

1975
DEC.

EVALUATION

"COMMUNITY CAREERS" - CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTARISM

Held at

Knox Metropolitan United Church
on
November 18th and 19th, 1975.

PREPARED BY: Elwood Springman
Executive Director
Edmonton Social Planning Council
10006 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta. T5J 1J2.

December 1, 1975.

EVALUATION

"COMMUNITY CAREERS" - CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTARISM

held at Knox Metropolitan United Church
on November 18 and 19, 1975

SECTION I - DELEGATES EVALUATIONS

(76 evaluations forms completed)

I. a. WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF THE CONFERENCE FOR YOURSELF?

Major expectation was gathering information related to volunteerism - present status of volunteerism, future trends, etc.

Second expectation which was expressed was an awareness of feelings and attitudes of volunteers and what needs they have.

Others mentioned frequently were:

- a look at self in relation to volunteerism (i.e., personal goals, abilities and expectations)
- an exchange of ideas related to volunteerism
- areas of volunteerism to engage in
- an update on volunteerism
- a place to vent frustrations
- the philosophy of volunteerism
- a broader scope of volunteerism.

One or two people indicated that their expectations included:

- establishing volunteer programs
- reinforcement of own ideas on volunteerism
- a chance to listen to others
- increase self-image and self-worth of the volunteer
- volunteerism or paid employment
- how to recruit volunteers, involve volunteers and encourage younger women to become volunteers.

b. DID THE CONFERENCE MEET THOSE EXPECTATIONS?

Yes:	53
No:	6
Partly:	12
No Answer:	5

c. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HELPED?

Keynote Speaker: 15.5 Panel: 24.5 Open Discussion: 31
Workshops: 64 Informal Discussion: 47 Other: -

II. IN YOUR OPINION, HAS THE CONFERENCE MET THE FOLLOWING GOALS?

a. TO PROVIDE REINFORCEMENT TO DELEGATES AS VOLUNTEERS	Yes:	60
	No:	4
	Partly:	4
	No Answer:	8
b. TO GAIN <u>SOCIAL RECOGNITION AND CREDIBILITY</u> FOR THE WORK OF THE VOLUNTEER HOUSEWIFE	Yes:	27
	No:	22
	Partly:	3
	No Answer:	20
	?:	4
c. TO EXPRESS THE PROS AND CONS OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	Yes:	66
	No:	5
	Partly:	3
	No Answer:	2
d. TO DISCUSS FAMILY COMMITMENTS IN RELATION TO VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	Yes:	28
	No:	24
	Partly:	3
	No Answer:	21
e. TO CREATE AN AWARENESS OF AND EMPHASIZE...		
- THE POSITIVE VALUES OF VOLUNTEERING	Yes:	56
	No:	7
	Partly:	1
	No Answer:	12
- FREEDOM-OF-CHOICE IN VOLUNTEERING	Yes:	63
	No:	3
	Partly:	1
	No Answer:	9
- SELF-INTEREST ASPECTS OF VOLUNTEERING	Yes:	62
	No:	1
	Partly:	1
	No Answer:	12
- THE STAGES AND PROGRESSIONS IN VOLUNTEERING	Yes:	40
	No:	13
	Partly:	2
	No Answer:	21

III. WAS THE CONFERENCE TOO SHORT 11 , TOO LONG 3 , JUST RIGHT 52 ?

No Answer: 10

WERE THERE SOME PARTS OF THE CONFERENCE THAT YOU FELT TOOK <u>TOO MUCH</u> TIME?	Yes:	25
	No:	33
	No Answer:	18

Many evaluations stated that the first morning was not very helpful. In particular, the keynote speaker and the panel discussion were singled out as taking too much time.

Other points mentioned by individuals included:

- berating of government with no recognition of poorly presented cases on behalf of volunteers
- program not received soon enough
- registration
- workshops too long
- coffee break on first morning
- group leaders need more training as some delegates spoke too long
- introduction and summing up on the first day.

WERE THERE SOME PARTS OF THE CONFERENCE THAT YOU FELT SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN <u>MORE</u> TIME?	Yes:	37
	No:	24
	No Answer:	15

A large number of participants expressed the desire to have attended more workshops and concurrently suggested more time during the workshops and for workshops.

Another concern expressed was the need for more time for conclusions and recommendations - both in articulation and planning.

A couple of people requested more time for small group discussions and informal discussions. Training of volunteers needed more time according to a couple of evaluations.

