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Volunteers and well-being

*The leaders' functions in voluntary organizations and the
importance of volunteers' well-being*

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Volunteers and well-being:

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In this essay, I focused on voluntary organizations and the relations between their leaders and volunteers. There are many different types of voluntary organizations in the Danish society, and I chose to base the research on two organizations, that both have a client contact and aim to counsel and provide help to people who need help.

In the research, I aimed to find out what leaders of voluntary organizations can do in relations to the voluntary workforce, so the organization can function in an optimal way, and what they can do to increase their volunteers' well-being. The methodological approach involved qualitative methods, where the data collection was qualitative interviews with four participants. Two of the participants were consultants for leaders of voluntary organizations in the Northern region of Denmark, and two of them were leaders of organizations, that have both volunteers and professional workers.

The research problem required the theoretical approach to come from multiple theories, mainly within sociology, psychology and organizational theories. The leaders' assignments require a wide range of knowledge and experience within those areas, and that is why it became necessary to use theories from different origins. The theoretical approach was partly based on the ideology behind organizational culture theories, and socialization processes. To define well-being and to set focus on the basic needs of human beings, I found it necessary to introduce Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs. I also used theories about coaching and the coaching processes, organizational climate, and the volunteers' motivation. Those theories were used to create the interview guides (see attachment 1 and 2), that was availed in the interviews.

The results were that the leaders' functions in voluntary organizations are quite important in relation to the volunteers. It is important that they make an effort to find the right volunteers for the organization, and create a good work environment so the volunteers feel good at the workplace. It is vital that the volunteers feel acknowledged and

appreciated, and they have an opportunity to have some influence within the organizations' work frames. All that is a part of each volunteers' well-being, and that makes it necessary for leaders to have focus on the volunteers' well-being. Without voluntary workforce, the organization will eventually collapse as a voluntary organization.

The leaders have several options to increase the volunteers' sense of well-being, and they can use their imagination to find methods to do so. Those methods can be both systematic and more individualized. Both approaches are important but leaders have to take each volunteers needs in consideration and see them as a group of individuals. Some volunteers might prefer systematic approach, others more individualized, and the leaders have to find an optimal balance for the organization to function.

Based on those results, I made a process model, built on the keywords: motivation, acknowledgement, well-being, and voluntary workforce. I hope that it could be useful to leaders of voluntary organizations, and that the results can raise a debate about the importance of volunteers' well-being in organizations.

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1. Introduction

A clever man named Edgar Schein stated that there was more to being human than just being physical. It is also being a cultural construction.¹ The human being is a very complex phenomenon, and each and everyone has some needs that needs fulfilling. Doing voluntary work, can be a part of that process and contribute to a person's well-being. That makes it interesting to research the relations between volunteers' well-being and leadership. Volunteers are a big part of voluntary organizations, and if no one feels motivated to do voluntary work, the voluntary organizations could not exist. In this essay, I intend to focus on these relations from the leaders' perspectives. Leaders have to make sure that the organizations can function in an optimal way, and to do that they have to have voluntary workforce, and be aware of their volunteers' well-being.

Despite all the types of voluntary organizations at the market today, I have chosen to focus on voluntary organizations with a client contact. In other words, that refers to voluntary organizations that goals are to help their clients with a direct contact between the organizations workers and the clients, by providing counseling or other necessary aid to them. The organizations I use in the research also have it in common, both to have volunteers and professional workers. Even though I focus on these organizations, I believe that the results can give an insight into the voluntary environment as it is today, because all voluntary organizations are relying on voluntary workforce. That makes it crucial for all leaders of voluntary organizations to focus on the relations between the volunteers and the organizations, and to be concerned about the volunteers' well-being.

In this chapter, I will introduce the research field and the research problem. I will end by introducing upcoming chapters and the project's procedure.

¹ Schein. 2004:171

1.1. Research field

There are mainly three types of organizations: Private organizations, public organizations and voluntary organizations. Under normal circumstances, the main difference involves the purposes and the aims of the organizations; where private organizations try to make as much profit as possible for the owners, the public organizations try to serve the society in the best possible way, and voluntary organizations that usually have the main goal to help others and promote some ideals.² Sometimes voluntary organizations are referred to as *NGO's*, that is, *Non-Governmental Organizations*, but there are also other names. *The third sector* has also been used and refers to voluntary organizations; the other two sectors are the state and the market.³ NGO is a relatively new name; at least it was not as common some decades ago, as it is today. Before it was more common to use names as for example *nonprofit-organizations* and the third sector, but they were considered to have a negative meaning.⁴

Birgit Perlt, a senior consultant at *Center for voluntary work* (Danish: Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde), considers a traditional voluntary work to be providing financial aid to the organizations clients. Today, the traditional form is not as common as it was few decades ago. It was partly replaced with a more modern form of voluntary work that involves more direct contact between the organizations workers and *clients*, in order to create network around the clients.⁵ That type of organizations is the type I focus on in my research. The development has been that it has gotten more common, at least in Scandinavia, for the state to support voluntary organizations. Today, those organizations are sometimes just as dependent on the state as the state is on them, since many of the organizations provide help or assistance to the citizens, that the state would have to provide for otherwise.⁶ That development has also done that there has been more focus on professionalizing, and that has resulted in increased number of professional, paid workers within voluntary organizations.⁷

² Bager, Obel and Sjøgaard. 2001:14-15

³ Klausen. 1990:26

⁴ Klausen. 1995:101

⁵ Perlt. 2004:51

⁶ Klausen. 1995:96-98

⁷ Klausen. 1990:153

Researches at this field are relatively new here in the Nordic countries. Some research has been made on the history and political role of some special organizations, but it was not until in the 1980's that some research concerning voluntary organizations, as a whole, were made.⁸ In the years 1994-1996 an extensive research was made called *Frivillighed i Norden*. One of the focus areas was about the volunteers' profiles. The results were that among the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) the average percent of volunteers was 69% female, around 47% of the volunteers were over sixty years old (although there was a difference between the countries), and the average amount of work hours was nineteen hours a week.⁹ According to those results, the typical volunteer is a woman at the retirement age that does nineteen hours of voluntary work a week.

1.2. Research problem

The research problem is the base of the research and a red thread throughout the project. After looking into the research field, I found this research problem most interesting and worth examining, because it is quite relevant for leaders of voluntary organizations. The research problem in this project is twofold:

*What can leaders of voluntary organizations do in relation to voluntary workforce,
so the organizations can function optimally?
What can they do to increase the volunteers' well-being?*

1.3. The project's procedure

The project consists of five chapters, along with the attachments and literature list. In the next chapter, I introduce the methodological approach to the research, along with the data used in the research. The third chapter contains the theoretical perspectives and the relevant concepts, and the keywords there are organizational culture, hierarchy of basic needs, coaching, organizational climate, and motivation. After that chapter, the data is analyzed, with a focus on the research problem. Finally, the main conclusions are drawn together and the relevance is evaluated from the leaders' perspectives.

⁸ Henriksen and Ibsen. 2001:9

⁹ Habermann. 2001:88-92

2. Methodological approach

This chapter is about the methodological approach, and how the methodology is applied in the research. The methodology in this research is in the spirit of qualitative methods, and contained four participants. The second section is about the data collection, and after that the indexing and analysis of the data is discussed. Section 2.4. is about the data validation and the research reliability. In this chapter, there will also be coverage of development of the interview guides, relevant questions, and ethical thoughts and reflections that came up in the process. Finally, there is a description of the participants, and how I found them. In the very end, there is a summary of this chapter's footage.

