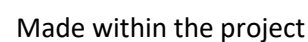


Easy Model: the Glossary



Easy Model: the glossary

This tool is designed for the project

EaSY_ Evaluate Soft Skills in International Youth volunteering

2016-2-IT03-KA205-009012

A 24-month project funded by the National Youth Agency under the ERASMUS Plus program, KA2 Strategic Partnership - Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices.

Through EaSY, the partnership aims to contribute to the process of recognition of skills arising from non-formal learning experiences in Europe, and in particular the cross-skills or soft skills resulting from the International Youth Volunteering.

The project co-operates with FEC and The European Guild, organizations with long experience in youth volunteering and Elidea - associated psychologists.

Produced in October 2017

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Posted by Elidea Associated psychologists, 00152, Rome, Italy

The document is available at:

www.elidea.org,

www.focsiv.it,

www.fecongd.org

<http://la-gilde.org/>

Written by Elidea Associated psychologists, 00152, Rome, Italy



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1| Introduction

The third step on Easy project defines Easy model, composed by the most significant soft skills developed by volunteers during the period abroad.

According to the analysis of data collected from the NGOs Fec, Focsiv and La Guilde by interviews and focus groups during the Step 2, this part of project has aimed to identify:

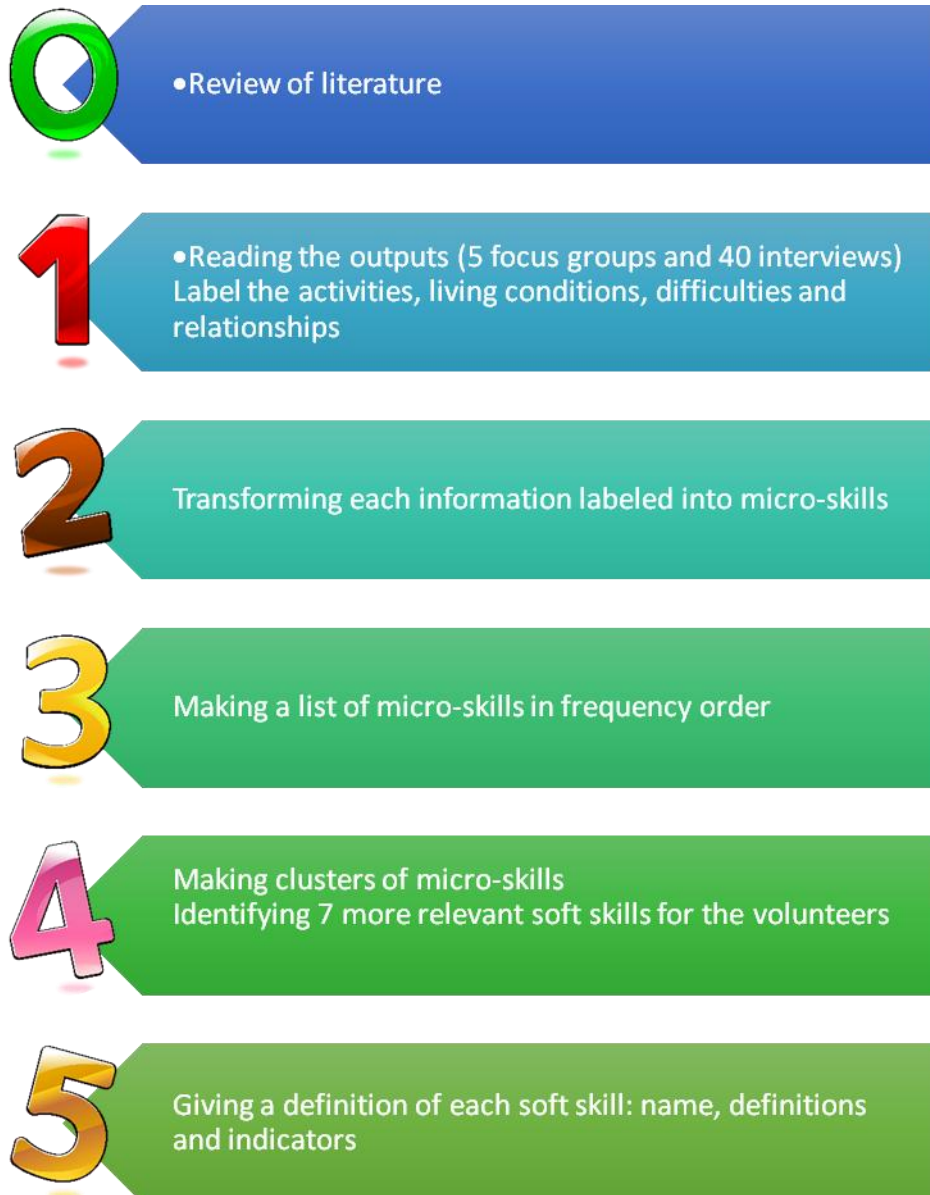
-  the list of soft skills that volunteers develop during the service abroad
-  the context variables that affect the experience

Easy model forms the bases of 3 task forces that are going to develop the following tools:

- a) Easy online self-assessment (test measuring the soft skills)
- b) Training course model for NGO youth workers (how to use Easy Model before the departure)
- c) Handbook (how to use the Report of Easy online test)

2| Working method

In order to reach the main purpose: “defining Easy Model”, we followed these steps:



Step "0"

• Review of literature

Before starting the data analysis, Elidea researched the main European studies about International volunteers soft skills. The purpose of this research was to understand what are the different models and how they approach to the volunteer experiences. At the end of this paper, we explain what are the main differences and the common points between these models and Easy Model.