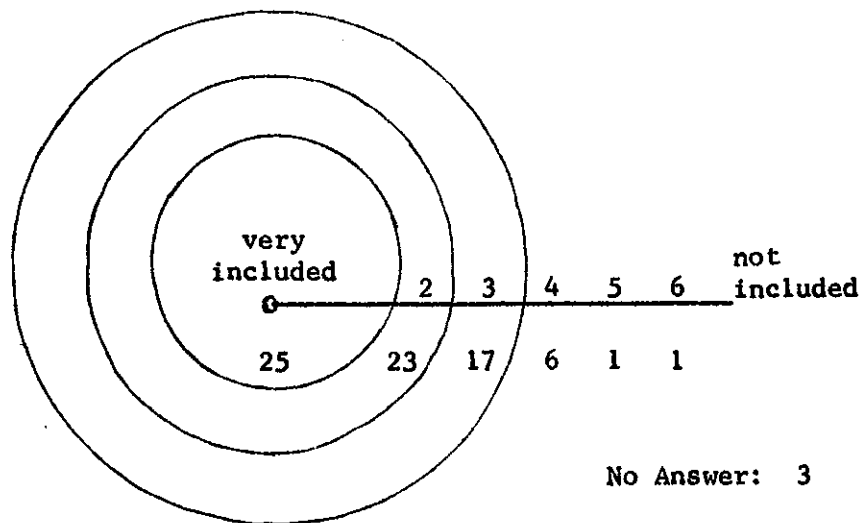
Other points mentioned by individuals included:

- discussion of benefits of co-operative planning
- economics as related to the volunteer
- funding
- role of the volunteer in creating social change
- workshops on specific problems, i.e. older volunteers with experience, how to improve influence of women as volunteers
- panel.

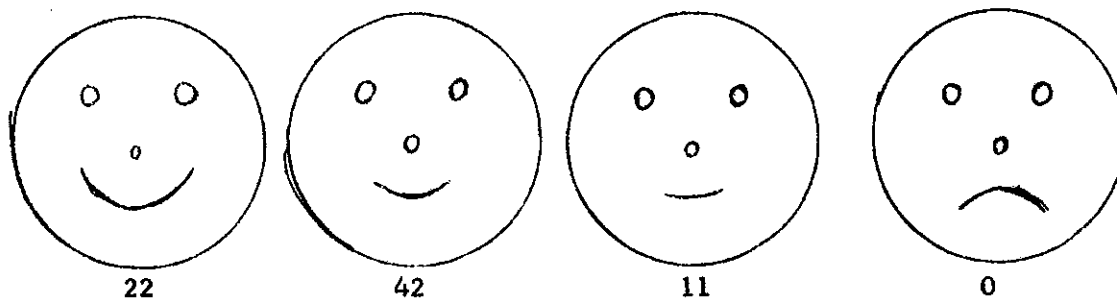
IV. DID YOU GAIN MEANINGFUL INFORMATION/SKILLS YOU CAN USE IN YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENTS?	Yes:	57
	No:	9
	Partly:	1
	No Answer:	9

V. DID YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE PARTICIPATING IN INFORMAL EXCHANGE AND DISCUSSION?	Yes:	73
	No:	2
	Partly:	1
	No Answer:	0

VI. HOW MUCH DID YOU FEEL INCLUDED IN THIS CONFERENCE (AS REPRESENTED BY THE CIRCLE BELOW)?



VII. ON THE SCALE BELOW, PLEASE CHECK THE FACE WHICH BEST REPRESENTS YOUR REACTIONS TO THE CONFERENCE.



No Answer: 0
 Spoiled: 1

VIII. QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS???

There were many responses in this section. Four or five stood up as representing points of view of more than one individual.

Firstly, a number of people indicated how much they enjoyed the conference. Related comments pertained to the useful workshops, the good facility, day care services, the impressive presentation of workshop leaders like Dorothy Richardson, and generally how well planned and executed the conference had been.

Many respondents indicated their concern that this conference was only the beginning and that future conferences need to be planned. Reasons given and directions included:

- establishing a committee to act on recommendations,
- conference to focus on improving the self-image of the volunteer,
- promote volunteer workshops within teachers conferences, student associations and so on,
- where do we go from here with recommendations, suggestions, etc.
- follow-up to what this conference accomplished,
- focusing in on men as volunteers - either at a separate conference or at a joint conference,
- volunteers and funding bodies to meet together to discuss funding issues,
- workshop for volunteers only (i.e., rather than staff, professional volunteers and occasional volunteers).