2.1. Qualitative methods

Qualitative research methods are very common and widely known, especially in social sciences.¹⁰ They seek to define and explain a certain pattern that can only be reached with certain methods.¹¹ The purpose is not to generalize, but to describe, explicate and understand some phenomenon or incidents. Qualitative research methods try to elucidate how the human beings create their sociologic reality and try to understand a social phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. That is what makes qualitative methods suitable to get a whole picture of experiences and situations of few individuals. Instead of generalizing, the purpose is to interpret and analyze the participants' experiences from their point of view. In order to do that, it is necessary to have a good interview guide to help the participants to discuss the day-to-day reality they find themselves in.¹² The results are in a form of *grounded theory*, where data collection and analysis are combined.¹³

¹⁰ Denzin and Lincoln. 2005:ix

¹¹ Huberman and Miles. 1998:185

¹² Creswell. 1998:51-54

¹³ Bryman. 2004:401

In this project I used qualitative methods to seek insight into how leaders of voluntary organizations experience their role. What do they consider their role when it comes to getting the organizations to function optimally? Are they concerned about their volunteers' well-being? What are their relations to the volunteers? Qualitative methods can be applied to get an insight into their experience when it comes to answering these questions and others, which are relevant for the research problem. By approaching the subject with this method, I seek to understand the subject better based on real experiences of leaders, instead of generalizing the research problem's relevance.

2.2. Data collection

I interviewed four persons, that all had some different views on the subject. In the spirit of qualitative methods, I found it more appropriate to get thorough descriptions of their experiences, instead of using quantitative methods that are used to get a more external understanding of many participants' experiences. Quantitative methods are more appropriate when the researcher is examining a *group* of people using surveys or experiments, but qualitative methods are more common when a thorough investigation of fewer *individuals* is required. To find the answers I needed, it was necessary to take enough time to interview each participant, and to analyze the interviews. Despite the low number of participants, I believe that the results apply for other organizations as well, because I believe that the research problem is relevant for all voluntary organizations.

The interviews are the most important stage of the data collection, because they are procurement for knowledge. The personal relationships created between the participants and the interviewers, are invaluable, and can often change the interviewers' vision to the research itself.¹⁴ In this case, it was best suitable to use *semi-structured* interviews to get the sensitivity and the personal connection is necessary.¹⁵ To get the most accurate results, I found it important to get as close to the participants' views on the subject as possible. It is vital to gain the participants trust, so they would be ready to talk openly and share their views and opinions. The intention was to create a good atmosphere, in hope of getting some valuable information in return.

¹⁴ Kvale. 1996:124

¹⁵ Punch. 1998:169-171

All the interviews were taken in Jutland; one in Aarhus and the rest in Aalborg. The time length was from approximately forty minutes up to approximately seventy minutes. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed, word for word, in Danish because they were taken in Danish. After indexing, I translated the bits I used into English. All the participants are anonymous so it was possible for them to share their own opinions, and not the views of the organizations they work for.

2.3. Indexing and analysis

In the book, *Writing up qualitative research* says that the main purpose of qualitative methods is to index, analyze, and interpret the data that are collected. That involves retrieving useful information from the data, and analyzing them using certain methods. The main purpose with this procedure is to find a common essence among the information and interpret that in the right context.¹⁶ The purpose with the interviews in my research was to collect knowledge about experiences and opinions of the participants, which I could use later on to find certain themes in the research itself. In the interviews, it is important to be attentive and ready to change opinions that you might have had before, in harmony to the results of the interviews.¹⁷ My aim was not to generalize, and make results only based on the theoretical background and my personal experiences, but to listen to what the participants had to say and try to see the reason behind their opinions. Therefore, the grounded theory and the results are based on the participants' perspectives, although they are approached with a theoretical background.

Huberman and Miles described subcategories in data analyzing, in their article *Data management and analysis methods*. Among those subcategories are the methods *data reduction* and *data display*. The data reduction was necessary so the results would not get to extensive, and there I used *coding* to find the relevant themes and the core of the data. The method is used mostly to analyze systematic details and systematically index them. A certain part of the data is marked, and that can be either a big or a small unit within the data.¹⁸ It is common to use coding at the first stage of the indexing, to

¹⁶ Wolcott. 2001:44

¹⁷ Wolcott. 2001:33

¹⁸ McMillan. 2000:266

draw the data together, and categorize the themes found in the data. The second stage of the coding is *axial coding* and is used to connect the categories together.¹⁹ It turned out to be useful to find a common ground to build the project on, and combine it with the theory. An example of how I used coding was that I started by reading the interviews over and mark the most common words, concepts, and themes. That way I created some research areas, and axial coding was applied in order to connect them together and combine them with the theory.

The data display method was used to find a certain look and frames for the research, and was used to index the results up so they were accessible and easy to compare.²⁰ In this project, the data display method was applied in connection to axial coding, because it was crucial to find the right order for the research areas to be displayed, in context with the theoretical background. The most accessible order seemed to be in connection to the process of how the relation between the leaders and the volunteers develop.

2.4. Reliability and validation

The results would be useless if they were not reliable and valid. Because of the essence of qualitative researches, it can be very difficult to measure their validity, on the contrast to quantitative researches. It is harder to measure validity out from few interviews than out of a survey in which more people participated. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate the reliability of the results. Many qualitative researchers have suggested that different criteria should be used for qualitative research methods, and propose that term of *trustworthiness* is emphasized and evaluated.²¹

In the book *Social research methods* by Alan Bryman, trustworthiness is considered to have four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.²² It is difficult to evaluate whether those criteria are accomplished, but before the interviews I investigated the participants and contacted the ones I found most trustworthy. All of the participants have a long experience for being leaders and

¹⁹ Creswell. 1998:150-151

²⁰ Creswell. 1998:141

²¹ Bryman. 2004:273

²² Bryman. 2004:273

consultants, and I consider them credible because of that. Transferability can have cultural impact that affects the results. I do not know whether this research problem would have been considered relevant few decades ago, but I believe that the content of the research problem is something all leaders have to be aware of, and cannot lose its validity in some years from now. To evaluate the dependability of the research, it is relevant to evaluate the data and the theoretical inferences. There could be a possible problem because of the language since I am Icelandic, some of the theoretical inferences and the interviews were in Danish and then translated to English. The dependability of this research can never be secured completely, but because I double checked the theoretical inferences and gave the participants a chance to read the final version and confirm their references, I believe that the results can be considered dependable. The last criterion is confirmability and can be evaluated in relation to the researcher's objectivity. I believe it is impossible to take an interview without having any ideas or opinions about the results, but the criterion of confirmability can still be fulfilled if the interview questions are neutral and not leading. I evaluated the confirmability out of my methods of asking questions and be an interviewer.

A complete assuredness concerning the reliability and validity of the results can never be obtained. To secure the validity of the results in best possible way, it is important to be aware of those criteria throughout the whole process, to get proofreaders that are familiar with the research field, and to give the participants a chance to confirm their references. An evaluation of those criteria has assured me that the results are trustworthy, and can be applied in other voluntary organizations as well.

2.5. Interview guides and research questions

The interview guides were used to organize the interviews and follow the themes that were found with the theoretical approach. I made two interview guides, since I interviewed both consultants and leaders (see attachments 1 and 2). I believe that the interviews should be like normal conversations in many ways but despite that, there are still some rules that apply. It demands organizational skills and to be able to use

systematic research questions. In my experience, it is best to keep the questions as simple as possible and accessible, so the participants know what you are going after.²³

In this research, I value the interviews with the leaders more than the interviews with the consultants, since the research problem is based on leaders' perspectives. The interview guides were based on the theoretical approach and among the topics I asked about, was the leaders' role in contrast to the volunteers, the organizational culture, relations between the volunteers job and their well-being, what can be done to increase the volunteers' well-being, the volunteers motivation, the work environment, social integration processes and the relations between the professionals at the organizations and the volunteers.