Please find below the main researches taken in consideration:

TAB.1a

N.	ORIGINAL TITLE OF RESEARCH, PROGRAMS, LAWS OR STUDIES CENTRE	YEAR	COUNTRY
1	Incentivare il volontariato – Rapporto di ricerca <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centri Servizi per il Volontariato (Belluno, Bergamo, Bolzano, Mantova, Trento e Vicenza) 	2011/2012	Italy
2	Bridging volunteering and the labour market: a proposal of a soft skills matrix <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rego, Zozimo, Correia e Ross 	2016	Portugal
3	Progetto attitudi per "Avviso pubblico della provincial di Milano per l'attuazione del progetto sperimentale in material di certificazione delle competenze acquisite in attiità di volontariato e la loro valorizzazione ai fini occupazionali <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centro Servizi per il Volontariato della Provincia di Milano (Ciessevi) 	----	Italy
4	Le competenze del volontariato: un modello di analisi dei fabbisogni formative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modello ISFOL - Cesvot – Centro Servizi per il Volontariato della Regione Toscana 	----	Italy
5	Servizio civile all'estero – Giovani, lavoro e cittadinanza attiva <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focsiv 	2014	Italy
6	ESCO – European classification of skills/competences, qualifications and occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Commission - Cedefop 	2012/2013	Europe
7	CEDEFOP – Centro per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale	----	Greece

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TAB.1b

N.	ORIGINAL TITLE OF RESEARCH, PROGRAMS, LAWS OR STUDIES CENTRE	YEAR	COUNTRY
8	PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of adult competencies - OCSE	2012	24 Nations in the World
9	Education and skills online assessment – The online version of PIAAC - OCSE - European Commission	----	24 Nations in the World
10	KEY COMPETENCES - European Commission	----	Europe
11	YOUTHPASS for European Voluntary Service - SVE – Servizio di Volontariato Europe	----	Europe
12	EUROPASS Mobilità - NEC – Centro Nazionale Europass Italia	----	Italy
13	European Guidelines for Validating Non Formal and Informal Learning	----	Europe
14	Workcamps, youth work, recognition and employability – Research report	----	Finland
15	D.LGS. 13/2013 – Definizione delle norme generali e dei livelli essenziali delle prestazioni per l'individuazione e validazione degli apprendimenti non formali e informali e degli standard minimi di servizio del sistema nazionale di certificazione delle competenze	2013	Italy
16	Intesa Stato – Regioni 22 Gennaio 2015	2015	Italy
17	Isfol – Quadro Nazionale delle Qualificazioni NQF Italia	2017	Italy
18	Voyce Project - Manual for the validation of volunteers' competencies	2017	Europe

Studying the International review of literature gave us the opportunity to compare Easy Model with the current scientific research. Indeed, one of the purposes of this project is to take part in an International debate about the competences developed during the International volunteering experiences.

The way to work is to meet the International reviews, producing any interesting innovation according to the job market demand.

Comparing Easy Model to the International review literature, we can see some similarity and differences.

Please find below the 8 more frequent competences of volunteers into the researches considered:




1. Communication
2. Teamwork
3. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
4. Learning from experience
5. Leadership
6. Negotiation and mediation
7. Innovation and creativity
8. Planning and organizational skills

As it can be seen, there are common points as: Communication, spirit of initiative, negotiation, analysis and synthesis skills and listening. So Easy model shares the 50% of other studies in term of skills considered. Indeed 4 skills out 8 are common to Easy Model micro-skills: communication and linguistic skills, spirit of initiative, planning and negotiation skills.

Please also find a list (TAB.2) of all the competencies identified from previous researches/models reviewed in literature.

This table shows in detail the competences in common between the literature review and Easy Model: you will find them in bold type.

The following table will show you:

-  list of the competences identified by the models/researches studied
-  models/researches taken into consideration (identified with a number)¹
-  frequency of the competencies: how many models take into consideration each competence

¹ Please note that "not all the previous researches/models in the TAB.1 have specifically identified a list of competences or skills". For that reason you will find in the table (TAB.2) the researches that expressly take a list of soft-skills. Each research/model is identified with a number (1,2,3,4,5,10,14,17) as the previous table (TAB.1).

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TAB.2a




	MODELS/RESEARCHES								
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQ.
Communication	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	7
Teamworking	x	x		x	x		x	x	6
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship		x			x	x	x	x	5
Learning from experience		x			x	x	x	x	5
Leadership			x	x	x		x	x	5
Negotiation and mediation	x	x			x			x	4
Innovation and creativity		x	x	x			x		4
Planning and organizational skills			x		x		x	x	4
Linguistic skills					x	x	x	x	4
Civic minded					x	x	x	x	4
Technological, informatic and mathematic skills					x	x	x	x	4
Analysis ability	x		x	x					3
Synthesis ability	x		x	x					3
Listening			x	x	x				3
Problem setting			x	x	x				3
Interpersonal sensitivity		x	x		x				3
Problem solving	x			x				x	3
Administrative skills	x			x				x	3
Result orientation			x	x				x	3
Planning				x	x			x	3
Cultural awareness and expression						x	x	x	3
Empathy			x	x					2
Autonomy					x		x		2
Adaptation					x			x	2
Self esteem					x			x	2
Decision making				x				x	2
Diversity management			x				x		2

TAB.2b

COMPETENCIES	MODELS/RESEARCHES								FREQ.
	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	
Tolerance							x		1
Emotional control			x						1
Organising data			x						1
Flexibility				x					1
Interpersonal relationship skills					x				1
Confidence in creating steady and peaceful relationship					x				1
Self-development		x							1
Networking		x							1
Practical sense			x						1
Willingness			x						1
Controlling and checking skills			x						1
Dealing with unexpected			x						1
Values				x					1
Technical skills				x					1
Customer-orientation				x					1
Needs analysis skills					x				1
Respect for the environment					x				1
Ability to encourage others and taking-prospective					x				1
Creating links between data					x				1
Collecting and analysing data					x				1
Being democratic					x				1
Leading role					x				1
Self management/Self organisation							x		1

Otherwise "Easy Model" differs from other models because it brings together micro-skills in order to take into consideration more complex abilities (Soft Skills).

Here the main characteristics of Easy model:

-  This approach allows the possibility to understand more specifically what a volunteer can improve about its skills, independently from the project and the country where the volunteer is involved.
-  The research (by interview and focus group) has not shown significant differences between different projects in different fields (rural, communication...). Otherwise they might be differences between the specific activities in charge of the volunteer and the skills that he/she can train.
-  Grouping micro-skills give the opportunity to consider specific aspects of the same skills, deducted by the experimental research done with the NGOs Fec, Focsiv and La Guilde. For instance the "Clear Communication" skill is

Easy Model: the glossary

defined as result of: synthesis, written communication and clear communication micro-skills.