As well, many were concerned that the evaluation results and recommendations of this conference be widely distributed to media, government and conference participants.

The most prevalent concern mentioned was the number of professionals or staff people present in relation to the grass roots volunteer. Some expressed intimidation resulted in some instances.

Other concerns, usually identified by one or two respondents, included:

- the put-down of community leagues by some people
- organizational problems
 - e.g.:
 - i) did not realize could only attend two workshops
 - ii) preliminary information on material to be covered in a workshop
 - iii) lunch should include salads, fruit, cheeses, etc., instead of bread and pastry
 - iv) should be an initial session on listening skills.
- conference represented only upper-middle-class community/school projects. This respondent also noted that service or grass roots volunteers were noticeably absent.
- too much discussion - not enough solutions.
- keynote speaker was disappointing - not enough specifics or enlightments.
- not much concrete presented, but good communication took place.

Questions asked included:

- why is there not an overall body to represent all volunteer groups in the city?
- how do you encourage senior citizens to become volunteers?
- how do you reach the untapped volunteer potential?
- do volunteers understand their roles and power as social change agents?
- what was the goal and what was achieved by the conference?
- what should be the on-going relationship between agency and volunteer?

Some respondents submitted the following observations:

- resource materials should be made available to groups
- government needs to know that not only do volunteers accept the challenge thrown out by the Hon. H. Hunley, but that government take-over is not wanted
- volunteers should pay more attention to fellowship, fun and enjoyment of volunteerism
- volunteerism not only serves to assist others, but it provides a self-help component
- consensus in volunteerism is difficult because of each individuals unique perception of volunteerism.
- the volunteers sense of direction is often confused by the sheer volume of demand on his/her time
- remuneration for out-of-pocket expenses should become a part of volunteerism
- more information on feminism and the changing role of the female in society needs to be aired at similar conferences.

Although by no means totally complete, the above questions, comments and concerns are representative of most of what was written by the respondents.

DELEGATES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend an independent depth study on the following:

1. Some type of incentive program:
 - compensation by tax incentive
 - credits
 - rebate
 - incentives in job credits for volunteer work
 - incentives in educational institutions for volunteer work
 - to go towards degrees.
2. Whether people doing volunteer work want to receive financial compensation?
3. Whether volunteers in general want to remain independent of any official controls?
4. Census survey should be changed - instead of classification as housewife could put expertise in a specific volunteer area.

That this study be under independent citizen control:

- citizen committee decide on criteria for study
- citizen committee decide who will be surveyed and questions to be asked.

Committee receive government funding for survey.

No government control.

Study be public!

A Citizens' Advisory Committee comprising representatives from womens' groups should be established to be an advisory board to the Provincial Womens Bureau.

ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP

Recommendation

Encourage all volunteer groups to become politically knowledgeable.

Recommend

New ways of measuring success in projects in the social services area of voluntarism.

Recommend

Leadership program for women involved in volunteerism.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

As a result of the Volunteer Conference, common concerns have been identified by over 100 participants representing over 40 agencies, organizations and institutions.

A major concern is the need for communication within the voluntary sector and between the voluntary segment and funding bodies.

Therefore, in response to the challenges facing the voluntary sector now and in the future, it is recommended that:

- 1) the Social Action Committee of the Y.W.C.A., as organizers of this Conference, facilitate the establishment of a regional committee with broad representation from the voluntary sector, to develop and implement a provincial conference on voluntarism; and
- 2) that representatives from appropriate levels and departments of government be asked to participate on this committee in order to help plan, organize and finance this conference; and
- 3) that the broad objectives of the provincial volunteer conference be:
 1. to facilitate communication within the voluntary sector,
 2. to examine the relationship between the changing role of the voluntary segment and funding bodies,
 3. to more specifically identify common needs and goals and develop long-range action plans,
 4. to make recommendations and initiate action in relation to the above concerns.

Submitted by,

Judy Smith, c/o Calgary Y.W.C.A.
263-1550; home phone 287-2367

Judy Goldsund

Betty Farrell

Joan Wensell

Doreen Orman - Calgary.

SECTION II - INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Overall, the conference was well done in that it certainly seemed to meet the expectations of those who were present.

There were, however, a number of ways through which the conference might have been enhanced. What follows is not to be construed as undue criticism of the committee or people serving on the committee, but rather it represents one person's point of view with regard to the planning and implementation of the conference.