I only used the interview guides as a frame of reference, because I wanted to let the interview develop normally and hear what the participants had to say. I found it important, to make the best of the interviews and in order to do that, I gave the participants some space to talk about what they were mostly interested in. The interviews ended up being quite different, although they were all within the same frame of references, and I managed to follow the red thread.

2.6. Ethics in researches

My opinions on ethics in researches are quite clear. The participants should never experience physical or psychic damage because of their participation in the research.²⁴ The researchers should do everything in their power to protect the participants and minimize the negative influences the researches might have. In order to do that, it is necessary to think about anonymity. There can be cases, where it is not possible to keep the full anonymity, because the research requires some personal information that can lead to recognition of the persons involved.

In this project, I decided not to give up names or age of the participants, and I tried to make the organizations they work for as unrecognizable as possible. I was concerned that the participants could not keep their anonymity since their job descriptions are unique and the organizations they work for could easily be recognizable since there

²³ Kvale. 1996:129-132

²⁴ Bryman. 2004:509

are no other organizations at exactly the same field. I still found it important for the results that the reader had some idea about the organizational environment, so I described the organizations briefly without giving up what organizations they are (see section 2.7.1.).

2.7. Participants

In the beginning, I had many thoughts about how to sample the participants. First, I wondered whether to choose one organization and interview several people within that organization, or to do as I did and find different organizations and interview people in same positions. The motivation for that was to get more oversight, and to be able to compare the views and opinions of leaders in the same position. I wanted to view the research problem from the leaders' perspectives, so I chose to interview two leaders of voluntary organizations and compare their answers. In order to get broader results, I also interviewed two consultants because of their experiences with counseling leaders of voluntary organizations. Although the consultants work for a voluntary organization, it has no relevance for this project. I consider the focus to be on the two voluntary organizations the leaders work for, and those are the organizations referred to in the project.

Since I am Icelandic, I also wondered whether to have Icelandic interviews, to use English, or to take them here in Denmark in Danish. I choose to take the interviews here in Denmark because I see Denmark as my future job market, and even though I am more confident in Icelandic (and English), I found it more important to get familiar with the Danish scenario.

The essence of qualitative methods is to keep more focus on fewer participants and their experiences. The consequence could be that the results would not have relevance at the larger scale. To minimize the risk of that, I found it important to find the right participants and be selective finding them. A random sample was therefore not suitable. I found *purposive sampling* appropriate, because then the researcher finds participants who are best suitable for the research problem.²⁵ That way, I could be very

²⁵ Bryman. 2004:333-334

selective finding the right participants and select participants that I expected to have specific knowledge and the experience that the research required. So although the interviews were not that many, they were quite thorough and of a great relevance for the results.

The interview process occurred from April to May 2008. All the interviews took place at the participants' work places, which also gave me an insight into their work environment.

2.7.1. Introduction of the participants

Here is a brief introduction of the participants:

Leader A

This participant is a leader for one of the largest voluntary organization in Denmark. The organization has both professional workforce and volunteers. It was founded in the 1950's, and the leader is leading their department in Jutland, and has been working there for several years. The organization is financially independent, meaning that it is not depending on financial aid from the state. It is cooperating with many other organizations and works both here in Denmark and throughout the world, mainly to help refugees to get asylum and integrate.

Leader B

The second leader is leading a smaller organization than leader A. The organization has been active for almost twenty years. It is also financially independent, it offers help to everyone that need help and support during the evenings and the nighttime. It is possible to both call and show up, and get anonymous conversation either with a professional worker or with a volunteer. When the interview was taken, there were around sixty volunteers employed at the organization, but it is very different from time to time. The leader has worked there since 1996, and has been in a leader position for the last years.

Consultant A

This participant is a female consultant, working for an organization that supports and develops voluntary work in Aalborg commune. She is the youngest participant but has experience from this work field. Her job is to help organizations in their relations to volunteers, participating in projects and local networks.

Consultant B

Consultant B is male and employed in the same position and at the same organization as consultant A. He is middle age and has a very extensive experience from working with volunteers and organizations that recruit volunteers and base their work on voluntary workforce.

2.8. Summary

In this chapter, I have debated the procedure of the research and the methodological approach to it. The approach is based on qualitative research methods, which are quite common in social sciences. Qualitative research methods are based on thorough interviews where it is important to create good relationships between the researchers and the participants. After introducing the essence of the research method, the focus was on the data collection and the methods I used to index and analyze the data. In the research, I used purposive sampling to find the four participants I needed and by using that type of sampling, I could be very selective finding the right participants. Based on the theoretical approach, I had prepared interview guides to help me follow the red thread. The chapter also contained some reflections about ethics and the procedure. Finally, there was a discussion about access to the participants and a brief description of them.

3. Theoretical approach

In this chapter, I will introduce the theoretical base for the project. I have chosen few theoretical perspectives that I find necessary to debate and take in consideration before the analyzing process starts. It is also important to clarify and define some concepts that I intend to use later on. Since the research problem is quite extensive, I decided to use different types of theories. The themes of every section in this chapter are based on those theories, and all of them have relevance to the research problem, although they might not be directly relevant to each other.

One of the perspectives I am going to use, comes from the organizational culture theories (see section 3.1), and within those theories I have mainly chosen Schein's ideas and theories, since they are very well known and can be used in voluntary organizations as well as the regular ones. In section 3.2., there is a brief discussion about the work relations in voluntary organizations. The relations can be more complicated in voluntary organizations and therefore I find it crucial to define them and clarify the difference. In section 3.3., there is an introduction to Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs. In order to examine the volunteers' well-being, it is relevant to keep in mind what the basic needs are, how they are fulfilled, and whether they are part of the volunteers' motivation to do voluntary work. Section 3.4. is about the coaching and mentoring relationships. It is necessary to define the concept of coaching and mentoring, and investigate whether they have relevance for voluntary organizations.

Section 3.5. is about the organizational environment and describes the factors, both within and outside the organization, that play parts in creating a work climate that can be either good or bad. In section 3.6., I discuss the motivation to do voluntary work, both conscious and unconscious, because I believe that it is necessary to have an insight into what drives people to do voluntary work. In section 3.7., the results for doing voluntary work are debated, and how they can result in a better well-being, which is quite related to the research problem. Afterwards, there is a brief discussion of the theoretical problems, and in the end the content of this chapter is summed up.

3.1. Organizational culture

Organizational culture theories try to explain how organizations work and how individuals and groups think within organizations.²⁶ It is a fact that one of the most important needs of the human being is to have a feeling of belonging to a group and be able to identify with a group. Organizational culture theories can be used to create social unification and fulfill those needs that could lead to a sense of well-being.²⁷ To be able to understand organizational culture, it is vital to understand the concept of culture. Gareth Morgan is one of the many who have tried to define culture. In his book *Images of organization* he defined culture as a certain pattern of development that was reflected in the society and can be seen in the society's knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day rituals.²⁸ I agree with Morgan, but I find his definition too external for my project. Another person who has defined culture is Edgar Schein. He is one of the best-known researchers within organizational culture theories and I find his definition of culture more suitable since it is more in the spirit of organizational culture theories. In his book, *Organizational culture and leadership*, he defined culture as: “*Culture is the result of a complex group learning process that is only partially influenced by leader behavior. But if the group’s survival is threatened because of elements of its culture have become maladapted, it is ultimately the function of leadership at all levels of the organization to recognize and do something about this situation. It is in this sense that leadership and culture are conceptually intertwined.*”²⁹ What Schein thinks about culture, can also apply for organizational culture and therefore I find his definition more suitable for my project.