- Even if this definition is in line with the scientific research about soft skills and the Industrial and Organizational Psychology research, it is tailored on the results of the data collected by this research.
- Lastly the strenght of Easy model is that the collection of data has been made at International level, considering data from 3 different Countries: France, Italy and Portugal, strongly engaged in the International Volunteering.

Step “1”

- Analyzing the data collected by focus groups and interviews**
- Labeling the activities, living conditions, difficulties and relationships**

It is the first part of the work. Its purpose was to understand the volunteers experiences from the point of view of volunteers (interviews) and Youth workers (focus groups). In order to achieve this goal, Elidea consultants have carefully read and studied each document (5 focus groups and 40 interviews).

Each output has been read by two independent consultants, experts in Job profile definition.

After this part, Elidea team labelled each information about the activities, the difficulties, the living conditions and the relationships.

Please find some examples as below:

NGO	DOCUMENT	ACTIVITY	LABEL
La Guilde	Interview	Training for Indian teacher on psychomotor development	Training activities
FEC	Interview	The paper work (reports, e-mail for the manager in Portugal, etc)	Drafting reports and papers

Step “2”

- **Transforming each information labeled into micro-skills**

Thanks to the above work, each information labeled has been translated in “micro-skills” that specified the main skills to: prosecute the activities, overcome the difficulties, address living conditions or manage relationships.

Please find below some examples:

ACTIVITY	LABEL	MICROSKILLS
Training for Indian teacher on psychomotor development	Training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group coordination • Clear communication • Listening • Creating good relationships
The paper work (reports, e-mail for the manager in Portugal, etc)	Drafting reports and papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information processing • Analysis • Written communication • Synthesis

This translation has defined which micro-skills were determinants to sustain the volunteers activities abroad.

Step “3”

- **Making a list of micro-skills in frequency order**

Once the previous step has been accomplished, Elidea made a complete list of all micro-skills.

Please find below the table of micro-skills ordered by frequency.

Micro-skills	FREQUENCY
Create a good relationship	99
Clear communication	49
Communication adaptation	48
Reading the context	47
Adaptability	47
Information processing	46
Listening	46
Organising available data	45
Small group Coordination	41
Frustration tolerance	37
Analysis	33
Emotional control	25
Mental flexibility	17
Followership	16
Written communication	15
Empathy	15
Autonomy	12
Synthesis	10
Sense of initiative	10
Mediation	9
Self-esteem	3

The frequency depends on the times that any micro-skill has been counted from each label of activities, difficulties, living conditions and relationships.

So it could be possible that 1 single micro-skill was counted different times for each output. That is mean that we have found some micro-skills very important for several aspects.

For instance “Creating a good relationship” could be useful to the “Training activities” and to manage “relationships” with local people when required in critical situations.

Step “4”

- **Making clusters of micro-skills**
- **Identifying the more relevant soft skills for the volunteers**

Elidea’s Staff used all micro-skills to define main competencies that volunteers can improve during their experience.

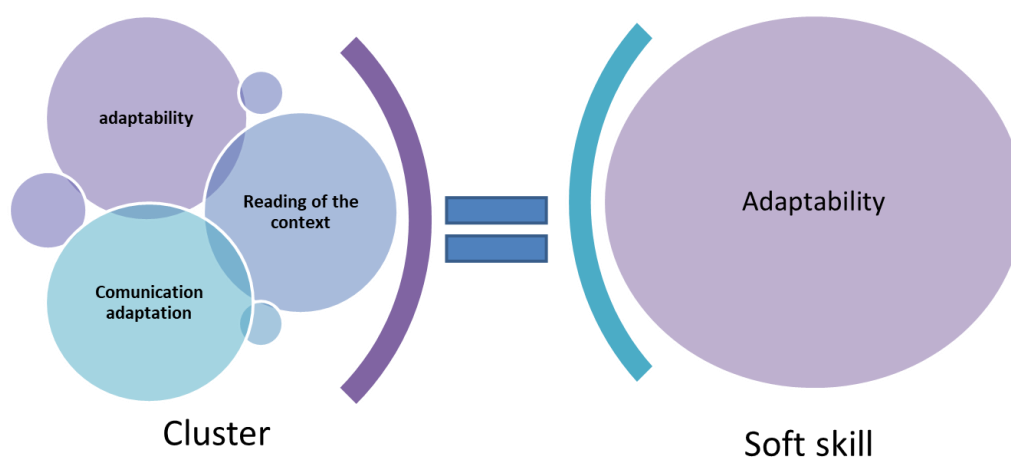
The micro-skills has been gathered in 7 different clusters, based on:

- the research literature of the main European studies about the soft skills of international volunteers;
- the over 20-year Elidea’s work experience about recruitment, selection and skill-balance activities for firms, companies, social cooperatives and public administrations;
- the knowledge about the specific volunteer experiences acquired from Elidea’s Staff, thanks to the NGOs engaged, analyzing interviews and focus group outputs, during the previous steps of the project.

In order to guarantee a “construct validity”, in particular the “discriminant validity”, no micro skills have been considered into different clusters. Thanks to this method, it will be possible to discriminate between different clusters (soft skills).

Each cluster has been identify as “Soft Skill”.

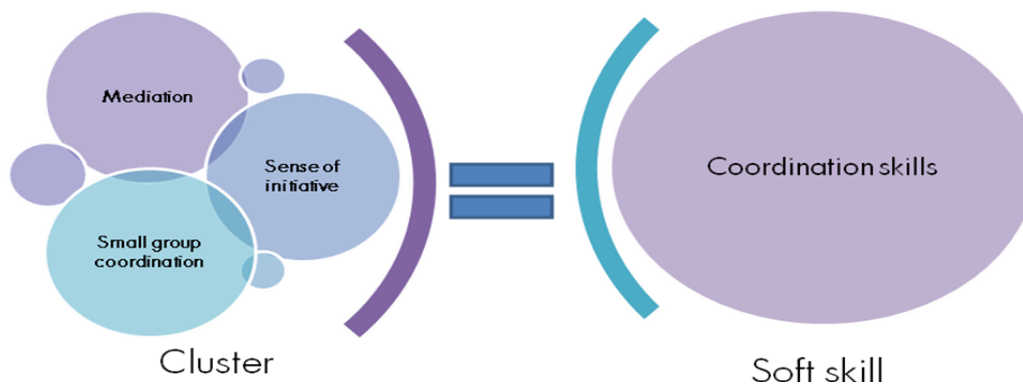
Please find below 2 graphic examples of clusterization.



