to investigate a specific response further. I also skipped questions when the answer to a query had been provided in a previous response. When an interviewee requested it, I set the camera so it would not capture their face. With their permission, I instead recorded their voice only. This occurred for two of the interviews.

As previously stated, I constructed the interview schedule to gather information concerning program sustainability, volunteerism and volunteer management. These three topics arose as central in the literature I reviewed during my research. For volunteers, I focused my questions on the type of training they had received, what their responsibilities were in their roles and what sorts of support their organization gave them, or could have given them, concerning activities, workshops and other programs they had undertaken during their service. For the youth center staff members, my questions addressed the roles they saw local and international volunteers playing in their organization, what kinds of activities they designed and if there was any corresponding support or trainings offered to help them with those responsibilities and how their organization managed their program. I also asked some questions about how the NGOs operated as well as their history. Information from interviews allowed me to contextualize how volunteer management issues I had identified in the literature related to CYC specifically. To understand better how the interviews related to concepts in the relevant academic literature, please see Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below

Table 4. 2: Volunteer Question Set

<b>Sample Questions for Volunteers</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Why did you decide to be a volunteer at this organization?	Volunteerism
How did you find out about your organization? Did you learn of your opportunity directly from the organization with which you volunteered or did you identify it through a separate party?	Volunteerism
Did the organization provide you with any kind of training upon arrival or during your service? If so, what character did it take and what subjects or concerns did it address and was it helpful?	Volunteer Management
As you reflect on your experience, what types of training would have been valuable to you, but were not offered or available?	Volunteer Management
What did (or are you doing) at your organization? Did you serve any specific roles or organize/ and/or manage a specific workshop or program, or help manage the organization?	Volunteer Management
Were there any clear job roles for you to work in during your service? Were your role and responsibilities in your organization clear to you? If so, what were they?	Volunteer Management
Were there already existing programs or activities in which you could work when you arrived in your organization? If so, was there any sort of already existing material (such as information packets or trainings on how to run the program) for you to use and learn from to help you run these programs effectively? If yes, can you describe the character of those materials for me? If not, do you feel that you would have benefited from such information and why?	Program Sustainability
Were there programs or activities that your organization had once undertaken in the past that you attempted to restart? If so, what were those and was your organization able to supply information helpful to you to help you get started? If so, what was the character of that information? If not, do you feel that you would have benefited from such material and why?	Program Sustainability

Table 4. 3: NGO Staff Question Set

<b>Sample Questions for NGO Staff</b>	<b>Topic</b>
What roles do volunteers play in your organization and why? Do you develop position descriptions for the roles they assume?	Volunteerism/ Volunteer Management
Do you have established relationships with certain organizations for recruiting volunteers? How were these established and when?	Volunteerism
How long do your foreign volunteers usually remain at your organization? What are the reasons for this timeframe?	Volunteerism/ Volunteer Management
What are some of the challenges you have encountered with having volunteers being involved with your programs for only 1-12 months at a time?	Volunteer Management/ Program Sustainability
Do you train new volunteers for any specific roles? If so, how and how often do you train them	Volunteer Management
Do you have any formal orientation or debriefing programs? If so, can you describe them for me?	Volunteer Management
Concerning volunteers and your organization's programs, do you provide volunteers with specific information concerning role expectations and duties and how their work and programs fit into the overall organization's efforts to realize its mission?	Volunteer Management/Program Sustainability
Do you provide programs for a volunteer to continue or are the volunteers expected to begin or create a program?	Volunteer Management/ Program Sustainability
If your volunteer is continuing or restarting a program that already existed before they arrived, do you have any trainings or materials that he or she can use or do you offer training for them? That is, do you provide volunteers with any sort of support to restart or continue an older program?	Program Sustainability
How do you keep your organization's activities going with volunteers constantly arriving and departing?	Program Sustainability
Does your organization have a strategy to train or inform new volunteers to continue that program/workshop? If so, what type of material or training do you provide?	Program Sustainability

I had hoped when I began my fieldwork to conduct 15 interviews: 10 from CYC and five from CPJD. From CYC, I set out to interview three paid staff, four EVS volunteers and three local volunteers. I reduced the number of staff with whom I spoke to two because after the second interview it became clear additional interviews were unlikely to yield new information. I reduced the number of EVS volunteers I interviewed due to a lack of responsiveness from those whom I contacted electronically that I saw as viable candidates. I reduced the number of local volunteers to two because of the availability of individuals in this group for interview. For CPJD, I was originally going to interview one paid staff member, two long-term and two short-term EVS volunteers. The second long-term EVS participant did not respond to my interview requests and the short-term EVS volunteers for whom I had contact information (email or social media) either did not have sufficient language skills (Macedonian or English) to be considered viable candidates for interview, or did not respond when I contacted them. I believe that the interviews I was able to conduct garnered very helpful information and provided a useful range of perspectives.

### **C. Coding**

After transcribing the interviews, I used open coding as described by Bailey (2009), to code them. During the first phase of coding, I separated each question/response pair from the others and grouped the data from the interviews together by type of subject interviewed (paid staff, local volunteer, international volunteer) in an electronic format. From there, I categorized the data into groups based on the question to which the interviewees had responded. After that, I summarized each group of responses and from those groups I distinguished themes and coupled them together. I then used those topics to contextualize the organizing questions I had gleaned from the literature review. These themes focused primarily on volunteer management, program sustainability and volunteerism in nongovernmental organizations. I used the literature to help me make sense of the themes I had identified. A breakdown of the ideas I identified appears in Table 4.4



Table 4. 4: Theming of Interview Data

<b>Volunteer Management</b>	<b>Program Sustainability</b>	<b>Volunteerism</b>
Training & Orientation	What Materials are Available	Technical Aspects of Volunteering
Organizational Processes	Transfer of Responsibilities	Motivations
Positive/Negative Aspects of Local versus International Volunteers	Shadowing	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction
Types of Programs/Activities Volunteers Organize	On-the-Job Learning & Transfer of Skills	Expectations
On-the-Job Learning	Institutional Memory (Physical & Nonphysical)	

The themes I identified in the interviews I conducted helped to reveal the different aspects and situations at play in CYC concerning its program and volunteer management and they also uncovered nearly identical concerns at CPJD. Through my observations I gained a better understanding of the youth centers, their stakeholders, and the two organizations' issues concerning program sustainability. I describe my findings more thoroughly in the following chapter.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

This chapter begins with a review of the results of the interviews I conducted with CYC and CPJD staff and volunteers during my Peace Corps service. Thereafter, I examine the program sustainability issues I identified at CYC based on interview responses and my own observations in light of the academic literature I reviewed. To give a more complete understanding of the sustainability issues the youth center at which I volunteered was encountering when I volunteered there, I also explain the different scenarios that affected it, followed by practical strategies for addressing those circumstances. I conclude this chapter with a brief review of my principal findings and the limitations of this study.

#### **A. Interview Results**

For analytic convenience and ease of understanding, I have grouped questions based on the subjects of volunteerism, volunteer management and program sustainability. Within these major groups, I have arranged interviewee responses according to stakeholder type (foreign volunteer, local volunteer or paid staff). During the staff interviews, I asked one set of questions concerning foreign volunteers and pursued a separate, but similar, set of queries for locals engaged with the centers.

##### *1. Volunteerism/Voluntarism*

The first question I asked EVS participants, after seeking some background information, was why they chose to volunteer. All four of the international volunteers with whom I spoke said their experience gave them opportunities to do what they wanted and/or that they liked the type of work in which they were engaged. This finding supports the motivational arguments made in the literature about individuals volunteering on the basis of personal motivations. Volunteers left either CYC or the organization's parent office in Skopje three times during my service and two did so at CPJD because they were dissatisfied with their experience because their motivations for volunteering were not being met. When I asked them how they found their hosting organization (HO) and how they began volunteering, all of those I interviewed indicated that they or their sending organization (SO) had identified the youth center (CYC or CPJD) online through the

European Voluntary Service (EVS) website. They submitted their application and other required information and then began a to and fro with the HO coordinator. When the assigned date arrived, the new EVS volunteer began his or her service in Macedonia.

At CPJD, Service volunteers helped manage Youth in Action (YIA) trainings, created language workshops as a side project and assisted with activities for major events and holidays. The workshops and annual events were recurring while the trainings were not. All of these efforts were at least partially created with help from the NGO's staff. The volunteers at CYC, however, created various sorts of activities themselves with limited staff support, including language courses, hikes, sporting events, art projects, special programs for holidays and many other types of occasions. In general, all of the CYC volunteers with whom I spoke ran a club or activity and helped to maintain the facility. None of those I interviewed were recruited for particular roles, but CYC does, on occasion, engage individuals to address specific responsibilities.

Local volunteers I interviewed indicated they had become active in their youth organization in one of three ways. One person (Personal interview with K-D-LV14, 29 August 2014) working with CYC became involved with the NGO first as a member and thereafter emerged as a volunteer by becoming more and more active and by being given opportunities by Center staff to assume more responsibilities. The organization's leaders fostered this person's skills and the individual is now the NGO's go-to person for graphic design. Another volunteer (Personal interview with K-B-LV14, 12 September 2014) from the same organization was minimally involved as a member with the Center. This individual had a personal friendship with one of CYC's presidents and when asked to do so, initially developed a computer education workshop. That engagement prompted this person's ongoing involvement with CYC. The CPJD local volunteer interviewee with whom I spoke (Personal interview with S-R-LV, 22 May 2014) was never a member of that center and became involved only when she stopped by the NGO and indicated she was looking for a way to volunteer and a staff member offered her an opportunity to do so. Each of the local volunteers I interviewed set limits on how much time they could offer their organization of choice due either to work or school commitments. Compared to foreign volunteers, locals had less available time to dedicate to program leadership positions within their respective organizations.

