

Volunteer Recognition: Individual Social Responsibility



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Public Opinion Poll: Key Findings

- **Need at the Community Level:** 65% have a personal responsibility to help others in need, 54% want a voice in shaping their community. 61% agree that the need for volunteers is driven by inadequate government services and 64% agree that there are community activities that do not happen due to lack of volunteers.
- **More Active Than We Might Think:** While 39% say they volunteer (infrequently to often) another 45% say they help friends or participate in activities related to school or other recreational activities that they do not consider volunteering.



Expanding the Definition of Volunteering

- In 2011 there was a call to expand the definition of volunteering at the [Governor General's Round Table on the Future of Volunteering](#)
- As the trust economy emerges and creates disruptions in the business community, so does the increase in informal volunteering and organic movements create disruptions within the non-profit/charitable sector. This was reflected in the Spectrum of Engagement in the [Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement](#) (2012)
- A range of ways to express our social values as discussed in [Beyond Giving and Volunteering](#) (2013)



Expanding the Definition of Volunteering

- The UK carries out the [The Community Life Survey](#) each year measuring four types of community engagement: formal volunteering, informal volunteering, charitable giving, and social action.
- Another international example of a way to conceptualize and understand civic engagement more broadly is the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) [World Giving Index](#), which ranks the generosity of people in 160 different countries.
- In the Netherlands, Dr. van den Bos explores the shifting understanding of volunteering, referring to the [Systems World and the Life World](#). (2016)



Expanding the Definition of Volunteering

- While 12.7 million Canadians volunteer through organizations, we know that this does not reflect the whole picture of the generosity of Canadians.
- Individuals are mounting public awareness and social advocacy campaigns, raising funds through digital channels, organizing events, and mobilizing people around issues that matter to them.



Expanding the Definition of Volunteering

- Others are crowd sourcing funds to pay for funerals, attend school, start a new business, produce something they have invented, participate in a peace mission, or retrofit a van to make it accessible.
- Canadians are making informed decisions about their consumption habits based on a company's corporate social responsibility practices and are making lifestyle changes to reflect their social and environmental concerns.



Individual Social Responsibility (ISR)

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been an integral part of businesses today encompassing a broad range of considerations including environmental footprint, purchasing (ethical supply chain management), hiring (diversity and opportunity), charitable donations, employee-volunteering, and community relations.
- Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) is an integral part of peoples' daily life encompassing a broad range of considerations including their environmental footprint (recycling, composting, transportation), purchasing, where to work (based on the CSR of the employer), charitable donations, vacation choices, etc.



Individual Social Responsibility (ISR)

- **ISR is defined as:**

“the continuing commitment to behave ethically and contribute to people’s development while improving the quality of life of other individuals, groups, teams as well as society at large.”



What does this mean?

- How can we recognize a broader spectrum of engagement within the context of ISR?
- How can the structures that we have put in place for formal volunteering also support other aspects of ISR?
- What are the implications for traditional CSR programs?



Investors Group Commitment

- Investors Group is committed to making a contribution to the many communities across Canada.
- For many years, Investors Group has recognized and celebrated staff who demonstrate a long-standing commitment to our communities through quarterly and annual awards.



Evolution

- Investors Group recognized the need for this program to evolve with employees' growing interests.
- Volunteer recognition need not be exclusive or formal and that volunteers were more interested in understanding the impact of their efforts and receiving timely, personal recognition.



Investors Group Example

- **New Community Impact Program:**
 - Recognizing that volunteer contributions of all types and sizes make an impact.
 - Celebrating non-traditional volunteer roles that our employees play right across the country.

Early success and on the right track!



Volunteer Centres and ISR

- Informal volunteering has always existed
- Most community organizations were founded by individuals who were informal volunteers
- Formal and formal volunteering have been functioning side by side and will continue to do so
- What's different now: change in people's habits and expectations, aided by developments in technology and communications



Volunteer Centres' Mandate

- Connecting people with opportunities to get involved
- Promoting and encouraging volunteering in general
- Keeping an eye on the evolution of people's motivations to give their time, energy and talents (trends)



Understanding the Results of the Study

- Observed trends are continuing
- Complemented by many other ways that Canadians want to and can be involved in their communities, **putting their values into action**
- Volunteer centres need to go beyond understanding how and where Canadians want to volunteer
- Need to understand that **they can and do make choices that reflect their values and their desire to effect change**



What does this mean for volunteer centres?

- There will always be a need for formal volunteering
- Volunteer centres can continue to recruit and refer individuals for services that require structure, regularity and constancy
- Using data from the study can provide insights, help to access **a wider audience of potential volunteers**



What does this mean for volunteer centres?

They can also leverage the informal side of Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) by:

- including spontaneous movements and actions as part of their definition of volunteering
- supporting a wide range of informal volunteering and social advocacy



What does this mean for volunteer centres?

They can also:

- work with organizations to raise awareness of new trends and new ways to engage volunteers
- partner with organizations on specific projects that might appeal to today's plugged-in and values-driven citizens



Time for Strategic Decisions!

Embrace whole range of ISR?

- **If so**, how to put this expanded mandate into action?
- **If not**, how to consolidate expertise in formal volunteering and better focus recruitment?
- **In both cases**, this study offers clues for strategic decision-making and planning
- While there are risks involved, there are opportunities as well



Biggest Risk

The greater risk for volunteer centres is to simply ignore the findings in this study



Discussion

- Questions?
- Thank you
- More information at volunteer.ca/recognition