As it can be seen, the 3 micro-skills (Adaptability, Communication adaptation and Reading of the context) have been grouped in a unique Cluster. This cluster has been defined by Elidea as “Adaptability” which is one of the Soft Skill that a volunteer can improve during his experience.

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Please find another example:



At the end of this process, Elidea has identified 7 main Soft Skills which defines Easy Model. Indeed this Soft Skills are able to describe the principle competences developing by International volunteers. Please find in the next page the 7 Soft Skills.

Step "5"

- **Description of each soft skill: name, definitions and indicators**

Last step of this process is the description of all Soft Skills.

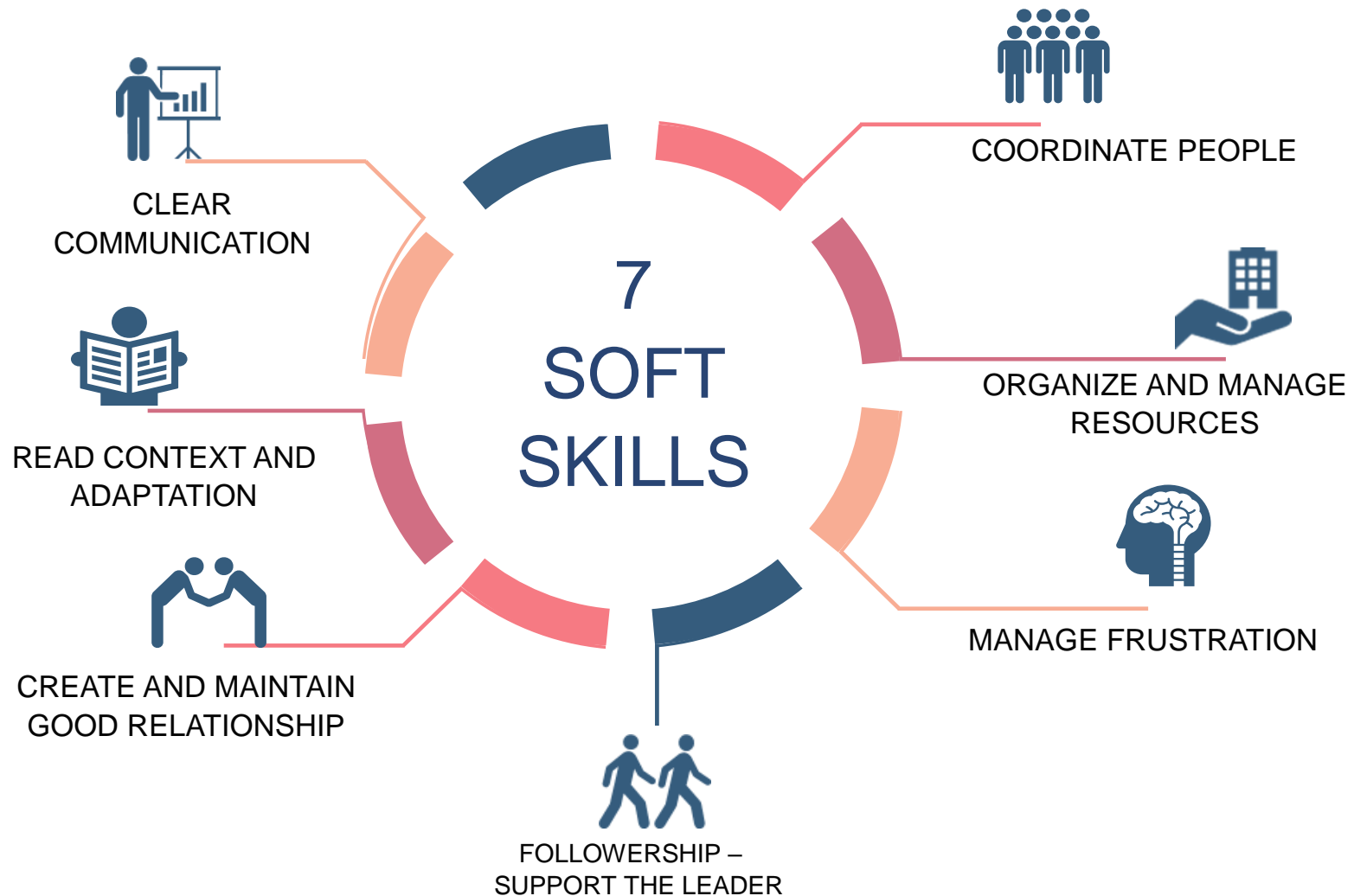
The definition of each soft skill has been given according to the following 2 criteria:

- 🌐 scientific research in Human Resources field
- 🌐 meaning of each micro-skill

As it can be seen, it has been necessary in 1 specific case to examine in depth the soft skill "followership-support the leader".

Elidea has studied the review of literature about "followership-support the leader" in order to identify its micro-skills.

EaSY Model



3| Easy model

These steps define the 7 Soft Skills, in other words the main competencies that volunteers can improve during their experiences.

This model assumes that the International volunteers have the opportunity to train this 7 competencies during the experience.

It is assumed by the Model that high level of those skills give more opportunity for the volunteers to match the requests of companies, firm and public administration after their experiences abroad.

Furthermore, these soft skills can be measured in order to give more awareness to the volunteers about their abilities.

Please find below a detailed description of Easy Model where you can find: definition, 2 or 3 micro-skills identified and main behavioural indicators of each Soft Skill.