CPJD local volunteers assumed more professional or semi-professional roles by acting as mentors and language tutors to EVS members and also helped organize workshops. Indeed, this center's director assigned one local volunteer specific responsibility for EVS mentorship and support, in the form of language or cultural training. That individual would also occasionally be in charge, or share responsibility, for managing YIA workshops or trainings. At CYC, in contrast, local volunteers typically played informal roles. It was not uncommon in my experience for Service participants to approach these individuals while they were otherwise "hanging out" at the youth center to solicit their help with an activity or program. This center's local volunteers came and went as they pleased because they did not have a set schedule.

According to CYC staff, both local and foreign volunteers aid the center in its mission of promoting volunteerism within the country. By bringing in foreign volunteers, the NGO raises awareness of the value of voluntarism among its youth members and in the broader community. Foreign volunteers generally develop the activities at the youth center while local volunteers and staff support them. Local staff members manage CYC's daily operations, foreign volunteers run the NGO's programs and both are supported by community volunteers. At CPJD, volunteers may play a supporting, a participatory or a more professional role, such as president or board member. Specific roles notwithstanding, local residents operate the Council with the aid of foreign volunteers.

CYC's foreign volunteers fit the prototypical profile of EVS participants. They are between the ages of 18 and 30, have either just graduated from high school or from college (at least according to my own observation) and are motivated to assist youth. These individuals serve for nine months on average. Local volunteers have a slightly different profile than their foreign counterparts. Using the information gathered from the literature review on the different types of volunteers (Worth, 2012; Connors, 2012; Knutsen, 2014), I have broken local volunteers at both organizations into two groups: member-volunteers and organization-volunteers. Dividing them into these categories helps delineate them based on their level and type of contribution to their respective organizations.

In both organizations, member-volunteers tend to serve more episodically, while organization-volunteers typically assume greater responsibilities than their member counterparts. Both types range from high school age to mid-twenties and sometimes older. At the Youth Association CYC (YACYC) in Skopje, volunteers are mostly female while CYC Kavadarci

volunteers are disproportionately male. CPJD volunteers are a more even distribution of men and women, although a specific breakdown is not available. Staff members at each location indicated to me that they believe this difference arises from the types of activities available at each location; which have differential appeal to men and women. The Skopje (YACYC) location offers more socially oriented activities, which tend to be more attractive to females, while the Kavadarci (CYC) center's programs are more sports and outdoors-oriented, which are typically more attractive to males.

Each NGO has ties with different sending organizations throughout the continent as a source for volunteers. The EVS program provides the lion's share of non-Macedonian volunteers for both organizations. CPJD has hosted a few foreign participants that were not a part of the EVS, but such can only occur, due to financial constraints, when those individuals can support themselves during their service. This same challenge has led CYC to recruit only EVS or Peace Corps international volunteers.

CYC staff interviewees reported advantages and disadvantages of hosting foreign volunteers. According to one staff member, volunteers who stay for less than six months never really adapt to the NGO's environment so they infrequently create independent programming or initiatives:

This is why, for us, the minimum is always 6 months, the preferred time period is 9-12 months. We think that only after 6 months can you really be effective in implementing activities.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

Short-term volunteers spend the bulk of their service learning about the center and have comparatively little time to render effective assistance. One advantage, however, of serving less than six months is that these individuals never leave the "honeymoon" phase of their service and therefore rarely experience homesickness. Therefore, there is less chance of them ending their experience early. Volunteers who remain for longer than six months usually confront homesickness or loneliness, but according to one CYC staff member, such bouts are usually temporary, although a few individuals have ended their service early in recent years because of this factor. Longer-term volunteers may also experience a deeper sense of culture shock than those helping for shorter time frames since they experience aspects of the Macedonian culture

that their shorter-term counterparts do not. The staff member noted:

So if you're here for a month or two you are more like a tourist, kind of, as a guest. But if you are here longer than six months, then maybe you are learning aspects of the culture that you don't really appreciate, that you don't like, that you don't agree with.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

The largest share of long-term volunteers do eventually overcome these feelings and become more responsible and proactive as time goes on; a stance or orientation that individuals who serve less than six months may never achieve.

CPJD staff interviewees reported that foreign volunteers require a lot of time and effort to train and orient. As Connors (2012) has argued, volunteers are not completely free labor and require organizational support. Long-term volunteers enjoy the advantage of time to learn and require fewer resources than their short-term colleagues on average. Long-term volunteers are also typically more truthful in their profile, cover letter and resume. CPJD staff reported that it is not uncommon for would-be short-term volunteers to have someone else write their resume for them and then take advantage of their brief opportunity abroad to travel or play games instead of providing assistance.

Often the CV or motivation letter is not written by the volunteer, so it's nice to talk with and see the real volunteer, [determine] the[ir] language skills, and also to understand the other things.

-Interview with S-P-S14, 29, April 2014

If a short-term volunteer does not provide promised support, CPJD can recover fairly quickly. When a long-term volunteer does not meet either organization's expectations, that fact constitutes a greater drain on resources and can result in important operating and strategic programming shortfalls. At CYC, short-term volunteers are not expected to perform any significant duties, so their performance is moot and because there are so many long-term volunteers at the youth center, although it would have a negative impact, their underperformance is less important than at CPJD. Interviewees for CYC and CPJD each reported, too, that long-term volunteers have more time to learn the culture and language and are therefore generally more effective than those serving for short periods (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 29 August 2014; Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014).

Interviewees from each NGO reported that there are advantages and disadvantages to utilizing foreign versus local volunteers. One major advantage of EVS and Peace Corps volunteers that all three staff members with whom I spoke mentioned was that each could be counted on to help full-time during the entire period of their service (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 29 August 2014; Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014; Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014). As I have noted above, local volunteers who are not members often have to balance the time they provide to the centers with other life responsibilities, including work or school. As one CYC interviewee observed:

It doesn't matter how many volunteer programs we have developed, it doesn't matter how many strategies or mechanisms that we have used, it's still difficult for us to define completely and to give completely roles to volunteers because you can count on a certain level of volunteers but it's very easy that after two weeks the volunteer will say 'sorry, I need to go to work' and they cannot volunteer anymore.

-Interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014

At CYC, foreign volunteers provide an opportunity for cultural exchange and help in fulfilling its mission of youth development and promoting volunteerism by the fact of their engagement (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 29 August 2014). Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of long-term international volunteers is also their "foreignness" since learning the Macedonian culture and language can create barriers and limits to their effectiveness. Staff of CYC and CPJD view volunteers as mission enablers with discrete advantages and disadvantages. As one interviewee noted:

... Involving international volunteers in local activities sometimes is not possible because they are done in Macedonian language. They can't just go to meetings or conferences that are organized in Macedonian, they can't organize official projects, they can't read the official documents in Macedonian, so their involvement is limited.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

When it comes to the short-term volunteers, I think the benefits are more on the side of the volunteers. The organization is not getting much, but what we are getting is accomplishing our mission, some of our goals, and it's also personal satisfaction.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

An advantage of local volunteers is that they know the language and culture, which enables them to attend town meetings and more easily network within the community. These attributes also make them more likely on average to be more effective, at least initially, at working with youth. Neither center would enjoy the same legitimacy in its broader community that each possesses without its local volunteers and the NGO's foreign volunteers would not be nearly so successful as they often are without locals' help. Although resident volunteers may be less available in the short term, they are more reliable in the long haul in the sense that although they may only be able to volunteer twice a month, they can do that for years as opposed to a maximum of one year. Local volunteers also do not require as many resources to host since they already live in the community. As the reviewed literature suggested was typical, volunteerism at both NGOs may assume several informal and forms depending on individuals' specific roles. Based on the interviews that I conducted with them, the motivations of volunteers at each NGO are similar to one another, and they appear to have matched themselves up with their organization based on these motivating factors, which several of the authors in the literature I reviewed would attest are consistent with their findings as to how volunteers choose where and why to volunteer (Clary, 1999; Bang, 2009). Understanding motivations is important as it can help one better manage and retain volunteers. The two centers recruit locals in a number of ways while, for financial reasons, both organizations employ more limited avenues to recruit internationally.

## *2. Volunteer Management*

I have been unable to discover a consistent strategy for the preparation of EVS youth for their service at either NGO I investigated. This is a possible point of issue as much of the literature on volunteer management has argued that training is an important part of managing volunteers (Connors, 2012). Some sending organizations offer at least some cultural or language lessons while others offer no classes whatsoever. All of the volunteers, however, whom I interviewed, had some educational or work experience that gave them a foundation to begin their service. After they had arrived in Macedonia, EVS volunteers reported that they had received one of two types of possible orientations. The most typical was an informal meeting or shadowing with a CYC or CPJD coordinator. These interviewees reported that they had followed that individual for the first day or so of their service, but then were left on their own. The volunteers I



interviewed from CYC, particularly, explained that the NGO provided them ample time to acculturate to the environment at the center, but did not provide any formal orientation or training.

At [CYC], my first few weeks were just slow starting. My time in the youth center was really loose, I didn't have a schedule. I was just getting to know things, so that was kind of my drive-in period.

- Interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014

The volunteer with whom I spoke from CPJD suggested that her experience had been quite similar (Personal Interview with S-V-FV14, 13 May 2014).

