

# **Activists: The Backbone of Community Initiatives**

## **Participant's Manual**

June 2000

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of Community Initiatives**

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by

**Abid Ullah Jan**

## **Agenda**

**9:00**

### **OPENING SESSION**

Welcome/Introductions  
Objectives/Norms/Expectations

**9:30**

### **INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVISTS**

Trends and Challenges  
The Importance of Activists  
The Roles of Activists  
Relationships, Rights, and Responsibilities

**10:00**

### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Motivational Research  
Psychological Factors

**10:30**

### **BREAK**

**10:45**

### **Strategies to Increase Community Participation**

**11:15**

### **"THE ASK" AND RECRUITMENT**

Ways to Ask  
The Asking Process  
Recruitment No No's  
Recruitment Steps

**12:00**

### **LUNCH**

**1:30**

### **Recruitment Steps (continued)**

Planning  
Outreach  
Interview/discussion  
Selection  
Inclusion

**2:45**

### **BREAK**

**Agenda  
(continued)**

**3:00**

**RETENTION**

Introduction  
Orientation  
Training  
Climate  
Recognition  
Assessment

**4:20-4:30**

**EVALUATION AND CLOSURE**

**"All that is required for the triumph of evil is for good [people] to do nothing."**

**—Edmund Burke**

# **NORMS**

- **Begin and end on time**
- **Be present mentally and physically at all sessions**
- **Be willing to take some risks**
- **Take care of yourself**
- **Others:**

# Roles of Activists

## Role of leadership Activists

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## Role of Social Organisers

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## **Relationships, Rights, and Responsibilities**

Programme Staff, community members, and activists must each have ...

- Commitment to goals of the partnership.
- An understanding of each other's roles.
- Respect for each other's work and contribution.
- Honest communication.
- Sufficient information, resources, work space, and supplies in order to perform the required tasks.
- Adequate training for specific assignments.
- Appropriate assignments according to skill, interest, and training.
- Ongoing guidance and support from team members.
- The opportunity to participate in appropriate meetings and planning sessions.
- Honest feedback—review of job performance.
- Meaningful formal and informal expressions of appreciation and recognition.

## Motivational Research

### The Key Elements to Maslow's Theory

1. People want to satisfy their unmet needs.
2. People have five levels of need:
  - Level #1 Physiological (food, water, air)
  - Level #2 Safety (shelter, defence, skills)
  - Level #3 Social (friends, relationships, etc.)
  - Level #4 Esteem (to be valued, admired, etc.)
  - Level #5 Self-actualization (to reach one's potential, to use one's talents)
3. People are motivated by their lowest level of unmet need, for example ... safety before social.
4. Only unmet needs motivate, therefore, once a need is met, it no longer acts as a motivating factor.

### The Key Elements to McClelland's Theory

Affiliation . . . . .	Relationships
Achievement . . . . .	Success
Power/Influence . . . . .	Impact

# **MASLOW'S THEORY**

**Level #1 Physiological**

**Level #2 Safety**

**Level #3 Social**

**Level #4 Esteem**

**Level #5 Self-actualization**

# **McCLELLAND'S THEORY**

**Affiliation**

**Achievement**

**Power/Influence**

## Volunteer Trends

### Why People Volunteer to be Activists:

1. They were asked—42%
2. Organization participation—41%
3. Because someone they loved was involved—28%
4. Sought out activity on their own—21%
5. Ad or media information—6%

### Why People Do Not Volunteer to be activists:

1. Too busy—57%
2. Unable to honour commitment—15%
3. Time is too valuable; already done enough—13%
4. Health reasons—11%

### Why People Who Would Volunteer Don't:

No One Asked Them!

# **VOLUNTEER TRENDS**

## **Why People Volunteer to be activists:**

- 1. They were asked - 44%**
- 2. Group participation - 31%**
- 3. Because someone they loved was involved - 29%**
- 4. Ad or media information - 6%**

## **Why People Do Not Volunteer:**

- 1. Too busy - 46%**
- 2. Lack of interest - 18%**
- 3. Health reasons - 14%**
- 4. Lack time due to paid work - 8%**

## **Why People Who Would Volunteer Don't:**

**No One Asked Them!**

## Strategies for Increasing Community Participation

### Factors:

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### Related Strategies:

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## Ways To Ask

1. Eye-to-eye
  - Most effective
  - Personalized
  - Demonstrates commitment and importance
  - Establishes/reinforces relationship
  - Uncovers objections.
2. Pitch to group
  - Convenient and efficient
  - Research group's history with issue and request
  - Prep group's leaders to respond positively to request
  - Follow-up is essential.
3. Pitch by phone to individual
  - Need to target calls to people who know the issue or caller
  - Timing is critical.
4. Direct mail
  - Use to reach large numbers of potential recruits
  - Use to build initial base
  - Use to cultivate supporters
  - Minimal response if "cold appeal" (1-3%).