Soft Skill...1 – Clear Communication

Definition	micro-skills
It is the ability to clearly express thoughts, facts and opinions in both verbal and written terms in a synthetic way, using an appropriate register for different social and cultural contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Synthesis ✓ Written communication ✓ Clear communication

Please find below the frequency of the micro-skills in the 8 European researches/models compared with Easy model. Thanks to this table, you can see the researches/models which share the micro-skills indicated:

MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Communication	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	7
Synthesis ability	x		x	x					3
Linguistic skills					x	x	x	x	4

Soft Skill...2 – Read Context and Adaptation

<u>Definition</u>	<u>micro-skills</u>
<p>It is the ability to act properly in both new and known contexts, adapting to their specific characteristics and recognizing the values, beliefs, resources and limits of the environment and people.</p> <p>It is the ability to recognize yours and others role expectations. In multicultural contexts, this capacity implies the linguistic-communicative adaptation to specific environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reading the context ✓ Adaptability ✓ Communication adaptation

Thanks to this table, you can see the researches/models which share the micro-skills indicated:

MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Adaptation					x			x	2

Soft Skill...3 – Followership - Support the leader

<u>Definition</u>	<u>micro-skills</u>
It is the ability to support the boss (or the referent) at the workplace, taking responsibility for the common goal, and actively participating in any task or change needed by the group. Is the ability to demonstrate collaboration, trust in the groups member and cohesion capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support the leader ✓ Critical thinking ✓ Autonomy

Not everybody can be a leader. Sometimes one has to lead, other times one needs to follow a boss. But being an effective follower is not so simple, the follower role is as hard as the leader role. Followership can be defined as the ability to work within an organization, in order to reach common goals under the direction of the leader, while maintaining independent thinking.

The research which explains followership is extensive. The majority says that the most relevant skills a follower should have a critical thinking and being supportive of the leader. From this perspective, it is clear that the "perfect follower" is not a yes-man or woman but a person who can follow the rules, who can be supportive of his/her boss (emotional and practical support), but who can also think independently.

Soft Skill...4 – Manage Frustration

Definition	micro-skills
It is the ability to react positively and with spirit of sacrifice to frustration or stress, while maintaining measured and socially acceptable reactions. It is also a propensity to recognize and value their own abilities and strengths and to find positive motivation even in difficult situations, missed expectations or obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mental flexibility ✓ Frustration tolerance ✓ Emotional control

Please find below the frequency of the micro-skills into the 8 European researches/models compared with Easy model. Thanks to this table, you can see the researches/models which share the micro-skills indicated:

MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Tolerance							x		1
Emotional control			x						1
Flexibility				x				x	2

Soft Skill...5 – Create and maintain good relationships

Definition	micro-skills
It is the ability to properly understand and use the rules of social interaction by creating and maintaining positive relationship with others. It implies the capacity to express oneself and recognize, from a cognitive and emotional perspective, the others' needs. It is the ability to express one's ideas while listening to and appreciate others, leaving them room to express their thought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Empathy ✓ Listening ✓ Create relationships

Here below the frequency of the micro-skills into the 8 European researches/models compared with Easy model:

MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Listening			x	x	x				3
Empathy			x	x					2
Flexibility					x			x	2

Soft Skill...6 – Coordinate people

<u>Definition</u>	<u>micro-skills</u>
It is the ability to manage and actively integrate the human resources of a team in order to reach the project goals. It implies the capacity of mediating among different viewpoints of group members and the willingness to take initiatives and to act involving the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mediation ✓ Sense of initiative ✓ Small group coordination

Below the frequency of the micro-skills into the 8 European researches/models compared with Easy model:

MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship		x			x	x	x	x	5
Negotiation and mediation	x	x			x			x	4

Soft Skill...7 – Organize and manage resources

Definition	micro-skills
It is the ability to organize information, tools, economic and human resources in order to reach project goals. It is the capacity to plan activities by deadlines and give priority. This combines the ability to analyze data and general information leaving nothing out. It is the ability to find solutions that optimize the available elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Information processing ✓ Organizing available data ✓ Analysis skills

Thanks to this table, you can see the researches/models which share the micro-skills indicated:

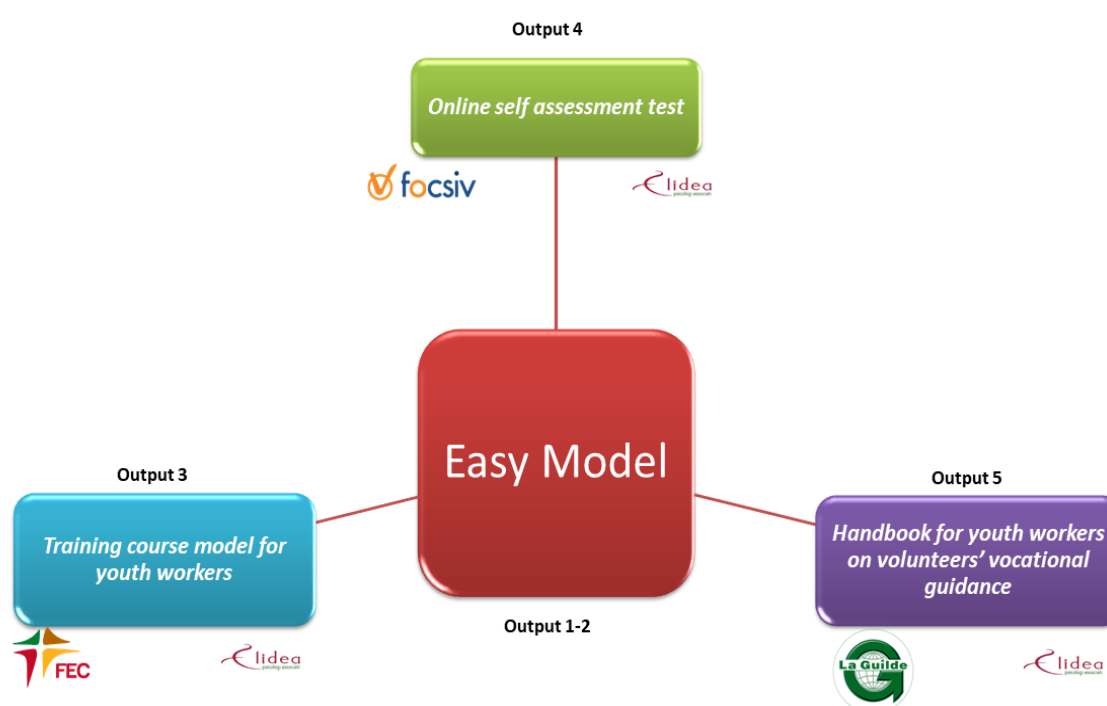
MODELS/RESEARCHES									
COMPETENCIES	1	2	3	4	5	10	14	17	FREQU.
Analysis ability	x		x	x					3
Planning and organizational skills			x		x		x	x	4
Organising data			x						1

4| Easy model impact on the next step of the project

According to the initial purpose, this step of Easy project is the base for the construction of 3 task forces that are going to develop the next tools.