EVS provided training in the form of a more formal on-arrival program, but this was not specific to either NGO. Rather, on-arrival workshops provided an introduction to culture shock and a chance to share experiences with other new volunteers. Interestingly, individuals who planned to serve in Macedonia had to travel outside of the country for their EU-sponsored on-arrival training because it was not available within the country due to the nation not being considered a partner country. As of January 1, 2014, Macedonia became a partner country and I expect that it now hosts, or will be hosting soon, its own EVS trainings (European Commission, 2014).

Unlike short-term Service participants, long-term volunteers receive additional training from the program throughout their engagement in the form of workshops. Similar to the on-arrival training, these offerings are not specific to working in a youth development organization. Only one foreign individual I interviewed stated that they experienced CYC-developed trainings during her/his service and she/he participated in two of them. Those efforts addressed specific issues at the youth center and allowed volunteers to raise concerns.

I think I was in two inside trainings that we were speaking about EVS role, about communication between EVS and local volunteers and so on.

-Interview with K-M-FV14, 25 July 2014

As the singularity of these events attests, these trainings were rare and few volunteers engaged in one. The volunteer with whom I spoke at CPJD did not receive any training created by her hosting organization, but did participate in many of the YIA programs that the youth center

organized. Some of these offerings taught skills that were useful at CPJD, but they were not specifically designed for center volunteers.

The CYC volunteers I interviewed observed in their interviews that better language training and better preparation for their particular roles would have improved their experience.

I think intensive language training would have been very useful, especially in the middle of the project when a volunteer already has some overview about the local language.

-Interview with K-K-FV14, 1 July 2014

These individuals also called for more role-specific development opportunities in the future. One volunteer from CYC did not believe any additional training was necessary, but this was the same person who had participated in the one workshop that the Center had organized in recent years.

The international volunteers I interviewed indicated that their roles were typically not clearly defined. Scholars have argued that having carefully designed roles is a major aspect of accurately recruiting and matching volunteers to productive roles within an organization (Bang, 2009). CYC called its volunteers “youth workers,” but that fact did not result in closely articulated responsibilities. As time went on, however, these individuals settled into self-defined roles. The international CPJD volunteer reported a similar experience in her interview (Personal interview with S-V-FV14, 13 May 2014). She did not have a clear role when she arrived, but eventually settled into one after being at the organization for a few months. One CYC interviewee noted that each EVS volunteer brought his or her own definition of what it meant to be a youth worker. That same individual also explained that during their first few months they mostly shadowed other volunteers and helped with simple tasks such as cleaning, until they felt comfortable taking on bigger responsibilities.

I think the problem is that the role that we were about to take was, as youth workers, supposed to be fluid. So we adapted to how we saw youth worker, and the different cultures that we came from

-Interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014

Although both youth centers provided similar levels of training and role definitions, these organizations are different in how they provide their local volunteers with these elements. CPJD did not offer its community volunteers any kind of organization-specific training at any point during their service. CYC, on the other hand, did provide some support in the form of team-

building exercises for working with other local and (sometimes) EVS volunteers. These were often held in Skopje, but sometimes in Kavadarci as well, and were led by the presidents of the youth association. Two of the three local volunteers with whom I spoke noted in their interviews that more technical types of trainings would have been useful (Personal interview with K-B-LV14, 12 September 2014; Personal interview with S-R-LV14, 22 May 2014). Specifically, they noted that they would have found training concerning how to lead workshops and how to communicate with youth helpful. Overall, local volunteers reported a much different experience than their foreign counterparts concerning preparation for their roles. Local volunteers who began as members or as sporadic members already knew the organization and did not require an orientation to it.

One of the CYC volunteers I interviewed (Personal interview with K-D-LV14, 29 August 2014), who had been an active member, was never officially given an organizational role. This individual grew into her/his position as her/his skills and interests developed. The youth center leaders utilized her/his capabilities to complete necessary tasks as these presented themselves. The other CYC volunteer (Personal interview with K-B-LV14, 12 September 2014) with whom I spoke was originally approached by the NGO's leaders and asked to be responsible for a specific function and then grew into a less-defined role after that concern had been addressed. The CPJD volunteer (Personal interview with S-R-LV14, 22 May 2014) I interviewed never had a clear role. Instead, organization leaders simply asked her to fill in gaps as needs arose. I believe that developing specific roles for foreign volunteers is much more important to them and their service than are similar delineations for local volunteers. This is because CYC's local volunteers grew up within the NGO and found their place within it relatively quickly, whereas foreign EVS participants are thrust into an utterly unfamiliar organization and do not benefit from that same sense of awareness and comfort.

Based on interviews with CYC's staff and the organization's description on the European Youth Portal, the Center does not usually assign specific tasks or duties to its EVS volunteers. Instead, the NGO leaves the issue of which responsibilities to take up to the volunteers for the most part on the basis of a few general descriptions of tasks (Youth Association CYC, 2012):

- Organizing and assisting with the organization of various activities for the young members from Kavadarci (workshops, outside events, performances, concerts, volunteer actions, etc.).

- Assisting the work of CYC's office in Kavadarci (coordinating the members, planning activities, fundraising, etc.).
- Organizing promotional events for the organization and its activities.
- Providing weekly reports.

The organization also outlines few specific expectations of its volunteers (Youth Association CYC, 2012):

- Volunteers will implement all activities in cooperation with the organization's team members and local volunteers.
- Activities should take up 60-70% of the volunteer's working time.
- The volunteer is expected to prepare the topic for the workshop, the contents of the activity and implement it alongside other EVS and/or local volunteers.

Having a defined role within an organization helps to utilize the volunteer efficiently and ensure effective oversight of his or her efforts. Training helps to orient volunteers to the organization's mission and because CYC often neglects formally to do this, volunteers are often unsure of their roles or significance within the organization (Worth, 2012). One staff member contended in an interview that if she/he asked an EVS or local volunteer, they would be unable to articulate CYC's mission (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014).

I bet if you asked them 'what is the mission of the organization?' they won't know.

-Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

EVS volunteers must sign a code of conduct (CYC, 2012) that outlines their rights and sets standards concerning how they will behave as representatives of the NGO, both in their workplace and in the broader community. Inside the organization they must follow standard house rules (K-A-S14, 2012). Outside of CYC's location volunteers are expected to conduct themselves so as not to besmirch their host institution's standing or reputation. Failure to adhere to these expectations can result, and has resulted, in expulsion from placements (Personal conversation with K-A-S14, November 2012). Local CYC volunteers must also sign a document (CYC-A, 2011) that outlines their rights as a volunteer and the conduct expected of them as representatives of the NGO.

At CPJD, volunteer role descriptions are even less specific than at CYC, with one difference. The organization's description on the European Youth Portal (CPJD, 2014) states that the entire team, including staff and other volunteers, will gather after a volunteer's first week to determine what that individual's main activity will be during their service. In other words, the EVS volunteer does not join knowing what role she/he will play, but that is commonly decided following their arrival. The Council's portal information also suggests that volunteers will be expected to assist with planning organization activities rooted in local traditions or to commemorate important international, national or local milestones or events.

As noted above, CYC recruits international volunteers primarily through the EVS program. It also advertises in local media and by hosting events in public places such as the main square in Kavadarci to recruit local volunteers. According to one staff member, the NGO's most common source of volunteers is its youth membership (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014). Existing members do not need nearly as much training as individuals from outside of the organization do, so CYC's leaders prefer to recruit from within. CPJD follows a very similar strategy (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). This center also seeks to recruit local volunteers through social media and by hosting international trainings for which local youth have the opportunity to travel abroad at little or no personal cost. This approach and incentive helps CPJD attract members and volunteers alike.

Neither organization offers any kind of financial incentive to retain its local volunteers. At times the CYC main office in Skopje has been able to offer some sort of remuneration as a form of compensation for incurred expenses, but that has only been the case in a few select instances (no more than two or three during the last six years and has never occurred in Kavadarci). Instead, the Center tries to accord preference to its local volunteers when it selects participants for international training programs (Personal interview with Y-D-S14 27, June 2014). This helps to encourage local members to become active volunteers at the youth center. These practices are consistent with this paper's definition of voluntarism and the literature Bussell (2002) and Cnaan (1996).

CYC member-volunteers usually help with setting up for events, cleaning or more labor-intensive tasks such as handing out fliers, tasks that do not require any training. Organization-volunteers also generally serve in supporting roles, but with bigger responsibilities such as translating and helping to organize youth members. CPJD has permanent volunteer positions

whose incumbents provide organizational/managerial skills for positions such as president or board member. That NGO also engages non-permanent volunteers who offer activities and sometimes participate in them as well. This group of volunteers works on a project-by-project basis. At CYC, member-volunteers engage on a project-by-project basis while organization-volunteers assist on an as-needed basis. When available, they may be at the youth center, but do not actively engage unless asked to do something. CYC typically has at least one staff member at the facility during its open hours and that individual is responsible for overseeing both local and foreign volunteers. In my experience, when a coordinator cannot be present at CYC, authority is assumed by the most senior foreign volunteer present. That individual is in turn typically supported by a local organization-volunteer.

### *3. Program Sustainability*

When I asked CYC EVS participants if there were any programs or activities already ongoing in the youth center in which they could participate, all three respondents answered affirmatively. When they first arrived, many Service program participants offered assistance or were asked to help in an activity that was already underway. These efforts included workshops, art programs, sporting events and more. In such cases, the new recruit aided another volunteer instead of replacing one that had departed. Occasionally, they were assisted as they began by the availability of working materials, but more often than not, these were not available. Instead, conversation with staff or volunteers was the primary means of explaining existing programs and exchanging ideas concerning them. At CPJD, however, there were no activities currently active when the volunteer I interviewed arrived. This situation is likely common for all volunteers at this center because it does not operate on a daily basis.