A. PUBLICITY

Unfortunately, a nation-wide postal strike began at about the same time as publicity should have begun to flow to the constituency. This factor probably accounted for a relatively small response from the constituents. Perhaps the publicity committee could have devised different ways and means of getting to the "grass roots" volunteers. Publicity which was used was good. Suggestions for future might be along lines of pre-conference briefings and information sessions with volunteer groups in various areas of the city, community league newsletters, shopping centre publications and information kiosks and so on.

Mailed brochures are a good method, but a postal service is necessary for implementation. By the way, a redesign of the brochure on colored paper might have been an asset.

B. ORGANIZATION

i) Registration - obviously more time should have been allotted to this time consuming procedure. As well, it might have been a good idea to have had more committee people manning the registration desk for the short rush period. They could be relieved of their duties following the main onslaught of registrants. This would not only cut down on the time required for this rather onerous task, but would also create a good feeling amongst the registrants as well. The location could probably have been changed - maybe to the open area near the church office or even the hall itself for the initial registration period.

ii) First morning - "Housekeeping" activities should be clearly outlined at beginning of conference and perhaps a permanent poster with these activities listed could have been posted on the wall. Housekeeping includes meal times, coffee times and procedures, workshop locations, group discussion locations, conference procedures such as closing time each day, questioning procedure and so on.

Opening remarks were quite good. Keynote speaker was not physically visible as was the panel. Delegates usually like to "see" the speakers as well as listen. If the stage presented too much of a physical barrier, perhaps the church might have been able to provide a make-shift 6 or 7 inch platform on the floor of the gym to provide the necessary height.

The temperature was a bit too cool in the gym for comfortable listening.

A better PA system (i.e., more than one microphone) is desirable for a panel discussion. Many problems ensue when "mikes" have to be passed back and forth. The panel itself was fairly well received with some members of the panel presenting information better than others. I personally found the panel presentation a bit too long (especially near the end of the morning).

iii) Tuesday afternoon - Small group discussion groups were well planned and organized. Purpose of the groups was unclear in the minds of many participants. Perhaps the purpose could have been enunciated a little more clearly. Amount of time allotted should have been explained before splitting off the groups into their respective areas.

Report-back and summation was well handled by Thelma Scambler. She really pulled the afternoon together in a smooth, coherent way.

iv) Wednesday morning and afternoon - Workshops were, for the most part, excellent. Leaders were well informed and informative. A few leaders tended to monopolize their groups, and some participants became a bit frustrated. I am not sure if any briefing was held with workshop leaders prior to the conference, but this is a necessity in all conferences using the workshop method. Workshops which seemed to generate the most interest (according to comments I picked up along with observations) included: How To Say "No"; Noah and Minimax; N.O.W. Position on Volunteerism and Economics As Related to the Volunteer.

C. SUMMATION

Although the conference attempted to provide an opportunity for professionals and volunteers to get together, I wonder if separate workshops (or mini-conferences) would not have allowed more interaction amongst the "grass roots" volunteers and those people working with volunteers on a full-time basis. At times, the "professionals" seemed to overwhelm the "ordinary" volunteer. Also a workshop for beginning volunteers might have been useful for those starting out in the volunteerism field. The young volunteer was somewhat overwhelmed at times by the veteran volunteer.

Much sharing of information took place amongst the participants and this was an integral part of the conference. The role of government and the funding question was of real concern to all who were present. The amount of time volunteers must devote to fund-raising was seen as a detriment to the work which volunteers attempt to accomplish.

According to the evaluation submitted by many of the participants, the strong parts of the conference were the workshops and the discussions. In terms of the goals for the conference, it appears that the gaining of social recognition and credibility for the work of the volunteer housewife and family commitments in relation to volunteer involvement, were not really reached. Other goals were reached, however, and perhaps another conference directed towards the above mentioned goals could be held another time.

Much growth was noted amongst many participants - a new awareness of self and others being particularly evident. Many participants were obviously enjoying themselves but perhaps more thought could be given towards making sure that provision is made for an enjoyable conference (e.g., more role playing, discussion period, etc.).

Certainly a start has been made at improving the image of the volunteer. Many participants were concerned that some action come out of the conference. The torch is in the hands of the "Y" social action committee. I hope that somehow you can facilitate the action process.

Congratulations for a job well done and best wishes for your new endeavours.

- Elwood Springman.