Each NGO will be in charge of a single task force and will work in collaboration with Elidea, in order to apply the model to the tools.

Please find below an overall summary of next step:



The goal to reach through the next steps will be the “translation” of the Model in effective tools that can help International volunteers to recognize their competences acquired from the experience of volunteering.

5| Attachment

VOLUNTEER FOLLOWERSHIP IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Followership is an essential part of the leadership process. There would be no leaders without followers. A large portion of followers in nonprofit organizations are composed of volunteers. These voluntary followers play a critical role within the structure of nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations are one of the fastest growing types of organizations in the world today. These organizations are challenged with the task of recruiting, motivating, and retaining unpaid volunteers. The purpose of this literature review was to explore volunteerism within the context of followership in order to gain a better understanding of followers in volunteer roles within nonprofit organizations. The literature examined addressed various labels for the types of followers and the characteristics of effective followers. Additionally, the literature revealed that socially constructed perceptions followers have of themselves within the context of their organizations have an influence on their role as a follower. Research has not shown how these concepts apply to voluntary followers. However, the literature inspects both functional analysis and role identity theories in relation to volunteerism. In general, there is an overall lack of research that studies volunteerism in the context of followership. From this review of the literature it is suggested that further research should combine functional analysis theory and role identity theory within volunteerism with current followership research to reveal avenues for further study that will provide better insight into the role volunteer followers in nonprofit organizations.

Keywords: Volunteer, Followers, Followership, Nonprofit organizations, Volunteerism

INTRODUCTION

Followership has come to be recognized as an extremely significant part of understanding the process of leadership. Leaders do not define leadership, but rather followers are what define leadership (Meindl, 1995). Therefore, followers are not only vital to the leadership process, they are essential. The leadership process is more than just leadership as a concept, but rather it implies a relationship and exchange between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2010). In the absence of followers, there would be no one for leaders to lead. Leadership cannot exist without followership (Hollander, 1993; Kellerman, 2008). Leaders in nonprofit organizations will often time lead unpaid followers known as volunteers. Volunteers are an extremely valuable human resource within nonprofit organizations that many times work alongside paid employees (Worth, 2009). In 2011, 64.3 million people volunteered and worked the amount of time equal to that of 8.9 million full-time employees (Blackwood et al., 2012). However, there is not sufficient research that explores volunteers as followers. The purpose of this review of the literature is to explore volunteerism within the context of followership in order to understand the unique characteristics of followers in volunteer roles within nonprofit organizations.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofits organizations play a significant role in the world today. There were approximately 2.3 million nonprofit organizations in operation within the United States in 2010 (Blackwood et al., 2012). The vast majority of nonprofit organizations currently operating today were established after 1950. Additionally, the concept of a united nonprofit sector became popular in the 1970s. Nonprofits are one of the fastest growing types of organizations in the world (Hall, 2005; Worth, 2009). These types of organizations are extremely difficult to generalize, because they vary tremendously in scope and scale. Nonprofits can range from informal grassroots organizations to multibillion dollar foundations consisting educational institutions, churches, healthcare facilities, service organizations, special interest and advocacy groups, fraternities and sororities, and self-help groups (Anheier, 2005; Van Til, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012). They also provide a wide assortment of services that include but are not limited to human services, credit and savings, environment and natural resources, local development and housing, humanitarian relief and international development, human rights, assistance to rural farmers, educational services, and religious services (Anheier, 2005; Worth, 2009). Well known nonprofit organizations include the American Cancer Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Mayo Clinic, Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross, AARP, Stanford University, the Salvation Army, and the Junior League just to name a few (Anheier, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012). These organizations have to do with almost every aspect of people's lives (Courtney, 2002). Simply defined nonprofits organizations are self-governing private organizations that do not make a profit for owners or members, but do provide some type of benefit to the public which they may or may not charge a fee for (Nahavandi, 2012; Worth, 2009).

Nonprofit organizations have characteristics that are unique to them. Although some nonprofits can be considered highly profitable, all money generated by these organizations is reinvested into the organization. Essential to the mission of nonprofits is to serve the public good; they must create and maintain public value or benefit (Weinberg, 2010; Worth, 2009). One of the ways nonprofit organizations are held accountable is by determining if they are adhering to their mission (Phipps and Burbach, 2010). Additionally, nonprofits are governed by a voluntary board of directors that are unpaid, but have a stake and/or interest in the organization and its mission (Axelrod, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012). Lastly, nonprofits are largely funded through contributions and grants (Hall, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012; Silk, 2005).

In addition to the unique characteristics of nonprofit organizations, they also face very unique challenges. Many nonprofit organizations are challenged with how to recruit, motivate, and retain workers. These workers include individuals who are paid and many others who are volunteers (McCurley, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012; Skoglund, 2006; Worth, 2009). Therefore, it is essential that leaders are effective at motivating and inspiring followers to join their organizations (Nahavandi, 2012; Worth, 2009). It also is important to understand the motives individuals have for working for nonprofit organizations, especially on a volunteer basis which will be explored later on in this article (Clary et al., 1998).

UNDERSTANDING FOLLOWERSHIP

In order to understand volunteer followers in the nonprofit sector, it is important to first have a basic understanding of the concept of followership. It has been noted in the research that there are negative connotations associated with being a follower (Agho, 2009; Banutu-Gomez, 2004; Chaleff, 2008; Hertig, 2010; Kellerman, 2008). It has even been suggested that followership does not exist, since followers partake in the leadership process not a followership process (Rost, 2008). However, the idea of what it means to be a follower needs

to be altered. People are programmed from childhood to not be followers, but in reality effective followers play a more important and complex role than just following (Hertig, 2010; Kellerman, 2008). There are important skills that are necessary in order for an individual to be considered an effective follower, such as the capacity to think critically and independently, the ability to give and receive constructive criticism, and the capability to be innovative and creative (Banutu-Gomez, 2004; Kelley, 1988; Hertig, 2010). Furthermore, followers work with leaders to achieve a “common purpose” within an organization (Chaleff, 2003, p. 17). Consequently, there is much more involved in being an effective follower than just taking direction from the leadership.