Restarting programs also occurred from time to time at CYC as well as at CPJD. One volunteer (Personal interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014) reinitiated an English program for young children (called English Kids) after it had gone on a temporary hiatus and also gave fresh life to a club called Solidarity. Another volunteer worked to rejuvenate the hiking club and one other developed new programs to address some common past annual activities, such as Earth Week. According to the international volunteers in my interviews (Personal interview with K-K-FV14, 1 July 2014; Personal interview with K-M-FV14, 25 July 2014; Personal interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014), the youth center did not compile any information, such as packets or

documents, to provide a history/memory of prior activities beyond a few working materials. Instead, as noted, local organization-volunteers provided most of the information concerning past efforts. These foreign individuals indicated in interviews that they felt they would have benefitted from documentation of past programs. In particular, one EVS participant indicated in an interview that a catalogue of former activities from which to gain inspiration would have been very beneficial on arrival.

I think in general most volunteers would have benefited if my organization had some kind of catalog and descriptions of former activities to get inspiration from and to see what worked, what didn't work.

-Interview with K-N-FV14, 25 July 2014

CPJD's international volunteer also found her/himself restarting initiatives. The person that I interviewed had sought to restart a Creativity workshop, an art-based program for youth members (Personal Interview with S-V-FV14, 13 May 2014). This youth center, in addition to support from local volunteers who had operated or participated in this program beforehand, provided the volunteer with what they called an "action plan." That document, prepared by the previous EVS participant who had overseen the workshop, contained a brief history of the program, an overview of its structure and enrollment and the types of activities undertaken. Unfortunately, this experience was virtually unique among offerings at either NGO. This report, in addition to local support, was helpful and allowed the new volunteer to restart the workshop quickly and with some sense of how to conduct the program. The EVS participant from CPJD attested to its usefulness:

We [still] operate the Creativity workshop... so we are just going to use [the action plan], but with our own ideas.

-Interview with S-V-FV14, 13 May 2014

The local volunteers at CYC had grown up participating in events and most had literally matured into their volunteer roles. As I have noted, unlike EVS program participants, local volunteers did not attempt, or were rarely asked, to take charge of existing programs. Instead they usually aided an international volunteer and helped her/him to take charge of an initiative. CYC leaders asked one volunteer temporarily to continue the NGO's weekly movie nights

during my tenure in Macedonia until an EVS volunteer was able to take over. The individual required no training or documentation to assume the responsibility. A history of what movies were played or what languages to have as subtitles for the films would have been beneficial had that person not been a local volunteer. However, this individual already knew the history of the movie night program because they had participated in it as a youth member. At CPJD, the local volunteer whom I interviewed observed that she had been asked to begin assisting with the delivery of programs, such as YIA trainings (Personal interview with S-R-LV14, 22 May 2014). However, only the professional-level volunteers or the paid coordinator were in a leadership role for those offerings. She never received any training or documentation concerning the effort other than the opportunity represented by shadowing other volunteers and/or staff.

The local volunteers at CYC I interviewed suggested that they too had helped to restart a program that had stopped operating (Personal interview with K-D-LV14, 29 August 2014; Personal interview with K-B-LV14, 12 September 2014). One local CYC interviewee (Personal interview with K-B-LV14, 12 September 2014) reported that she/he was currently in the process of restarting a monthly/quarterly magazine called *HappyDarci* alongside an EVS volunteer. CYC leaders were able to share a previous issue of the periodical to give the pair a sense of its previous organization and topical foci. The community volunteer had also been involved with producing the earlier effort and so could share her experience as well.

I asked the staff members I interviewed at both centers if they provided volunteers specific information concerning how role expectations and duties fit into how their organization works and how programs fit into overall efforts to realize their mission. CYC staff responded that when volunteers sign their agreement with the NGO, they also agree to abide by the expectations and responsibilities set forth by the organization (Personal interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014). This document does not explicitly state how specific programs fit into the Center's mission, but it does broadly suggest, as I have noted, how activities fulfill those aims. CPJD does not offer its volunteers anything similar (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). When I asked staff members if they saw it as their responsibility to provide programs for volunteers to continue or develop or if they expected volunteers to create their own programs, my interviewees responded that both statements were true (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014; Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014). Volunteers are given a lot of freedom to develop their own programs, but center leaders also sometimes ask them to revive



lapsed or moribund programs. When I asked about creating programs and assigning roles, one staff member responded:

We're saying here is the platform, here is the framework, we would like to involve volunteers, this is the overall of the organization, let's see who of you will fit in this part, these are the roles and responsibilities that you would have.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

One of the key questions I asked staff interviewees was, "How do you keep your organization's activities going with volunteers constantly arriving and departing?" One CYC staff member responded by admitting that programs usually end when a volunteer leaves (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014). If an activity had been especially popular, the NGO's leaders will sometimes seek to transfer it to another volunteer, with varying rates of success. Another staff member noted that Peace Corps volunteers, long-term EVS (9+ months in this case), and local volunteers maintain some measure of programmatic sustainability by providing relevant institutional knowledge. These individuals do indeed provide a semblance of institutional memory, although they are limited to a rather recent history. One strategy that CYC staff used is to overlap their EVS volunteers as often as possible in order to facilitate interaction between experienced, local, and new international recruits. This staff member (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014) pointed out that the two instances when volunteers left and arrived in groups that did not overlap in recent years had resulted in a disruption of activities, daily duties and confusion at CYC. The same staffer also confirmed my own observation that in instances in which a new arrival did not want to continue a program led by a departing volunteer, the initiative would end and not resume until an individual arriving later was willing to lead it. Overlapping helped both NGOs encourage institutional memory transfer in both tacit and explicit ways. CPJD tries to utilize an overlap strategy so that long-term volunteers can help new arrivals adjust (Personal interview with S-P-S14, 29 April 2014). As that staff member explained it:

We try to overlap these things so that it's not like somebody leaves today and the next one comes next week. ... They get to meet each other, they exchange some things, and the new one starts with the old way before the previous one is leaving. We also ask them, especially when it comes to activities that they develop... to have written documents, to have some materials that would help the others, local or international, to continue working on [the project] with a completely new group.

Providing and retaining institutional memory played a much bigger role in the duties of international volunteers than it did for local ones in both NGOs I investigated. Community natives often have substantial tacit and explicit knowledge of CYC or CPJD as youth members and have been a part of the organization for a much longer period than foreigners. International volunteers must rely on their tacit knowledge, but when it is not available, a written/physical documentation of programs is necessary. Without either form of institutional memory, EVS participants essentially seek to start, continue or restart programs in the proverbial dark. This type of memory is key to maintaining capacity (Cassidy, 2006, p. 149).

#### *4. Conclusion*

The experience at CYC is quite different in character, depending on whether a person is a local or international volunteer. These two groups of individuals are recruited differently, become involved for different reasons, have distinct roles and bring different advantages and disadvantages with them from the organization's point-of-view. Local residents who volunteer are typically engaged for much longer periods than are EVS participants. Service members can serve for a maximum of one year, but usually serve for less, whereas community members can remain engaged as long as their interest sustains their involvement. As suggested above, members of each group serve different roles. CYC leaders generally assign EVS participants responsibility for designing and implementing activities, whereas locals typically serve in supportive and advisory capacities.

Local volunteers often have the advantage of personally knowing everyone at the organization (staff, other volunteers and beneficiaries), speaking the language, understanding the culture and they do not require much financial support. However, they are also less available due to other life obligations (such as work or school) while EVS volunteers are in the country to serve at the youth center. As noted above, EVS participants also bring CYC financial support. Lastly, international volunteers bring a cultural dynamic to the youth center that locals cannot, simply due to the fact of their foreignness.

EVS volunteers turn over fairly rapidly for an organization so dependent upon them to operate efficiently and effectively. An analysis of the Peace Corps Five-Year Rule (Peace Corps,

2010), also known as the “in-up-out” policy, revealed that constant turnover has a variety of advantages and disadvantages. The advantages (Textor, 2011) of rapid turnover include infusions of fresh energy into an organization, since most volunteers are very proactive about their service, and personnel change may also yield the potential for perspectival diversity. Some common disadvantages (Buller, 2012) of regular rapid turnover include:

- Maintaining program quality can be difficult.
- Ensuring institutional memory becomes a major concern and securing it becomes a continuing challenge.
- Entities can avoid large-scale projects due to personnel (volunteer) time constraints.
- Performance management options can be hindered.
- Turnover can create a disincentive to invest in volunteers, and
- Managing those offering their time and talent can require significant organizational resources.

CYC leaders also manage local and international volunteers differently. EVS program participants arrive as volunteers while community residents typically grow into such roles. They usually begin as members, mature into member-volunteers and finally become full-fledged organization-volunteers. Local residents often must traverse a line between serving as volunteers and also as service recipients. Indeed, sometimes they are both. One local volunteer described the nature of how they volunteer in an interview:

Anything from helping [the volunteers] clean around to organizing an event. Like, basically anything that they needed help with I was there. I accepted everything.

-Interview with K-D-LV14, 27 June 2014

CYC volunteer training is informal and mostly conducted on-the-job. The NGO’s leaders solicit EVS volunteers formally while CYC recruits its local volunteers informally from among its current members.