Schein adds that culture of a group can be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions, adapted to each group in order to deal with problems of external adoption and internal integration within organizations. If those procedures were successful, they were brought on to new members of the group. Usually, new members of a group seek to learn about the groups’ operating norms and assumptions. Schein does not deny that the group can survive without having shared assumptions but once it exists, then the socialization process starts by transferring those shared assumptions to the new

²⁶ Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:11

²⁷ Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:129

²⁸ Morgan. 1986:112

²⁹ Schein. 2004:11

members.³⁰ I can imagine that those methods can be either positive or negative, so in order for the organization to survive, it is important to create a good organizational culture that works for the people attached to the organization.

But one thing is to define culture, another thing is to define organizational culture. Kirsten Michaelsen, consultant at *Center for voluntary work* (Danish: Center for frivilligt socialt arbejde) in Odense, considers a good organizational culture to be a culture, where the organizations' goals are legible, and where the organizations' values are obvious in the work.³¹ Schein partly defined organizational culture like that, but his definition has more dimensions. According to Schein, organizational culture is to think in dynamic evolutionary terms and there are four critical elements that have to be fulfilled. *Structural stability* is implied within some levels of culture since the cultural features are not only shared, but also stable, because it defines the group. *Depth*, since culture is the deepest part of a group and therefore less visible than other parts. *Breadth*, since it covers all of group functioning that can be of a very different kind and *patterning/integration* since its elements are tied together in the definition of culture, and culture formation is always striving towards patterning and integration.³² I believe that all those elements are vital for organizational culture, but I think that sometimes they are fulfilled unconsciously. That could be a problem when it comes to collect data with a theoretical perspective.

I think that the concept of culture is very wide and can be used in many contexts that do not necessarily relate to each other. Therefore, there are some different definitions of the concept and in this section, I have chosen to debate the ones I find best suitable for my project. When culture theories are applied, it is important to realize that the cases can be very different and should be analyzed in their own terms. I believe that Schein's ideas about organizational culture can provide the best ground for the research, because they are well known in researches at this field and have often been used to examine organizational culture. Based on Schein's ideas, I believe that the organizational culture is most likely to survive if the new members of the group are willing to adapt to the patterns and even help improving the former methods so they work in a better way. That I

³⁰ Schein. 2004:17-19

³¹ Michaelsen. 2004:44

³² Schein. 2004:14-17

intend to investigate especially in connection to recruitment and the volunteers' impacts to the organization (see section 4.3., 4.5. and 4.6.).

3.2. Work relations in voluntary organizations

I have chosen to debate the relations between the organizations and its workers, especially the volunteers, because the relations can be very different in voluntary organizations than they are in normal organizations. Normally, the relations between the organizations and its workers would be defined as hierarchic relations between the individuals and the organizations. The employees have a contract where they sell their workforce to the organizations and do the assignments that they were hired to do.³³ In the recruitment process, it is necessary to look at qualifications and how each person fits to the organizations. It will influence what kind of organizational culture will evolve in the future.³⁴ In contrast to paid professional workers, the volunteers usually have only the organizations' perspective on the work within the organizations. They don't have to deal with the conflicts between professionalism and the organizations' goals and values, but have a responsibility to let the organizations' values be the drive for their work and their job is to "translate" the organizations' values to the world outside the organizations. Therefore, it is extremely important for leaders to create good work frames for the volunteers, based on good ethics.³⁵

Tine Murphy wrote the article *Medlemsdemokrati versus handlingsdemokrati*, and in her opinion, the volunteers need to be able to adapt to the organizations in the work process so the organizations can function optimally. That might require a work structure, where the volunteers can take breaks from the work occasionally, and still feel like they have contributed with something. They should have the possibility to change their relations to the organizations, without causing a disagreement. It is just as important for the volunteers to get a chance to develop and grow, and get new assignments when needed.³⁶ I agree with Murphy, and I believe that it is essential for every volunteer to find an organization that fits their ideology and motives, because usually the volunteers have

³³ Bager, Obel and Sjøgaard. 2001:12

³⁴ Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:141

³⁵ Michaelsen. 2004:44

³⁶ Murphy. 2004:29

to adapt to the organizations but not the other way around. In order for the volunteers to fit in, it is crucial that they get a chance to get to know the organizations and the work environment and they might need some time and help from the organizations behalf to do so. I believe that the volunteers have to adapt to the organizations, but since voluntary workforce is usually a big part of voluntary organizations, the organizations often have to grow with the volunteers, in the way that the majority of the volunteers can influence the organizations and be a part of making changes on former policies, values and goals.

Carol Barbeito is a Ph.D. and a president of CLB & Associates, who provide service in broad range of management and leadership topics. She finds it important that there are formal job descriptions for every type of voluntary work within the organizations. She thinks that such a job description could prevent misunderstandings and it is a useful tool to help the organizations to hire the right volunteers.³⁷ I agree with Barbeito, and believe that finding the right volunteers can be tricky for the leaders, but it can be helpful to spend time and resources in the recruitment process to avoid problems later on.

In the analysis, I intend to use this theoretical approach to find out what the leaders' role is when it comes to recruit new volunteers, and what the participants think about the volunteers' impact to the organizations, and what degree of influences from the volunteers they consider optimal for the organizations (see section 4.3. and 4.5.).

3.3. Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs

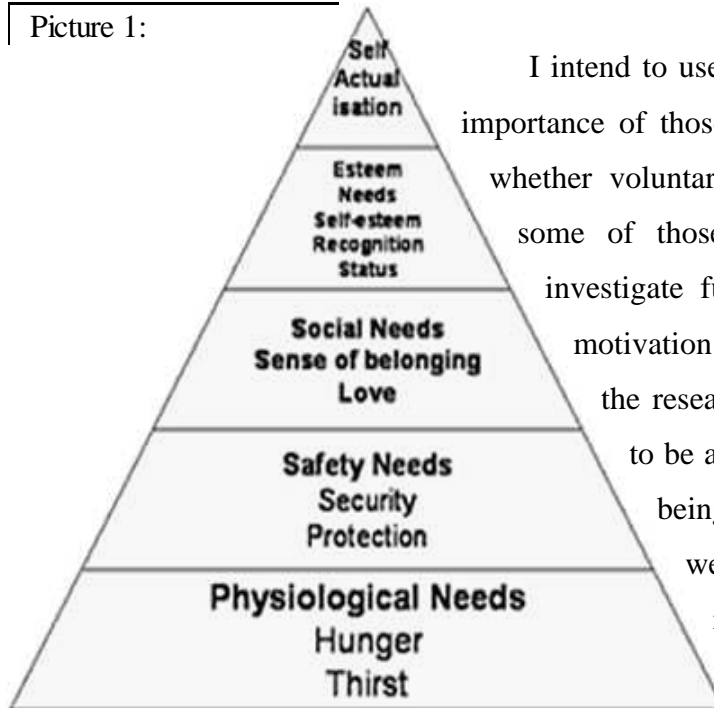
Maslow's theory is that there are at least five sets of goals called needs and they are physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Out from those needs he made the *hierarchy of basic needs*, where the basic needs are arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency, where some of the needs are more important than others. Research has shown how the hierarchy functions in relations to organizations and the results have been that if these basic needs are fulfilled, the management will see stores of hidden energy and productive cooperation.³⁸ Maslow is well known for this hierarchy and because of its popularity; it is natural that some criticism has occurred. The hierarchy has been

³⁷ Barbeito. 2004:143

³⁸ Maslow. 2000:3-4

criticized for the categories being imprecisely formulated that result in confusion about the content. The confusion is often about the order of the needs, and how they should be fulfilled. However, the criticism might not be applicable because it was never Maslow's intention that the needs had to be fulfilled in any specific order or that one of the need had to be fulfilled before the next one could take over. Maslow made it clear, that the same person's needs, could be fulfilled and at the same time unfulfilled and the degree of completeness would change while moving up in the hierarchy.³⁹

Picture 1:



I intend to use Maslow's hierarchy to show the importance of those basic needs being fulfilled and whether voluntary work can contribute to fulfill some of those needs. That I will primarily investigate further in relations to volunteers' motivation (see section 4.2.). In relations to the research problem, I consider it crucial to be aware of the basic needs of human beings in order to examine people's well-being. I believe that Maslow is right about these being the basic needs, as long as it is taken in consideration that the needs do not weigh the same and they do not have to be fulfilled in any particular order or be fulfilled at the same time.