Effective Followers

Kelley's (1988) seminal work expanded greatly on the idea of followership and forever changed the way followers are viewed in relation to leadership. Followers were classified into five types based on two different dimensions. The first dimension being the level at which the follower is able to think critically and independently, and second the level of active or passive involvement in the follower role. This concept was considered controversial at the time of its publication, because it challenged commonly held ideas about followers (Kelley, 2008). Additional researchers have also assigned their own labels to the types of followers (Chaleff, 2003, 2008; Kellerman, 2008).

Effective followers have essential qualities that make them effective (Banutu-Gomez, 2004; Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 1988, 2008). The qualities considered essential for followers to possess in order to be effective are self-management, commitment, honesty, competence, focus, and courage. Many of the qualities that are essential to effective followers overlap with the qualities that make leaders effective (Agho, 2009; Kelley, 1988). Although effective followers are ideal employees to have, they do not always appear to be the most desirable employees to leaders. Leaders might be concerned that these types of followers will not stay challenged by their position in an organization, resulting in possible higher turnover. Also, ethically questionable organizations might worry that this type of follower could cause possible complications in their practices and ultimately become a whistleblower. This concern most likely is not issue for ethically sound companies. Generally, organizations with a high number of effective followers perform better than other organizations, because these followers do not rely on leadership to provide direction and motivation which results in lower costs to the organization (Kelley, 1988, 2008). Ultimately, effective followers complement and provide support to those in leadership positions (Howell and Mendez, 2008).

How Followers Perceive Followership

A subsequent area of followership that is important to take into consideration is the way in which follower's own perception of followership determines how they view their role as a follower. It is important to understand how followers perceive their roles within an organization in order to uncover the social construct of followership (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien and Pillai, 2007). The follower role is one that is complex and multidimensional. Research has revealed three socially constructed meanings of followership which are passive, active, and proactive in nature. Evidence also suggests that individuals in follower roles embrace many meanings of followership. Followers' perception of the role of followership is influenced by the context that is created by the leadership of the organization. Therefore, a follower's ability to be passive, active, or proactive depends to an extent on the perception of followership by the leadership (Carsten et al., 2010). The social constructions of followership are a product of the context of the organization in which the followership exists (Meindl, 1995).

Volunteer Followership

Research on followership is often limited to understanding the role of follower as an employee. However, the role of followers extends beyond an individual's place of employment (Chaleff, 2003; Kellerman, 2008). Volunteers are a type of follower within a nonprofit organization. The role of volunteer is not exclusive to nonprofit organizations. Many individuals volunteer outside of nonprofit organizations or any type of organization all together (Finkelstein and Brannick, 2007). Although many nonprofits do employ paid workers, this section will focus on followership on a voluntary basis within the nonprofit sector. It is important to note that the term volunteer is sometimes used differently by some organizations. For example, recruits of the Teach for America program are often referred to as volunteers, even though they receive a full teacher salary with benefits and monetary funding for educational use in return for their service to the program (Fenzel and Flippen, 2006; Teach for America, 2012). The term volunteer in this context refers to someone who works without monetary compensation or tangible benefits.

As previously mentioned, nonprofit organizations face challenges recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers (McCurley, 2005; Nahavandi, 2012; Skoglund, 2006; Worth, 2009). In order to further understand these challenges and to attempt to find solutions to them it is essential to take into consideration why volunteers decide to volunteer. It is important to note that volunteers generally seek out opportunities to help instead of encountering a situation where they can help by chance. Therefore, prospective volunteers have the chance to contemplate what type of volunteer work and amount involvement they want to commit themselves to before they volunteer. The individual's active role in choosing to serve and planning out their own course of action as a volunteer is a recurring theme in volunteerism (Omoto et al., 2010). As a result, it is beneficial to understand the motives individuals have to become volunteers.

Functional Analysis Theory

"The same volunteer work can serve different functions for different individuals, and the reasons for helping can change over time" (Finkelstein, 2008, p. 1354). The concept in which it is believed that individuals volunteer to serve their own psychological functions is referred to as the functional approach to motivation, or functional analysis (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein, 2008, 2010). The six motives for volunteering in the context of functional analysis are values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. The values motive is used to express values related to selflessness and compassion for others. The understanding motive is used to allow new learning experiences to occur and to utilize skills, knowledge, abilities that might otherwise go unutilized. The social motive is used to strengthen social relationships and engage in an activity that is viewed positively by others. The career motive is used to use volunteering as a means of advancing one's career, increasing job prospects, or to gain career related experience. The protective motive is used to reduce guilt and negative feelings about oneself and as a means of addressing one's own personal problems. Finally, the enhancement motive is used to increase self-esteem and to further psychological development and growth (Clary et al., 1998). It has been suggested that volunteers can uniquely combine motives to suit their needs as a volunteer (Gronlund, 2011). Individuals chose volunteer activities that they believe will help satisfy the motivations that are important to them and are more likely to continue volunteering if these motivations are being satisfied (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein, 2008, 2010; Finkelstein and Bannick, 2007).

Shye (2010) argues that instead of focusing on a set group of motives when understanding what motivates volunteers to volunteer, researchers should focus on finding out the degree at which the act of volunteering rewards the volunteer. Attention should be placed on the needs

individuals perceive to be satisfied through participating in volunteer work. In implementing this type of design, the scope of volunteer motivation research is significantly broadened. This highlights areas that have been previously overlooked by research pertaining to volunteerism. The first implication of this design is that it allows researchers to group volunteer motivations by if they relate to culture, social, physical, personality, and well being of the volunteer. Second, this design allows researchers to identify rewards that are not satisfied by volunteer work. Third, this design widens volunteer research to also take into consideration other activities that may compete with volunteering by fulfilling the same needs. Lastly, this design integrates many significant studies that have been conducted in the field of volunteerism (Shye, 2010).