The youth center relies heavily on locals for the retention and dissemination of tacit and explicit institutional memory. Those individuals provide EVS participants with critical background knowledge about programs, successes and failures. However, residents are not always available to assist international volunteers and they may not always be aware of salient concerns, even though they have been involved with the NGO for long periods. For their part,

staffs may possess a general understanding of the center's programs, but do not typically have a grasp of their details, as volunteers typically develop and implement those. EVS participants, meanwhile, rely on institutional memory to understand how a program functioned, to predict the success or failure of a potential initiative and/or to learn about the organization's history.

## **B. Specific Issues Affecting Program Sustainability at CYC**

This section examines three concerns that together constitute an ongoing challenge to CYC's organizational sustainability: preventing institutional memory loss due to turnover, ensuring adequate volunteer training and providing sufficient volunteer management. I begin with what may be the most tractable of these issues: ensuring institutional memory.

There are two reservoirs of institutional memory at CYC: the experiences and knowledge of the international volunteers and those of the community volunteers and staff, respectively. CYC's potential sources of tacit and explicit memory are in constant flux. The Center's decision to rely primarily on international volunteers for program delivery exacerbates this situation. The NGO's foreign volunteers are limited by their service duration. Each time a volunteer departs, that individual takes their accumulated explicit and tacit experiences with them. I have argued that CYC has sought (intermittently to be sure) to address this loss by overlapping EVS volunteers so they have a chance to share experiences with and shadow each other. The idea is that this will, at the very least, ameliorate the institutional memory loss caused by volunteer turnover, but in practice this effort offers only a partial remedy to an ongoing problem.

Without changing the way that CYC utilizes its volunteers, and it would appear that its leaders have no desire to do so, losing considerable organizational knowledge with each international volunteer's departure appears inevitable. This reality heightens the importance of community volunteer and staff knowledge and experience. Locals are typically more engaged with the organization's activities than even the NGO's professional staff, who usually perform behind-the-scenes roles and offer support. The hiking club provides an example of these roles. A local volunteer participates in hikes alongside a Service participant while a staff member helps both to promote the club or directs the foreign volunteer to the appropriate local person with whom to coordinate to facilitate that result. The EVS volunteer would not know where to go to walk, but the local person does, and together they could lead youth members on a successful

trek. The local volunteer's knowledge of where to go hiking is an example of how CYC's community volunteers possess and share relevant program knowledge. This kind of social interaction and interdependence between the foreign and local volunteers is also treated in the scholarly literature, which highlights the necessity of creating situations in which to exchange such knowledge (Parker, 2011).

However, this strategy falls apart when the local person is unavailable or lacks knowledge about an activity. It also cannot succeed if international volunteers do not collaborate with community residents on projects. This can occur because an area native is not available or because the foreign volunteer does not want to or know how to work with a local person. Meanwhile, staff members know that certain activities are to take place, but they often do not know their final effects or how they were executed. They therefore may only be able to provide limited information.

As highlighted above, physically documented tacit and explicit memory is almost non-existent at the youth center. Few things are recorded and when they are, that information is usually incomplete and/or at the initiative of a foreign volunteer, meaning that staffers are sometimes unaware of its existence or its significance. Materials are lost or stored away and forgotten, leaving the next generation of volunteers with little to build on. Indeed, even in cases when records were kept and are found and used, those seeking to employ them do not know the context in which the materials were originally used. A formal strategy for recording experiences at CYC does not exist. Having such a strategy can create a way to preserve and/or reduce the knowledge that is lost from turnover. As the literature suggests, a proper strategy for retaining memory and facilitating knowledge transfer should provide ways of transferring and recording both explicit and tacit information (Gilbert, 2010).

Training at CYC, in a formal sense, is a rarity. There is no formal explanation about preferred methods of interactions with the youth members or about how to include local volunteers in activities. Standards can even slip without reorientations. For example, I observed experienced volunteers stop spending as much time with youth members in favor of planning for activities in the office. That is, they shifted their attention from the central reason for the NGO's existence to administrative processes. Such behavior is simply not sustainable in the long run. Formal programs that focus on teaching specific skills may be less useful due to the informal nature and variety of offerings present at CYC, but offerings that focus on policies, quality

standards and procedures (such as pairing up with another volunteer) could be beneficial.

However, routinization in the sense discussed in Chapter III (Pluye, 2004) does not exist at CYC. Even if there was a formal strategy, volunteers may not be able to transfer their initiatives to other individuals. If no eligible volunteers are present to take on the responsibility, a program ends. Other volunteers may refuse to take on responsibility for an offering because they feel unsuited for the role or because they have no interest in it. This discontinuity is the largest negative consequence of volunteer turnover within CYC. Expectations of program continuity do not appear to exist at the youth center either, despite staff having expressed a desire for such sustainability (Personal interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014):

... All the time our aim is to make a transfer to the local volunteers so that they can continue and find a way to make that project to sustain, to be more sustainable and be continued by the local volunteers.

-Interview with K-A-S14, 22 October 2014

Recruitment from a local supply of volunteers allows the youth center to find individuals that can suit the needs of the organization. However, there are two issues that negate this advantage. First, community residents engaged with CYC are mainly supportive instead of directly active in offering programs. Second, even if they are more directly engaged, their availability is usually limited. Volunteers recruited through the EVS program add another variable to volunteer recruitment. I believe that this second factor is the more significant of the two preventing locals from taking a bigger leadership role within the organization. Service hosting organizations cannot discriminate against a volunteer on any basis, including education or ability. Although there are great benefits to this policy in achieving the program's mission, one major disadvantage it places upon NGOs such as CYC is that it becomes more difficult to recruit the actively engaged volunteers that it needs to run a program. If the Center has a successful sports program and a new EVS volunteer needs to be recruited to replace the volunteer that is leaving to continue that effort, but volunteers who do not wish to lead sporting events apply, the youth center cannot turn away those individuals as it awaits others with the interests it seeks.

Continuing with this example, if a volunteer interested in art applies and there is a need for a volunteer to run sports programs, the new individual may refuse to fill that gap. As a more general proposition, the recruit may also not be a viable candidate because they do not possess

relevant skills. Constraints on recruitment hinder the youth center's ability to match volunteer motivations with opportunities. This can result in discontinued programs and dissatisfied volunteers. This unhappiness can eventually manifest in early termination of volunteer service, reducing the number of individuals available to the organization and creating gaps in services. Unexpected foreign turnover cannot be remedied by new replacements because calls for volunteers must be planned in advanced so the national agency for the country can properly budget for the year (European Commission, 2013). In short, proper matching of volunteers to needs and opportunities at CYC does not always occur, which goes against the recommendation of much of the volunteer management literature (Connors, 2012; Worth, 2012; Hager, 2004). When CYC has failed in the past to properly match volunteers, one staff member stated:

... We were coming in to situations in which volunteers had the wrong expectations. They had a completely different picture in mind.

-Interview with Y-D-S14, 27 June 2014

### **C. Common Volunteer Service Scenarios at CYC**

I have identified several common scenarios through my own observation and interviews, which concern program sustainability at the youth center. Some of these activities occur because they are designed to continue or discontinue in a particular way, while other scenarios occur out of inability to realize another outcome. For example, a program that has a defined start and end date ends as it was intended to do, while another initiative that does not have a planned end date terminates because the volunteer in charge fails to pass responsibility for it to another before she/he returns to their home country. This section identifies several common difficult volunteer management scenarios at CYC and explains what can be done to address them to promote improved program sustainability.

*Scenario 1: A departing volunteer is able to hand a program off to another volunteer successfully*

The English Kids program is an example of a successful transition between international volunteers that has occurred at least three times in recent years. In each case, some training was involved in the form of shadowing, one-on-one explanation of class operation, co-teaching and

program co-development. In each instance, too, the head volunteer trained the new arrival who first observed a few classes: thereafter developed lesson plans with the program's leader and then began to co-teach the program. Thereafter, when the senior volunteer left the organization, her replacement officially took over. Volunteer overlap occurred each time the program was transferred. Institutional memory was available and transferred from one volunteer to another through sharing of experiences and by explaining working materials. Even during a period in which the program was shut down by staff for a period (for a reorganization of the Center) the volunteer in charge was able to restart it because he had taken it over prior to the temporary closure.

If this volunteer had left during this hiatus, it is unlikely that English Kids would have been successfully passed on to another volunteer. This program has survived because incumbents have trained their replacements, staff members have actively sought appropriate individuals to manage it or motivated volunteers had volunteered to teach it, personnel have kept working materials between incumbencies and those involved have shared what they have learned with new arrivals. This situation was rare at CYC in my experience.

*Scenario 2: The head volunteer of an ongoing club leaves without handing off responsibility for it to another volunteer*

An excellent example of this scenario is CYC's hiking club. An EVS participant had restarted the club in 2013 with the help of a community volunteer who provided knowledge of past efforts (this club had lapsed and restarted numerous times, but had nonetheless remained popular among area youths). The activity usually only operated during the warmer months (with a few exceptions) and as a result of this reality, when a head volunteer left during the winter, there was no way for a replacement to shadow the program and eventually assume responsibility for it. Additionally, neither volunteers nor staff seemed to consider finding a new lead person for this program important, possibly because it was not an active concern during the colder months. Other than some photos placed on social media, there was no awareness or documentation of this club save in the minds of local volunteers and participants. In the following year, because that resident was not available until the end of the college school year, the club began offering hikes much later in the warm season (the summer as opposed to the spring) and it ran inconsistently with limited youth participation.