## The Stage Of An Ask

1. Research and preparation
2. The opening—establish relationship.
3. The presentation—explain mission and needs, frame presentation from prospect's perspective, capture their hearts and minds.
4. Discover their interests, needs, motivations, skills, gifts.
5. The ask—describe what the prospect can do to help advance the mission, address the needs, and satisfy their interests; define the roles/jobs that match prospect's interests; ask for a specific commitment.
6. Listen for overt and hidden objections.
7. Overcome objections.
8. Reach agreement/understanding.
  - If prospect makes a commitment, set date for orientation and follow-up immediately.
  - If prospect is not interested, attempt to establish opportunity to make contact at another time. Follow-up.

# **THE STAGES OF AN ASK**

- 1. Research and Preparation**
- 2. The Opening**
- 3. The Presentation**
- 4. The Discover**
- 5. The Ask**
- 6. Listen**
- 7. Overcome Objections**
- 8. Reach Agreement/Understanding**

# **SELECTION STEPS**

**1. Planning**

**2. Outreach**

**3. Interview/discussion**

**4. Willingness of the community**

**4. Selection**

## Selection and Retention

—Worksheets—

### PLANNING

Type of activists needed:

\_\_\_\_ Activists/Leadership:

\_\_\_\_ Community Members

Project Description:

Primary responsibilities/task assignments:

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Skill requirements:

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Where can you find Activists with these skills?

What can you offer these potential Activists that might motivate them to work for your partnership?

Who in your partnership should make the pitch?

## **OUTREACH**

Which outreach approach would you use?

\_\_\_ Wide-net

\_\_\_ Targeted

Which vehicle(s) will you use to reach out to the type of volunteer you need?

## **INTERVIEW**

List a few of the open-ended questions you may use during an interview with a potential activists:

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## **SELECTION**

If you determine that the activist is not right for the job you are trying to fill, what will you do/say to this person?

## **INCLUSION**

What specific things can you do to help to attract Activists from different segments of the community? What will make them feel wanted, welcomed, and needed?

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## **ORIENTATION**

How soon after the selection process should your orientation program be held?

Who will be invited?

What information should be presented?

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presented by</b>
●	
●	
●	
●	
●	
●	

**TRAINING**

List the things that a volunteer must learn in order to be able to successfully do one of the tasks that you have identified.

Task: \_\_\_\_\_

Need to learn to ...

...

...

...

...

Who will conduct the training for each of these topics?

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How and when will this training session be held?

What can you do to empower these Activists to have them feel like they own their work?

## **CLIMATE**

What can you do to make working for your partnership more fun?

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What can you do to increase interactions between the Activists?

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How can you help the Activists achieve small, short-term successes as they work on this specific, long-range project?

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What can you do to help these Activists feel more connected with the full partnership?

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## **RECOGNITION**

List a few things that you can do to provide recognition in an informal way to these Activists:

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Describe a more formal recognition program that you would like your partnership to institute.

What would be the criteria for receiving the recognition?

### **ASSESSMENT**

If you determine that the volunteer is not right for the job you are trying to fill, what will you do/say to this person?

### **OTHER NOTES**

# **RETENTION COMPONENTS**

- 1. Orientation**
- 2. Training**
- 3. Climate**
- 4. Recognition**
- 5. Assessment**

## AND NOW A WORD FROM ERMA BOMBECK

I had a dream the other night that every volunteer in this land had set sail for another country. I stood smiling on the pier, shouting, "Goodbye, phone committees. Goodbye, disease of the month. No more getting out the vote. No more playground duty, bake sales, and three-hour meetings."

As the boat got smaller, I reflected: "Serves them right, that bunch of "yes" people. All they had to do was put their tongues firmly against the roofs of their mouths and make an 'o' sound ... no. It would certainly have spared them a lot of grief. Oh, well, who needs them?"

The hospital was quiet as I passed it. The reception desk was vacant. Rooms were devoid of books, flowers, and voices. The children's wing held no clowns, no laughter. The home for the aged was like a tomb. The blind listened for a voice that never came. The infirm were imprisoned on wheelchairs that never moved. Food grew cold on trays that would never reach the hungry.

The social agencies had closed their doors—unable to implement their programs of scouting, recreation, drug control; unable to help the retarded, crippled, lonely, and abandoned. Health agencies had signs in their windows: "Cures for cancer, birth defects, multiple sclerosis, heart disease, etc., have been canceled because of lack of interest."

The schools were strangely quiet, with no field trips and no volunteer classroom aides. Symphony Hall and the museums that had been built and stocked by Activists were dark and would remain that way.

The flowers on the church altars withered and died. Children in day nurseries lifted their arms, but there was no one to hold them in love. Alcoholics cried out in despair, but no one answered. The poor had no recourse for health care and legal aid.

I fought in my sleep to regain a glimpse of the ship of Activists just one more time. It was to be my last glimpse of a decent civilization.

(Reprinted from the Fort Dodge Voter who reprinted it from the Chicago Sun Times, 1976)

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