ROLE IDENTITY THEORY

Individuals are made up of numerous social role identities that are developed from social interactions and the expectations of others. These developed social role identities are what consequently guide future behavior. In regards to volunteering, the longer amount of time one volunteers the more likely he or she is to develop a volunteer role identity. Once this occurs volunteering goes from being an activity to becoming part of one's identity (Finkelstein, 2008; Finkelstein and Bannick, 2007; Grube and Pilliavin, 2000). It has also been suggested that there are multiple role identities that can be satisfied through the action of volunteering, instead of the singular volunteer role (Gronlund, 2011). Role identity has, nevertheless, been identified as a major predictor of the amount of time worked and the total service duration of volunteers (Chacon et al., 2007; Grube and Pilliavin, 2000).

There are additional influences that contribute to the time spent volunteering. Farmer and Fedor's (2001) investigated factors that might influence the amount of volunteers' contributions of time, energy, and personal resources that are given to the organization. It was discovered that volunteers who felt that the organization's demands interfered with their career and family activities contributed less to the organization in both time and money. It was also revealed that social interaction with other volunteers led to increased contributions in both time and money to the organization. These findings provide insight into how to keep volunteers motivated and to contribute more to the organization they volunteer for (Farmer and Fedor, 2001).

Functional analysis and role identity theory can provide guidance about how to approach the challenges faced by many nonprofit organizations of effectively recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers. Recruitment and motivation can both be addressed by the motives identified through functional analysis and retention can be addressed through continued motive satisfaction and development of role identity. These two theories have been previously been examined jointly, but not within the context of followership (Finkelstein, 2008; Finkelstein and Bannick, 2007).

DISCUSSION

Followership is a complex process that is essential not only in the study of leadership, but also in the study of organizations. Followers play a necessary and vital role in organizations (Kellerman, 2008; Kelley, 1988). Therefore, it is evident that followers would play just as significant a role as volunteers in nonprofits organizations. The number of nonprofits organizations is currently growing. Thus, the need for volunteers who make up a large portion of the workforce is also growing (Hall, 2005; Worth, 2009). However, volunteer followers pose unique challenges to organizations, because they are less dependent on the organization than paid employees (Brudney, 2005). It is important for nonprofit organizations

to understand these valuable and unique followers in order to improve recruitment, motivation, and retention.

Although there are negative connotations associated with the term follower, they play a multifaceted and critical role within organizations (Hertig, 2010; Kellerman, 2008). Followers work with leaders to achieve a common goal within organizations (Chaleff, 2008). Researchers have categorized followers into different types based on their qualities (Chaleff, 2003, 2008; Kelley, 1988, 2008; Kellerman, 2008). Categories such as these that pertain to the qualities of followers are not addressed within the volunteer literature, nor has it been examined if the same types of categories apply to volunteers. Furthermore, specific qualities have been identified that distinguish effective followers. Many of the qualities of effective followers are the same as those that are essential for effective leaders (Agho, 2009; Kelley, 1988). The overlap in these qualities helps explain the why effective relationships between followers and leaders are ones that are complementary in nature (Howell and Mendez, 2008). The literature has also revealed that followers' self perception is influenced by how followership is perceived by within a given organization with importance placed on how the leaders view the followership (Carsten, et al., 2010).

Volunteers are unique followers in organizations, because they provide service without compensation. Also, they typically seek out opportunities to provide such service (Omoto et al., 2010). Therefore, recognizing the motivations individuals have for seeking out volunteer opportunities is important to understanding volunteer followers. Research has recognized that volunteers' motives to volunteer can be attributed to fulfilling personal needs (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein, 2008, 2010; Shye, 2010). Furthermore, the literature suggests that volunteers continue to contribute their time in order to satisfy their identity as a volunteer (Grube and Pilliavin, 2000; Finkelstein, 2008; Finkelstein and Bannick, 2007). The knowledge of what motivates volunteers to volunteer in the first place and how much time they contribute to organizations is important to understanding volunteer followership. However, there is not enough research available that explores the quality of the contribution made by volunteers and what makes volunteer followers effective. These areas are important because nonprofits need volunteers that are effective and are able to make a valuable contribution to the organization.

The current literature on volunteerism can be utilized to offer possible solutions to help mitigate the major challenges of recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers faced by nonprofit organizations. A major portion of the existing research examines functional analysis and role identity theories in relation to volunteering (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein, 2008, 2010; Finkelstein and Bannick, 2007; Gronlund, 2011; Grube and Pilliavin, 2000; Shye, 2010). Yet, further research would be extremely helpful in providing further insight on the topic of volunteer followership. A better understanding of volunteers would benefit those who work in the nonprofit sector, especially in a leadership capacity. It would be advantageous because volunteers provide a substantial economic value to nonprofit organizations. Even though volunteers provide free service, there are still costs associated with maintaining a volunteer program (Worth, 2009). Many of the expenditures related to volunteers are related to the funds spent on the orientation and training of new volunteers (Brudney, 2005). Therefore, if organizations were better able to retain the volunteers they have it would provide a financial savings to the organization and the funds could be distributed elsewhere.

Specifically, additional research that explores volunteers in the framework of followership is needed. There is currently an extremely limited amount of research in existence that examines volunteerism in this context. Furthermore, the central focus of the research is on the

role of leadership and its relation to voluntary followers (Rowold and Rohmann, 2008). Further research would aid in the understanding of how to increase effectiveness in managing volunteers. Combining the concept of followership with volunteerism might be able to offer those in the nonprofit sector better insight into the unique type of followers who volunteer for nonprofit organizations.

CONCLUSION

Nonprofit organizations depend greatly on volunteers and understanding these volunteers in the context of followership is critical. Future research should explore volunteers within the context of follower types, such as those presented in the works of Kelley (1988, 2008), Chaleff (2003, 2008), and Kellerman (2008). In particular, researchers should examine if the motives one has for volunteering have any relation to the type of follower the individual is within the nonprofit organization. Additionally, the social constructs of followership should be studied in conjunction with identity theory in volunteerism to determine if one's identity as a volunteer is influenced by one's socially constructed perception of oneself within the organization. Research such as this will provide the nonprofit sector with an increased understanding of the follower role volunteers play within nonprofit organizations.

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