3.4. Coaching, mentoring and training programs

In the literature that I used in this project, the concepts of *coaching* and *mentoring* are often confused. To define the difference I used Parsloe and Wray's ideas about coaching, and Raymond Noe's definition of mentoring. In Noe's opinion, a mentoring relationship is present when a person who has experience and productiveness, educates or trains another person. It has become very popular among organizations to use mentoring

³⁹ Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:237-238

relationships for socialization processes and training programs.⁴⁰ Parsloe and Wray considered coaching to be a dynamic workplace activity and constantly expanding.⁴¹ Coaching is more common to train or educate a group of people.

In coaching and mentoring other employees, trainability of the employees could have a very significant role. The environment created by the organizations can influence the trainability. Important factors could be the climate concerning changes and the social factors created by supervisors and coworkers of the work settings that provides reinforcement and feedback.⁴² I believe that trainability has a very significant and central part in coaching processes, and therefore it is important that the new employees are trainable.

A good training program results in positive trainee reaction, learning, behavior change, and improvements in job-related outcomes, which would have good effects on the organizations.⁴³ The mentor's, or the coach's intention, would most often be to leave the person that is being coached more competent in the field.⁴⁴ The use of behavior modeling training programs has increased and many organizations have begun to use mentoring relationships as a part of their recruitment strategy with good results.⁴⁵ There are many different models to use, and organizations should find a model that fits their work place, and that they find comfortable. Training programs are a big part in the coaching and mentoring processes, and they are one of the first things that affect new volunteers. In section 4.3.3., I will examine how it is to start as a volunteer in the voluntary organizations and whether the organizations provide a training program of any kind.

3.5. Organizational environment

Organizational environment is a concept used to describe the themes or imperatives that employees use when they describe their organizations. The consistencies of these themes are based on the practices, procedures and rewarded behaviors that are

⁴⁰ Noe. 1991a:475-476

⁴¹ Parsloe and Wray. 2000:41

⁴² Noe. 1991b:510

⁴³ Noe. 1991b:509

⁴⁴ Flaherty. 2005:2

⁴⁵ Noe. 1991a:475

happening to the employees and in their environment.⁴⁶ Rudolf H. Moos and Andrew G. Billings wrote the book *Understanding and improving work climates*: “*Work environment, also labeled work climate, refers to the social-psychological characteristics of a work setting. The work environment includes the attitudes of employees toward the work tasks and their communication with each other and with their supervisors. Each work settings develops a “style” or a work climate, which influences how decisions are made and defines typical patterns of interactions at work.*”⁴⁷ According to this, the workers have most to say about their work environment. The leaders can make an effort to create a good work environment, but in the end, the workers have most influence. I believe that a good work environment is one of the key elements when it comes to the volunteers’ well-being.

Every individual has to adjust to several environments. According to the Minnesota theory, the other environments in every employee’s live already influence the work environment. The theory also acknowledges the influence of the work environment to the other environments in every individual’s lives. The theory is based on the idea that the work environment is created by the people working there and is therefore under their influence.⁴⁸ For that reason is the individuals’ well-being at the work place, like other places, extremely important, since it influences the creation of the work environment. According to Moos and Billings, relationship dimensions, personal growth dimensions, system maintenance and change of dimensions, are the key elements of work climate. Relationship dimensions refer to the relations between employees and between the manager/leader to the employees. Personal growth dimensions refer to the work environments’ influence on personal growth of the employees. System maintenance and change of dimensions refer to the structure of the workplace and openness to make changes.⁴⁹ As a result, it seems like the volunteers’ well-being in general, not just at the work place, and the relations within the workplace, has a big influence on the work climate within the organization.

⁴⁶ Schneider and Gunnarson. 1991:542

⁴⁷ Moos and Billings. 1991:552

⁴⁸ Dawis. 1991:535

⁴⁹ Moos and Billings. 1991:553

I believe that is important, both for the organizations and people interested in voluntary work, to understand the work climate and thereby the conditions they have to work under. I think that the work environment is of great importance in voluntary organizations and therefore it is essential for leaders to work on creating a good work climate, in order to increase the volunteers' well-being, so the volunteers will find themselves in a good work environment. I section 4.6. I will analyze whether leaders should make an effort to create a good work environment and whether they think it is important.

3.5.1. Importance of trust

Some researchers believe that if the organization applies administrative control then it signals that the management does not trust the employees enough and that the trust is necessary to build up a good core ideology.⁵⁰ Fran Tonkiss and Andrew Passey examined the status for development of the voluntary sector in Britain the year 1999. Their results were that within voluntary work, three key features were pertinent in the theoretical perspectives on trust. They found out that trust relations are required in voluntarism and agency, since voluntarism is the base of voluntary organizations. Shared values link to the concept of trust, and trust relations separate themselves from the confidence-based work structures.⁵¹ It seems that trust has a very significant role in workers' well-being at the work place, and should not be underestimated. In the analysis, I intend to find out whether trust relations play that significant role, Tonkiss and Passey talk about (see section 4.6.2.).

3.6. Motivation and identity

All volunteers have some kind of motive for volunteering. In general, the motives divide into four categories: Political, intellectual, social and emotional.⁵² In the book, *Spirituality and social care*, Mary Nash and Bruce Stewart wrote about spirituality being the emotional motivator for many volunteers. They also wrote about the importance,

⁵⁰ Zucker. 1986; Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:150-151

⁵¹ Tonkiss and Passey. 1999:272

⁵² De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:10

when managing volunteers, to be aware of and understand the volunteers' motivation for doing the job.⁵³ Most volunteers might get their motivation because they want to work for a joint goal and feel a part of a group.⁵⁴ I believe that a creation of identities could also be a factor used to motivate people to do voluntary work. Ulla Habermann wrote the article *En nordisk frivillighed*. She thinks that voluntary work could help each and everyone to create an identity and self-actualization where the person feels active, useful, and acknowledged.⁵⁵ Mary Morris wrote the book *Voluntary work in the welfare state*, where she discussed the motives volunteers might have to do voluntary work. She thinks that the main motives can be threefold. Some volunteers do voluntary work because they have a genuine desire to help and increase happiness for others, some volunteers do it because they have an urge to further a certain cause, and some volunteers do it because they want to satisfy their own personal needs to do activities outside their home.⁵⁶ In my opinion, that fits with the four main categories, since those motives are either political, intellectual, social, or emotional. I believe that the motives can be categorized in many different ways, but the content is still quite similar, at least on the surface. Therefore, I agree that the main motives could usually be categorized as political, intellectual, social, or emotional. These motives are likely to be conscious choices made by the volunteers, but I do think that the volunteers can have unconscious motives as well.