Local volunteers were interested in helping, but unable to participate consistently, and the available international volunteers were unfamiliar with the surrounding area, rendering them unable to lead hikes initially. One way this late start could have been prevented was for past program leaders to have provided a written record (such as maps or descriptions of hike locations) and assigned responsibility, along with that documentation, to an interested volunteer once the weather became warm enough to start offering outings again. Program participants might also have been able to help, but communication with those individuals is much more difficult as the language barrier becomes a larger issue, as do potential liability issues that could arise with relying on minors to guide a hiking trip. Actively searching for and training new lead volunteers, most likely by the more-senior leadership of the program, during the club's inactive months would also help make sure that the group was ready to restart, with new leadership, once the weather was appropriate again. This same experience of interrupted leadership has dogged other CYC clubs and longer-term projects (such as the Center's online magazine).

*Scenario 3: A program with a finite life expectancy ends and is restarted later by a new volunteer*

An example of this situation is CYC's annual summer camp. The camp occurred regularly, but only for up to one week each summer season, and each year's program was usually designed and carried out by a new team of volunteers. Local volunteers were a vital source of information about what past camps had offered because, other than a few photographs, no one had formally documented what had occurred during previous offerings. Local volunteers and staff provided information about the technical aspects of past experience, such as location, duration and theme, as well as what the camp's successes and failures had been. Staff also provided information about camp finances and other such technical details. During my service, I taught volunteers how to act as camp counselors, which helped prepare them for their roles. I am unclear whether others had provided such training for volunteers or staff for previous iterations of the camp.

Additionally, this sort of expertise is not always at hand. Instead, the volunteers' abilities to provide needed camp services may rely too heavily on their own experience and backgrounds. These annual camps are only able to function with the support of staff and by employing the institutional memory possessed by local members. It would have been helpful if former lead volunteers had provided written reports concerning the design, organization and conduct of

previous camps. Such inconsistency in the effectiveness/preparedness of program staff can cause a drop in quality that could be avoided by provision of a rather straightforward report concerning past experience and programming. The combination of local memory and documented international volunteer experiences could help provide a record of expectations, level of quality, types of activities and the various technical aspects of the camp that would help establish a framework within which program designers could operate.

*Scenario 4: General programs at the youth center that occur regularly that must be taken over by a new volunteer, but which do not require ongoing activities of a specific sort*

This scenario addresses CYC program offerings organized under a specific theme, such as sporting activities. One volunteer could promote basketball while her/his successor could offer soccer, and so on. The CYC art workshop provides another example of this scenario. This program usually occurred once a week at the youth center and did not require any specific content. The art project changed weekly unless designed to support another activity, such as making decorations for a Halloween party. In that case, the workshops would spend two or so classes making materials for the event. This program did not necessitate any specific skills, but did require a volunteer to take charge of it and ensure that it had the supplies it needed to operate smoothly. However, this did not always occur because the person responsible for the program was frequently in question. Sometimes a volunteer would lead the activities for a couple of weeks and then become bored and stop offering activities or a new volunteer would want to host a program and the current volunteer would be replaced (usually without any protest). As a result of this confusion, the workshop was inconsistent, under-resourced and poorly attended. Recruiting a volunteer specifically to manage this initiative would have been of great benefit, but staff did not seek anyone specifically for it. A record of past activities would have also been useful in providing inspiration to volunteers for future programming.

*Scenario 5: There is a need for an individual to restart, take over or support a program, but current volunteers refuse to assume responsibility*

This circumstance has occurred for a variety of CYC programs. When an offering ends and there are no volunteers to continue it, the initiative formally concludes and must be restarted by new volunteers later if it is to be offered once more. The Solidarity Group (club) evidenced

this scenario during my tenure. After the individual in charge completed her/his service, the group dissolved because no volunteer assumed responsibility to continue it. A local volunteer eventually restarted the program almost a year later when she/he returned to Kavadarci. She/he could do so because of her/his knowledge of past efforts, staff support and the aid of several foreign volunteers who felt comfortable acting in a supporting role. This was also one of the few times in my experience that a community volunteer took charge of a program. Targeted recruitment would have also been useful in bringing in an international volunteer to help assume responsibility for the effort.

Another example of this scenario occurred during the design of one of the summer camps. When I approached some of the foreign volunteers about acting in a supporting role for the program by becoming a camp counselor, all but one refused. This left the camp initially severely understaffed. Eventually I was able to recruit enough local volunteers, including some from outside of the organization, to fill the needed positions. Although the code of conduct that they signed did state they were expected to aid in all activities of the youth center, if they had specifically known that they might be expected to participate in a summer camp from the beginning, they may have been more amenable to participating or they might not have signed up in the first place, providing space for a more willing volunteer to apply.

#### *Scenario 6: Meeting general volunteer expectations is inconsistent*

The CYC has many expectations of its international volunteers, but the primary one is that these individuals will interact with the NGO's youth members on a daily basis. This includes talking with them (or attempting to), playing games together and simply being present. They are expected to spend less time in the office and more time with CYC members. However, compliance with these and other expectations fluctuates in quality in practice. I recall being in numerous team meetings when a local volunteer or staff member raised this issue of volunteer availability to and engagement with youth members. If current international volunteers and/or the staff fail to emphasize this expectation, volunteers will often react in kind. After several new volunteers arrived and some senior ones departed, youth members informed CYC's coordinator that they were not interacting with the new recruits as often as they had in the past. Team meetings with the coordinator, at which she/he called for increased interaction, succeeded in addressing this concern, but only temporarily. However, regaining the previous level of

volunteer-youth interaction was slow because prior volunteers had failed to show the new volunteers what to do and the latter group had to relearn what the previous team members had already discovered concerning what worked and what did not in eliciting and sustaining meaningful interactions. This situation could be prevented or its frequency reduced by introducing regular trainings and more deliberate shadowing/mentoring of new volunteers by senior volunteers.

All six of these scenarios required institutional memory in the form of collaboration with local support and/or recorded documentation, focused recruitment and training. The following section explores which of these approaches appears to be practical for the Center and which less so. Annual events are less dependent for their sustainability on effective volunteer management as they can be different each year so long as they are indeed supported by relevant actors. Themed activities, clubs and weekly activities are much more influenced by sustainability management and stand to benefit the most from planned organizational capacity maintenance.

#### **D. Practical Approaches to Build Program Sustainability at CYC**

Outsider attempts to impose a new method of operation and to change the structure of CYC would be arrogant and misguided. The Center functions well overall and is not facing imminent failure (at least as a result of program sustainability-related issues). However, CYC could make a few changes within its working culture that could help increase its capacity and increase its effectiveness within the limitations imposed by its resources. Doing so could help the youth center address its mission more effectively. Based on the operating scenarios sketched in the previous section, this part will focus on CYC's training and recruitment practices, strategies for preserving institutional memory and methods of transferring program responsibility from each cadre of volunteers to its successor(s).

Before I outline several recommendations aimed at assisting CYC with program sustainability, I want first to highlight the issues I will not address. These concerns are either beyond the scope of this thesis or are not practical in my view. First, I will not call for more resources, although both fiscal and personnel capacities undoubtedly influence program sustainability. Second, I will not treat the question of the relative abilities of the Center's

volunteers beyond the extent of their training. Third, I do not believe that changing CYC's management structure or modifying it so that foreign volunteers play a less significant role in program development and execution and local staff and volunteers play a more significant role is practical or likely, and so I do not assume or treat that possibility here.

Tacit and explicit retention of institutional memory has developed as a major issue influencing program sustainability at the youth center. As I have argued, the literature suggests an NGO's ability to save and share information and knowledge can clarify the responsibilities of volunteers, increase their productivity and boost their confidence (Ward, 2007; Parker, 2011). The relevant question, therefore, is how the youth center can better preserve its institutional memory when volunteer turnover is high. Explicit knowledge is easily recorded and stored while tacit knowledge is much more difficult to transfer because it resides in the minds of people and is usually expressed through "gut feelings" and intuition (Parker, 2011). There are two ways in which institutional memory can be preserved at CYC: by fostering social interaction that encourages the exchange of tacit information and by creating a database that contains records of key elements of past and current programs that is easily accessible to new and current volunteers and staff.

Gilbert et al. (2010) have outlined the SECI model of knowledge creation. This framework outlined four methods of creating a knowledge base to support tacit and explicit institutional memory: Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization. Gilbert's method was based on preserving both tacit and explicit memory within the Peace Corps among volunteers at their various international sites. It is mostly an electronic system, but as I will explain in the following paragraphs, can be modified to the environment at CYC. Understanding the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge, as described in the literature review (Parker, 2011), is essential to understanding the following discussion. Socialization focuses on promoting interaction between volunteers to foster storytelling and sharing of experiences; this is a tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge process. Externalization is introspection leading to a formal expression of ideas. This is a form of tacit to explicit knowledge conversion process. Combination is the analysis and synthesis of written information and is an explicit to explicit knowledge form of memory conversion. Finally, internalization implies understanding written information or discussion and is an explicit to tacit knowledge conversion process.

Socialization and externalization are already promoted fairly well at the youth center.

Because the volunteers live, work and hang out together, they have ample time to socialize, share stories and shadow one another. Externalization already takes place to some extent, too, through the weekly reports that volunteers are supposed to provide the Center's coordinator. However, it is common for these efforts not to be completed and for staff members not to mandate them. Social media also provide a forum for interaction among different generations of volunteers, but it is not fully utilized and former EVS participants often do not communicate with current EVS or Peace Corps volunteers. In other words, social media is only a viable utility when all of those targeted are willing to converse via such formats.

Overall, the sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge socially is fairly strong among volunteers when they are around each other. However, a major issue emerges when those individuals who possess essential information are no longer available at the youth center. It may be possible to record tacit information in written form (Gilbert, 2010), but that seems a more difficult possibility for the youth center. Social interaction among current EVS volunteers is the most easily fostered, but it results in the sharing of only a limited range of knowledge and institutional memory. Including community volunteers in such efforts will help expand the collective range of knowledge and experiences that those engaged share since locals serve for longer periods. The youth center already promotes a healthy social dialogue between area resident and international volunteers. As a result, I will not offer any recommendations based on team interactions, as CYC cannot readily change the availability of local volunteers beyond recruiting more organizational-volunteers (during the majority of my service there were only 2-3 active local volunteers). On the other hand, the systematic recording and retention of program information is lacking at the youth center. This fact leads to my first recommendation:

*Recommendation 1: Document experiences and program aims and characteristics in a digital/physical format for future volunteers*

Many of the authors of the literature on institutional memory and its centrality for volunteer management refer to various methods of recording organizational activities in order to preserve both explicit and tacit memory, although retaining and transmitting tacit knowledge is more difficult to ensure (Parker, 2011; Ward, 2007; Gibbs, 2008; Ashkenas, 2013). Volunteers could use this knowledge to create new programs or restart those that had lapsed, but in which there

was youth interest. These materials could also provide a programmatic history of the organization. To play these roles, this documentation would need to include the following:

- Description of activity(ies)
- Resources and working materials needed to support and operate
- Purpose of program (how it fits into the organization's mission)
- History, which includes successes and failures, participation and timeframes of activities
- Photographs or videos of activities
- Record of local and international team members (staff and volunteers) and community members that were involved in the program.

I based the list above on the elements that Scheirer (2005, p. 320) makes on what should be included in institutional memory (project design, nature of program conception, design process, who was involved, how long the initiative existed, and the sources of its financing) and then adjusted it, based on my own experience of what might work most effectively for CYC. This is not a comprehensive list of potentially helpful information, but it would provide a base of knowledge that would be useful to the organization and that could be shared across cadres of volunteers. These forms of data are not set in stone and the youth center could modify them to fit its own methods of working. By providing this documentation concerning program history, much of the experience and knowledge usually lost when a volunteer departed in the past could be retained and could be utilized by future volunteers. Recording which local volunteers were a part of past programs could also help to ensure that center staff and EVS/Peace Corps volunteers could access the connections and knowledge that those individuals collectively represent.

Because CYC has limited resources, it is unlikely the NGO could afford to purchase high-quality data storage and retrieval software, as suggested by Gibbs (2008), Parker, (2011) and others. However, the Center could manage shares of its institutional knowledge in two formats: digitally and physically. CYC has access to some software programs that allow it to develop and store documents digitally, it has access to cameras that record photos and videos as well as programs that help to write documents and it can utilize both of these formats to record the information outlined above. This data could be stored in a folder on one or more office computers and volunteers could augment or update relevant records each time they completed a center-sponsored activity. Alternatively, this information and knowledge could be stored as physical documents in binders. Digital storage would likely prove less costly and more flexible

for all concerned. Should they be required, copies of information could be printed for volunteer orientation and use (the youth center has its own printer and access to printing businesses). Creating and maintaining such a record would fit into the Center's culture because it already asks volunteers to submit weekly reports. This could either replace or supplement those and could be made a requirement of service and act as one basis for final evaluations for volunteers.

Because volunteers are already principally responsible for design of the youth center's programs, it would make sense to recruit these individuals to play more supervisory/managerial roles to oversee major CYC activity themes such as art and sports. Much of the literature that I cite in my volunteer management timeline from Connors (2012) suggests that position descriptions and clear roles should be an integral part of overall volunteer engagement strategies. This would help mitigate situations in which a volunteer refuses to take responsibility for a program or activity since all would know their likely responsibilities when they sign up to assist. My next recommendation concerns recruitment.

*Recommendation 2: Recruit some volunteers specifically to oversee recurring themed activities*

Volunteers recruited for this role would still have to engage actively in the activities that they are in charge of (CYC would not want volunteers simply overseeing an activity and not interacting with youths), even if they were overseeing/managing other volunteers conducting programs. Their role would not preclude them from actively engaging in activities, and it would ensure that someone is in charge of and coordinating those initiatives. Additionally, such volunteers would retain the freedom to develop their own projects, but they would be encouraged to do so within the framework of their assigned responsibilities. They could also develop or aid in programs outside of that role, too, as long as their primary responsibilities were not neglected. As I have emphasized, CYC does not generally tell its volunteers what to do and providing that group a framework in which to work would not only support that management style, but also help to ensure that needed programs continue across successive generations of volunteers.

Several volunteer management scholars have encouraged recruiting individuals for specific roles and matching volunteers based on their motivations to those posts (Connors, 2012; Clary, 1998; Bang, 2009). As previously stated, this practice improves volunteer retention, engagement and satisfaction. In the context of CYC, such steps would improve retention, make



sure that programs operated continuously and result in better-targeted and more effective recruitment. Realizing this managerial goal would require more clearly defined volunteer role descriptions and expectations, which would create greater demand for communication between CYC staff and potential volunteers during the recruitment phase.

Focused recruitment would require specialized orientation training to introduce individuals to their roles, such as Lead Sports Volunteers, for example. CYC staff would have to be sure that they thoroughly explain the position for which they are seeking support during the recruitment process. They may not wish to require a precise set of capacities, but they can build on the capabilities of individuals already motivated to volunteer for an advertised role. Volunteers looking for sports-related opportunities could apply for such positions because they would match their motivations and others would be deterred from their pursuit when these did not match their aspirations (Stukas, 2009).

The literature about individual motivations to volunteer suggests that such inclinations are multifaceted and differ from one person to another (Okun, 1998). Past analyses also suggest that volunteers matched properly with their service opportunities based on their motivations will perform better than those who are not matched well (Clary, 1998). Weick (1979), however, has argued that volunteers determine their motivations retroactively. If Weick's view is accurate, recruiting based on individual motivations becomes much more difficult, if not impossible. This conclusion holds, however, only if the field's dominant view is untrue. However, if both theories are true, implementing targeted recruitment strategies would still be more accurate at locating appropriate volunteers than current strategies. The recruited volunteer may need some additional training in some cases, but the youth center's leaders would not have to worry about instances in which an individual refuses to do something because they lack interest or motivation to address it.

*Recommendation 3: CYC should provide more training programs designed to educate volunteers concerning the NGO's operating policies in order to routinize activities and expectations*

My third and final recommendation focuses on training designed to reinforce organizational policies. If this strategy were to be implemented, CYC orientation would not only serve as a one-time training for new volunteers, but also as a refresher course for those currently engaged.

These programs, whose elements I have derived based on the literature and my experience, should address the following policies that the Center has already embraced:

- How volunteers should interact with youth members.
- What the organization expects of its local and foreign volunteers.
- Collaboration and partnering with other volunteers, with an emphasis on local/foreign partnerships when applicable.

Other suggested volunteer service-relevant training programs could include:

- How to develop a project.
- How to transfer programs from one volunteer to another (this should also be expressed as an expectation, which CYC does not already explicitly state).
- Documentation of program details and experiences.

Providing international volunteers training in these ways would help to mitigate confusion concerning knowledge transfer, emphasize working alongside community volunteers, increase international participants' understanding of the purposes of shadowing and help to secure and retain institutional memory. These steps would help to clarify volunteer roles and responsibilities as well. Based on the literature, this would help to routinize programs and expectations and result in increased institutional capacity and thereby promote CYC programs' sustainability (Pluye, 2004).

According to Pluye (2004), Cassidy (2006) and Scheirer (2005), routinization demonstrably helped to establish a standardized level of service quality in several closely examined cases. Increased routinization and standardization through training could help improve the consistency and quality of services delivered at CYC, too. The GEMS Model (Culp, Deppe, Castillo, and Wells, 1998) suggests that a volunteer could enter into the education phase at any point in their service; meaning that both experienced and new volunteers could attend the same training sessions (Connors, 2012). Importantly, the NGO should not offer these programs to international volunteers alone, but also to locally engaged individuals. Local and foreign volunteers should receive this training together, especially for those sessions focusing on strategies to secure program sustainability.

## **E. Conclusion**

I developed these recommendations as possible strategies to address the recurring scenarios outlined above. Targeted training could help CYC routinize its programs while more precise recruitment could help the NGO locate those willing to perform its most needed duties. Systematically developing an institutional database could help recruited volunteers perform better in the roles to which they are assigned.

CYC is a fairly informal organization that imposes few constraints on its volunteers and in general, in my experience, those assisting the NGO appreciate that fact. Volunteers are fairly free to create whatever programs they wish and the youth center encourages their creativity. Volunteers and staff could reject too much formality by way of policy or prescribed roles and duties, but without some clear expectations of behavior and actions, program sustainability will continue to be negatively affected.

CYC's neighboring organization, CPJD, provides a useful comparative benchmark. Both NGOs suffer similar program sustainability issues and can therefore learn from each other. CPJD has, to a limited extent, developed more formalized systems to support institutional memory and it also has a wider base of local volunteers that take on larger roles within the organization and are also able to provide institutional memory to its foreign volunteers. Both forms of memory have been useful in supporting CPJD's long and short-term EVS volunteers. Shadowing and knowledge management have been issues at the Council because there is less sharing among long-term volunteers, whereas substantial sharing occurs between long-term and short-term volunteers. Finally, CPJD often recruits its short-term volunteers for specific projects, which helps them to define their roles and responsibilities (although the NGO does not officially state in what capacity until the volunteer has arrived). CYC does not follow that practice. If the Center did so, that step could help volunteers better define their responsibilities, foster continuity and reduce role confusion.