According to Jacobsen and Thorvik, socialization occurs when people learn how to behave so they are accepted and acknowledged as members of groups or organizations. That progress develops through an observation of how other members of the groups behave and emphasize what they think is important. Through this process, it is possible to create social identities, and that is very important for the development of a good culture within organizations.⁵⁷ I believe that is because if the volunteers are able to create good social identities, they contribute in a positive way to the organizational environments. Acknowledgement is also important, and in that context I find it relevant to introduce Axel Honneth's theory about the struggle for recognition. In the article *Grounding recognition*, he insists that the struggle for recognition must be regarded as permanent

⁵³ Nash and Stewart. 2002:97-99

⁵⁴ Brixen. 2004b:70

⁵⁵ Habermann. 2001:96

⁵⁶ Morris. 1998:194

⁵⁷ Jacobsen and Thorvik. 2002:137

features of the social life of the individuals but not a temporary phenomena.⁵⁸ Honneth has also defined three patterns of inter-subjective recognition and he calls them *love, rights and solidarity*. There he adopts a number of psychoanalytic motives and techniques in order to understand the inter-subjective relations that result in patterns of self-development. The purpose of the theory is to show the importance of the individuals being acknowledged in all those areas of their lives. If fulfilling those criteria, it will eventually result in well-being.⁵⁹ According to this, I draw the conclusion, that it is important for the individuals to behave after the appropriate norms and values, and being recognized in the work processes. The voluntary work might not fulfill all of the three types of recognition Honneth debates, but the volunteers might seek recognition and acknowledgement at some areas in the voluntary work. I assume that it could be one of the motives for doing the voluntary work, even though the volunteers themselves might not be aware of it.

According to this, the motives can be either conscious or unconscious. The conscious motives are usually political, intellectual, social, or emotional and the unconscious motives can be to seek acceptance, acknowledgement, and recognition. In section 4.2., I intend to analyze those motives from the participants' perspectives.

3.7. Well-being being the result

In the history, it is easy to find messages about the human beings needing to be concerned about the well-being of others.⁶⁰ In a research made by Anna Nieboer and Siegwart Lindenberg, the results were that voluntary work improved people's well-being. They made a scale to test well-being and found out that the well-being of both employed and unemployed people, who did voluntary work, was higher than with employed and unemployed people who did not do any voluntary work.⁶¹

In the book *The social psychology of prosocial behavior*, numbers of research made on the connection between volunteering and well-being were mentioned. Among other results, volunteering was considered most likely to lead to a better physical and

⁵⁸ Honneth. 2002:502

⁵⁹ Honneth. 1996:92-130

⁶⁰ Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder and Penner. 2006:8-9

⁶¹ Nieboer and Lindenberg. 2002:184

mental health among isolated people. In addition, widows started doing more voluntary work after their widowhood since it was considered to prevent depression. In another research, the results were that volunteering helped less integrated people to benefit psychologically.⁶² Similar results were revealed in the essay *Feeling good about doing good*, after Jane Piliavin. Those results were that volunteering benefited the self-esteem, personal happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, and minimized the risk of depression.⁶³ Therefore, there are many positive affects of doing voluntary work and one of them seems to be that it increases one's sense of well-being.

In the book, *The social psychology of prosocial behavior*, different aspects of the concept *helping* are described. The definition of helping is often that helping increases the well-being of the person receiving the help. However, there is also something called *egoistic help*. That means that when one helps someone, it makes one feel better. Therefore, the well-being of the helper has also increased.⁶⁴ So theoretically, I believe that voluntary work could be a win-win situation for all partners. But I will investigate that further in section 4.8..

3.8. Theoretical problems

I discovered some theoretical problems when making this chapter. Furthermore, I do not seem to be the only one coming across with those problems. Kurt Klausen has struggled with some of the same problems and he described them in his article *Om teoretiske problemer ved studiet af frivillige organisationer*, based on one of his lectures. Klausen pointed out that the theories within the study of organizations and politics, are often inapplicable for voluntary organizations, and could give a false result, if applied.⁶⁵ The main reason for that is that voluntary organizations are more often than other organizations, controlled by traditions, coincidences, and circumstances.⁶⁶ I agree with Klausen, and like him, I also struggled with the fact that it was almost impossible to use a single theoretical approach to the project. That problem occurs because there is very

⁶² Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder and Penner. 2006:251

⁶³ Piliavin. 2005:32

⁶⁴ Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder and Penner. 2006:22-26

⁶⁵ Klausen. 1991:13

⁶⁶ Klausen. 1991:23

limited material about voluntary organizations only, and the general organizational theories are not always applicable because voluntary organizations are so different from other organizations. That is why it became vital to approach the project with different theories and use relevant material, even though it came from different directions.⁶⁷

Even though Klausen's book is based on a lecture from the year 1991, I have to admit that those problems are still there, although there might be slightly more material now, than there was back then.

3.9. Summary

The intention with this chapter was to introduce some of the most relevant theories, concepts, and definitions, to base the analysis on. I decided to use some theories within organizational culture theories, and there I mainly focused on Schein. He thinks that group culture should be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions and the socialization process is so those assumptions can be transferred. I have also found out that the relations between the workers in voluntary organizations can be very different compared to other organizations. Some specialists have argued for the importance of the volunteers' relations to democracy at the work places, and I agree, although I believe that the volunteers have to adapt to the organizations' values. I have also introduced Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs where I hope to be able to use the hierarchy to show how vital it is to get those basic needs fulfilled. Theories about coaching and mentoring were also debated, and the trainability of the employees turned out to be very important. It is also important for the volunteers to know their place within the organizations, and that the leaders provide them with good information about the workplace. The volunteers' sense of well-being seems to be of a great importance for the work environment, and therefore it seems relevant for the leader to be concerned about their well-being. People can have different motives for doing voluntary work, and I believe that those motives can be both conscious and unconscious, but usually they result in increased well-being of the people.

⁶⁷ Klausen. 1991:2

4. Data analysis

In this chapter, I will reveal the work frames and analyze the most important themes from the research. As I wrote in the second chapter, the work frames or the themes, are divided into the sections of this chapter, and were organized with the data display method. First, I will debate the leaders' role, and thereafter I will look at volunteers' motivation, and recruitment of voluntary workforce. Then I will discuss the relations between professional workers and volunteers, and the volunteers' impact to the organizations from the participants' perspectives. Section 4.6. is about how the leaders can create an ideal work environment for the volunteers' well-being, and thereafter I will deal with the problems the leaders have, when there is a lack of voluntary workforce. In section 4.8., I will debate the relations for well-being and voluntarism, and finally what the leaders can do to increase the volunteers' well-being, using both systematic methods and more individualized methods. In the last section, there is a summary of the main results from this chapter.

4.1. The leaders' functions

This section is dedicated to the leaders' role. Since there is some confusion about the definitions of *leaders* and *managers*, I will start by clarifying that difference to avoid misunderstandings. After that, I will analyze the leaders' role in relation to the volunteers and in a larger perspective, according to the results from my research.

4.1.1. Leader versus manager

It is necessary to point out that there is a conceptual difference between being a manager or a leader, and there is a tendency of neither seeing that difference nor being aware of it. The managers' job is to be concerned about designing a system that works and shows right efficiency. Leaders are more focused on doing the right things but not do

things in the right way.⁶⁸ Adrian Furnham has researched the psychological aspects of this difference and in his book *The psychology of behavior at work* he wrote: “*The essential difference between leaders and managers is that while managers perform a rational, analytic, intellectual function, leaders inspire by vision, values, confidence and determination.*”⁶⁹ Leadership involves having influence in the companies’ processes and leaders have to pay attention to the group of employees and their environment. Their position is often confused with managers. That is because leadership is often given a very broad meaning and it is common that it goes into the managers’ field, which involves planning, organizing, monitoring and controlling.⁷⁰

In the literature used for this thesis, there is most reference to *leaders* but sometimes they are referred to as *managers*. This difference is not that relevant to the research problem or the context of this project, so when referred to managers in the literature it has no influences to the results.

4.1.2. In relation to volunteers

In the book *Spirituality and social care*, Mary Nash and Bruce Stewart wrote about the manager’s role in relation to the volunteers:

A good manager will take their volunteers seriously by ensuring that all the tasks of managing them are carried out. They will have clear job descriptions, orientation processes, training, and supervision. They will encourage communication and take the trouble to ensure that both paid staff and volunteers are aware of where they interface and complement each other’s work. There will be funds available to reimburse expenses incurred in being a volunteer. They will acknowledge the contribution made by the volunteers and let them know they are appreciated. They will create an affirming atmosphere for volunteers, that recognizes the spiritual aspects of their motivation and their work.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Doherty and Home. 2002:206

⁶⁹ Furnham. 2005:567

⁷⁰ Alvesson. 2002:93-102

⁷¹ Nash and Stewart. 2002:99

This definition of Nash and Stewart is highly relevant to this project, both to the theoretical base and it is quite similar to the impression I have gotten through the interviews in my research.

According to consultant A, one of the most important functions of the leaders, is to *care* about the volunteers and give them something instead of wages. Leader B considers his most important function, in relation to the volunteers, to back them up and give them the support they need. Because in his organization, the assignments are primarily about communicating and making contact to the clients of the organization, and when the clients are highly traumatized, it is easy for the volunteers to become “locked”, because they want to do their jobs in the best possible way. By backing them up and supporting them, he gives recognition and acknowledgement, comfort and safety, so they are able to fly on their own wings.

I believe that the results show, that the most vital function of the leaders in relations to the volunteers, is considered to care about them, and give them the support and the recognition they need so they can continue to do their job. That has influences on the volunteers’ sense of well-being and has a lot to say about whether the organizations can function optimally.

4.1.3. In larger perspective

According to consultant A, the development through the last decades has been that the leaders have a great deal of administrative assignments, along with leading the personnel group and have fundraising functions. Their job is to make sure that the ordinances and the concernments are fulfilled. Consultant B added that most leaders of voluntary organizations had to work closely with management committees elected to control and manage the organizations. With this development, it has become very rare that leaders are also volunteers, so the majority of leaders today are paid workers.⁷² This description of the leaders’ role fits very well with the functions leader B has but leader A has a slightly different functions, since his organization is a bit different. His direct contact with the volunteers is very limited, and his job requires more oversight. He

⁷² Klausen. 1990:24

considers his main assignment be to take in refugees and help them get integrated in Denmark. Both at the personal level and at the Danish job market. In relations to the clients, he deals with the most traumatized refugees. The focus of the organization is set on consulting and advising assignments, but it is also about running a language school. He is also dealing with a lot of administration and has to make the economy work, so the organization can keep on going. He has to make sure, that the organization has enough assignments, because without them they have no income.

Jan Molin is a professor at *Copenhagen business school* (Danish: Handelshøjskolen) and has done research on nonprofit organizations. In his opinion, leaders of voluntary organizations have neither a harder job nor easier, than leaders in other organizations. It is just different, in the way that it is based on the surroundings, and institutional conditions are a bigger part of the leaders' role and the form for the leadership has to be based on that. It is also important for the leaders to keep the central historic values and traditions alive and visible.⁷³ It is not only important to do the right things, it is just as important to do them in the right way.⁷⁴ On the broader scale, I think it is possible to say that the leaders' role would be to make the values and the goals of the organizations as visible and approachable as possible for the volunteers, and to create work environment where there are meaningful perspectives and rich possibilities to grow.⁷⁵

I believe that it is necessary for leaders of voluntary organizations both to be concerned about the relations to the volunteers and the organizations management. It seems like leaders of voluntary organizations have to be able to solve very different assignments, everything from working closely with volunteers and clients, to general management functions.

4.2. The volunteers motivation

Despite the multiple motivation factors mentioned in section 3.6., the participants mainly experienced volunteers with two motives. The consultants agreed that volunteers

⁷³ Molin. 1995:91

⁷⁴ Christensen. 1995:121

⁷⁵ Majgaard. 2004b:87

mainly sought to improve their social network and do activities with others. Therefore, I believe that it is crucial for the organizations to have a good work environment and atmosphere, so the volunteers feel good about showing up and meeting other co-volunteers. Leader B said that he mainly experienced two groups of volunteers; students who sought some professionally related experience before they went to the job market, and pensioner that sought social activities to avoid isolation and to proof that they still felt solidarity for improvements. Within those two groups, there is room for varieties and diversities of the volunteers' profiles. Those motivation factors result in an age gap in the volunteer group, since there is a lack of middle-aged volunteers. That group is typically occupied with their carrier and family lives, and because of that, they might not have the surpluses leader B sought.

Based on the theoretical approach, I draw the conclusion that the most conscious motives to do voluntary work are social and intellectual. The other motivation factors debated in section 3.6. seem less obvious. The participants did not seem to be directly aware of the unconscious motives although they emphasized the importance of acknowledgement and recognition in other contexts. I believe that the unconscious motives are just as important as the conscious motives. Furthermore, I believe that voluntary work can be a part of fulfilling the top three needs of Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs (see section 3.3.). *The need of self-actualization* can be obtained when the motive is to proof something for one self. *The need of recognition* is most often an unconscious motivation factor that can be fulfilled via relations to co-volunteers, the organization's personnel, leaders, or the organizations' clients. *The social needs* seem to be most common and can be fulfilled through social activities and social network. I consider all of the basic needs to be a part of one's well-being. If some of them are fulfilled via voluntary work, it proofs that voluntary work can contribute to well-being.

4.3. Recruiting volunteers

Now there will be focus on the recruitment process, which is about finding the right volunteers for the organizations, the recruitment process itself, the learning period and social integration.

4.3.1. Finding the right ones

When recruiting new volunteers, they might bring new impulses, wishes, and demands with them. Sometimes there is room for that within the organizations, and sometimes there is not. That might result in conflicts within the group. The organizations have to make choices about whether to change their politics to meet the new volunteers, or stick to their politics and leave the option to the volunteers to find other places to do voluntary work.⁷⁶ That makes it relevant for the organizations to find out what kind of volunteers they want to attract and have their policies and values clear so there is less risk to recruit the *wrong* kind.⁷⁷ Nash and Stewart agree, in their opinion it is vital for the organizations to recruit the *right* volunteers that fit into the work environment, and refuse the ones who do not.⁷⁸

The participants in the research also emphasized how important it was for the leaders to make an effort to find the right volunteers, so the organizations would not use their resources to teach the volunteers how to be a volunteer at their organizations. Their experience shows that if the volunteers are not a right match, it could result in the volunteers quitting shortly after they were recruited. That fits well to Schein's theory about the organizational culture to be more likely to survive if the new volunteers are willing to adapt to the organization's patterns (see section 3.1.). I believe that it is true, and that is why it is important for the leaders to make the organizations' patterns visible for the new volunteers, so they are more likely to find the right volunteers.

4.3.2. Recruitment process

The consultants agreed with Barbeito about job descriptions (see section 3.2.). They believe that good job descriptions, along with providing good informations about the organizations, are quite important for the organizations. Leader A also mentioned those things, and since he is not that much involved in the recruitment process, he finds it important that their volunteer consultants spend time informing the volunteers about the job functions. If they get some conflicts in the later run, the volunteer consultants also

⁷⁶ De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:5

⁷⁷ De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:9

⁷⁸ Nash and Stewart. 2002:100

deal with that. Leader A was not aware of that formal job descriptions existed in his organization, and neither was leader B. According to leader B, it is because there are no formal functions other than communicating with the clients, and do some occasional housework. However, the organization requests an informal profile of the volunteers that consists of persons that have personal surpluses and are not too troubled with a certain problem that they cannot talk about it, without relating to their own experience and history. Therefore, instead of making a formal job description, he seeks volunteers with a certain profile; independent and mature persons, that are able to tell and ask for help, if they need to.