Creating a physical memory on which volunteers at CYC could draw is crucial. Institutional memory loss caused by turnover would be greatly reduced by such steps and could help the Center become more efficient and effective while also conserving resources and providing inspiration to volunteers for project ideas. This knowledge must be recorded and stored in a manner that respects the organization's culture and resources.

Additional volunteer training could also help to routinize and standardize practices within CYC. Such efforts would not only help build organizational capacity, but the specific knowledge conveyed could also help with individual volunteers to learn from shadowing. Training could also prepare volunteers better for their positions, making them more confident of their capabilities. Making it official policy and ensuring that volunteers are aware that they are expected to create a record of their experiences/programs in order to preserve institutional memory and transfer responsibility for their efforts would help ensure that programs remain sustainable and are provided at a desired standard of quality.

Recruiting volunteers for certain roles based on motivation, not on skills, helps to ensure that there will be a supply of individuals willing to continue a variety of programs at CYC. Matching individual aims for their service with available programs will diminish the chance that volunteers will refuse to work on a project or workshop and also likely improve their enjoyment of their service. This will help retain volunteers as well and, as has happened in some cases, encourage individuals to return to assist once more after their service has ended.

Some workshops at the youth center are not meant to be sustainable. If a volunteer brings in a unique set of skills or an idea that is suited only for the current environment, then that activity may operate for a limited time only. In certain cases, it is acceptable for a program to begin and end with a single volunteer. One example might be if there are several youths with an interest in architecture and model building. In such a case, CYC could offer a project in which interested members photograph and build a model of a building in the town. This project is unlikely to need to be reproduced because it was designed for only that set of interested members. It should, however, still be documented, in case a later volunteer finds her/himself in conditions that warrant a similar project. The Center's leaders may also choose not to continue a program if it is only mildly popular and/or judged unsuccessful on other grounds.

There are several conditions in which my proposed recommendations could fail. Language barriers could hinder the transfer of institutional memory between local and international volunteers as well as between international and other team members. Socially, such differences can prevent individuals from interacting in meaningful ways. Language differences may also keep a member from recording her/his experiences because she/he cannot express her/himself in the common working language of the Center (English). As has happened with some weekly reports, a volunteer could fail or refuse to record their experiences on that basis as

well. Recruiting, even when targeted, can result in the wrong people joining CYC. Sometimes candidates can lie about their motivations or qualifications. If a volunteer prematurely ends their service, that fact may also result in an activity not being properly documented and leave a hole within the organization. Finally, training depends ultimately on someone's ability to teach and transfer relevant information and if there are no qualified instructors at CYC, such cannot occur appropriately. Volunteers must learn how to train their replacements and if they are unable to perform in such a manner their successors will not be equipped to be effective in their new role(s).

## **Chapter VI**

### **Conclusions**

I began my thesis with a single question: How can an organization that has rapid volunteer turnover create and maintain sustainable programs? This led me to two additional basic queries: What is program sustainability? How does volunteer turnover affect sustainability at CYC? To explore these concerns, I investigated a youth center in Macedonia due to its strong dependence on and utilization of volunteers and the frequent turnover of those individuals.

My literature review investigated program sustainability, volunteerism and volunteer management. Analyses addressing these topics aided me in examining these concerns in the context of CYC's operations. Exploring the question of program sustainability gave me insight into what it is and how it can be maintained. That literature also introduced me to the concept of institutional memory and the role that it plays in organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit. My readings on volunteerism helped me understand common types of volunteers, typical issues associated with them and the motivations that animate such individuals to donate their time and talents. Finally, my review of volunteer management scholarship yielded insights into how organizations and managers have sought to use volunteers in an efficient and effective manner. These studies treated volunteer training, different styles of volunteer management and why such oversight is important.

The interviews I conducted provided the empirical context to which I could apply what I had learned from my literature review. I used relevant scholarship to help me make sense of what I learned about volunteer-specific issues at CYC and to seek to identify the factors and conditions necessary for the NGO to create and maintain sustainable programs, given its high reliance on volunteers with a high rate of turnover. The interviews suggested that volunteer training at the center is uneven and typically conducted informally. Indeed, such efforts often consist of little more than new volunteers shadowing other volunteers with little staff involvement or other orientation. CYC is aware of its sustainability issues and has tried to mitigate them by ensuring that new arrivals overlap with older volunteers. While I explored CPJD illustratively rather than exhaustively, I found that it has used an identical strategy to reduce its own volunteer-related sustainability issues.

My analysis of the CYC's use and management of volunteers yielded three primary recommendations that I believe would allow the Center to develop and maintain more

sustainable programs. My first suggestion, and in my judgment quite likely to be the most practical and effective recommendation I could make, is that CYC ensure continuing documentation of its various programs. That archive can then be used in tandem with the knowledge provided by existing and departing volunteers and staff to orient new arrivals to the organization and its aims and initiatives. Ongoing documentation of the NGO's efforts would provide new recruits with a history of the center's programs and aid them in continuing and/or restarting them. An up-to-date overview of offerings might also inspire new arrivals to offer fresh activities. Although staff members whom I interviewed did not mention this issue during interviews, several foreign volunteers did explicitly express a desire for such a resource.

A second major finding or recommendation arising from this work is that CYC develop training efforts to ensure that current volunteers understand that they are expected to transfer successful programs to a successor before they depart, and to ensure they have the knowledge and resources to accept responsibility for them. This step would help CYC routinize and standardize standards of quality across its programmatic offerings.

A third major conclusion of this analysis was that the youth center could help ensure the quality and consistency of its programs by adjusting its recruiting methods and assigning specific well-defined roles and responsibilities to its volunteers. Each of these recommendations will require time and staff support if it is to be realized.

It is not uncommon for NGOs to rely heavily on volunteers to secure their sustainability. Organizations that use such individuals to provide a major share of their services or that have them as major actors in their programs could benefit from the findings of this research even if they have different missions, rates of turnover or types of volunteers.

Many civil society organizations suffer from a lack of institutional memory, particularly those with limited resources. Without strategies to preserve organization-specific knowledge, an NGO can waste precious funds and capacity on reinventing programs that have already been implemented in the past, or worse, recreating activities that had already failed, only to have them falter once more. When an organization's workforce is constantly arriving and leaving, it can create inconsistencies in its activities/services. Routinizing programs, policies and expectations through training can help minimize such negative consequences. Having defined roles for volunteers and recruiting individuals for those posts can ensure that there is constant leadership for desired programs.

The voluntourism industry, which relies heavily on donated labor, frequently from overseas, could certainly benefit from the second recommendation I outline above. If an organization utilizing voluntourism assigns major responsibility to its volunteers to create programs, then ensuring a strong institutional memory concerning past efforts would be useful for both those individuals and their host organizations. Likewise, hospitals that use volunteers usually seek to match their recruits with available posts in which they can function responsibly and productively. This careful appraisal keeps volunteer morale and satisfaction at a high level and ensures that individuals are occupying roles that the medical center requires and those providing assistance are willing to carry out.

Future research concerning NGO program sustainability in the context of international volunteerism could investigate whether and how program ownership may play a role in achieving this goal. None of the literature I reviewed mentioned ownership as a factor in program continuity. Nonetheless, my interviews and my own experience suggested that volunteers also “owned,” to a large extent, specific programs. Even ones that were originally created by staff or previous volunteers often became something personal to the individual who succeeded her/him. In my experience paid staff members were not usually heavily invested, personally, in actively providing the different activities that had been developed by volunteers. If staff do not “own” existing volunteer-driven programs, could that affect sustainability and cause confusion when those individuals leave the youth center? I believe that investigating whether ownership could affect transferring the program to the next volunteer and/or prevent cooperation between volunteers would be of value not only to organizations like CYC, but also to the field more broadly.

Research could also be conducted into how staff and volunteers relate to one another. What is their relationship, especially concerning authority and power? Are volunteers not given “major” roles by NGOs because there is not enough trust between paid staff and those individuals who donate their time, staff perceptions of volunteers’ (perceived) abilities, or because of their limited period of service? For an organization that utilizes volunteers so heavily and so extensively, it would appear to make sense that CYC volunteers should have a bigger stake in the organization than would otherwise be the case. Another question for future inquiry concerns the dynamic between local and foreign volunteers or paid staff at CYC and in similar NGOs. Other than time commitments, why has the youth center not developed a more robust



program aimed at integrating local volunteers into more defined roles? Why does the dynamic of authority between locals and volunteers unfold as it does now? Investigating these questions could help uncover additional program sustainability strategies for the CYC and similar NGOs that depend on voluntarism for their sustainability

I think it would be useful empirically as well to conduct additional interviews or surveys with CYC staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. Follow-up research questions could include: Have programs become more consistent at the youth center in their quality of service or in how often they operate during the past 5 years? Has assigning certain volunteers larger roles for themed activities reduced stakeholder confusion about who is in charge? If a physical institutional memory is created at the Center, how will it affect foreign volunteers' experiences?

During the course of my research, I have learned about voluntarism and the various aspects of volunteering, the role that management and training plays in NGOs and how it can be used to promote program sustainability and finally what sustainability means and the various ways in which it can be created and maintained. For CYC, I have proposed three beneficial recommendations and some insights into how the organization operates that may not have been obvious to those working inside the youth center. Finally, I believe that if the youth center acts on these recommendations and takes action to implement them, within a few years CYC could have a level of consistency in its activities that could have profound positive impacts on both its youth participants and other stakeholders.

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Reference Note: In order to protect confidentiality, I have used CYC, Youth Association CYC, and CPJD as pseudonym acronyms and withheld website links for online materials.