Those results indicate that the leaders have a very important function when it comes to the recruitment process. If the leaders spend time and resources to spot the right volunteers and provide them with good information about the job, it will benefit the organizations in the later run. I believe that it is desirable for the organizations to make formal job descriptions for the voluntary work. However, even though there are no formal job descriptions, I find it crucial for the leaders to have an idea about what kind of profiles the volunteers should have and I think that is an important function of the leaders.

4.3.3. Starting as a volunteer

When the interest of doing voluntary work comes to the light, the start is to find the right place. It is common that the volunteers have to go through an interview before recruited, and that applies to the organizations used in this project. Leader B said that in the interview process he tried to get as close to the volunteers as possible to check if they fulfilled the requirements according to the volunteer profile (see section 4.3.2.). In the interviews, he also used the opportunity to give information about the organization and the possible assignments.

According to leader A, there is no formal training program for new volunteers in his organization. However, in some of the sub departments, the volunteers are occasionally offered courses in how to be a volunteer. That way, they are also recognized and acknowledged for their interests and inputs. In the organization led by leader B,

there is a tradition for having training programs in a form of trial periods. According to the consultants, a trial period is a very good idea and gives the volunteers a chance to feel how the atmosphere is within the organizations and what the assignments are like, so they are better prepared for the jobs. The consultants also recommend that the organizations provided information material in a form of a folder, so the volunteers were assured rather to get too much information than too little.

There seem to be different ways to start as a volunteer, but the most common way seems to be a thorough interview in the beginning, and a trial period there after. A formal training program could be an excellent idea, but I can imagine that it requires too many resources from the organizations' behalf. Nevertheless, I believe that some sort of a training program could turn out to be a good investment for the leaders. A suitable training program for voluntary organizations could be in a form of mentoring- or coaching relationships, or trial periods.

4.3.4. Socialization processes

The dangers of strong demands for the socialization processes are that the volunteers have to go over a high threshold to be a part of the organizations and be socially accepted.⁷⁹ In section 3.1., theories about socialization processes and integration were debated and how important it is for both organizations and their workers to have good socialization processes. However, it can also be damaging in the way that it can make the organizations grow through some kind of "cloning", where the same integration models are used repeatedly with the same results. The new members integrate to be a clone of the older ones, and in that way, it is impossible for the organizations to get fresh inputs.⁸⁰ However, like previously mentioned, there are also problems with the lack of socialization processes and integration, in the way that it causes multiplicity within the organizations. Hence, it is necessary for leaders to create a balance that fits the organizations. Neither one of the leaders has had problems concerning socialization processes, and leader B thought the reason was that there is a focus on the volunteers' well-being in form of recognition and acknowledgement, rather than trying to clone the

⁷⁹ Brixen. 2004b:71

⁸⁰ Majgaard. 2004b:89-90

older volunteers and make certain volunteer types, that prevents variations and diversities. According to his experience, the volunteer group has always been very different when it comes to cultural backgrounds, politics, and ethnicities, and that has not given any problems. He thinks it is important to spend time learning to know each other within the organizations, and it is not necessary to agree about everything.

According to Schein's ideas about culture of a group, an internal integration is vital for the group to function. Since social network seems to be the most common motivation factor for volunteers (see section 4.2.) and a part of the basic needs (see section 3.3.), it is important for the volunteers to feel like they belong in a group. Socialization processes should therefore be built up on internal integration and to transfer the shared assumptions Schein talks about in section 3.1.. For the organizations to function optimally, it is crucial for the leaders to find a good balance when it comes to socialization and make an effort for the socialization processes to be successful.

4.4. Professionals versus volunteers

Since the majority of organizations have both paid, professional workers and volunteers, it makes it relevant to focus on the relations between those two groups. In this section, I will therefore look into when paid workers are needed, whether there are different demands, and what the benefits of those relations could be.

4.4.1. When paid workers are needed

If the workload is too much, it is common for organizations to hire paid workers also, often some ones with a professional background.⁸¹ It all depends on the organizations and the assignments. Leader A thinks that it is quite possible to do a good job without involving professionals, but he finds it important to integrate both groups when possible. It could be impossible because of the assignments, because sometimes the assignments require a paid workforce. That could be because of the work hours, the professionalism, or other. Nevertheless, even though those two groups cannot integrate in all occurrences, the volunteers always have the possibility to seek help and counseling

⁸¹ Michaelsen. 2004:39

from the volunteer consultants and the consultants' jobs are to ensure that the cooperation is successful.

In the article *Frivillige og professionelle i organisationerne*, Kirsten Michaelsen wrote about the situation when organizations decide to hire some paid workers. There is a risk of the volunteers might feel less valuable to the organizations and not as big a part of it as before. There would also be a risk of creating different kind of culture within the organizations, where the volunteers would be in one corner and the paid workers in another. I agree with Michaelsen's solution to this, that it is vital for the organizations to make sentient decisions about the assignments for both partners, to avoid those conflicts mentioned above.⁸² However, luckily those kinds of conflicts do not seem to be very common according to the participants. I believe that conflict situations could be avoided if the voluntary organizations are good at listening and consult the volunteers. The leaders have to be aware of that the voluntary organizations could not survive without voluntary workforce.

4.4.2. Different demands

Birgit Perl, wrote the article *Frivillige og professionelle – a moderne pas de deux* and in her opinion latent conflicts between being a volunteer and being professional can't be avoided, because it is impossible to be a volunteer without a past.⁸³ I agree with her, because I believe that all volunteers have collected a life experience that can somehow be relevant for their voluntary work. In that way, the gap between the volunteers and the professional workers can vary, and depends on the individuals. The consultants agreed with that, and said that the volunteers were often more qualified to solve the assignments and give supervision to others, than the professional workers. However, there are different demands to voluntary workers that should be considered, and therefore the volunteers should not carry as much responsibility as the ones who are paid. That is why the volunteers can say no to assignments, and under those circumstances, the paid workers take over. Leader B mentioned the same thing, and said that the volunteers should not carry more responsibility than they are ready for. I believe that the

⁸² Michaelsen. 2004:41-43

⁸³ Perl. 2004:60

organizations cannot make the same demands to volunteers as they can to paid workers. The volunteers are usually there because they want to make a difference, but are not financially dependent on the organizations. That is why the volunteers do not have the same kind of professional secrecy or the same duty to inform about problems or crimes.⁸⁴

According to leader B, the different demands can cause uneven balance, where he as a leader, has a tendency to focus on the paid workers instead of the volunteers. The same thing can be reflected in unsolvable conflicts between the volunteers and the professionals, where he is forced to focus on the professional workers instead of the volunteers. It is easier to ask the volunteers to resign than the paid workers, and he is forced to think about the whole picture and what would be better for the organization. In that way, different demands can result in unevenness that the volunteers have to accept. However, the fact is that there are different demands to volunteers and paid workers. I believe that the demands are different because the volunteers should not feel pressured and the organizations have to take the volunteers' motives and interests in consideration, if they want to hold on to them. The different demands can cause uneven balances, but I do not think that it can be avoided.

4.4.3. Benefits from the cooperation

Consultant B thinks that it could be an advantage to have both professional workers and volunteers, because the volunteers might have different background than the professional workers (see section 4.6.1.). To be a professional defines one within a certain group and becomes a part of one's identity, just like being a volunteer could be a part of one's identity.⁸⁵ Peter Aagaard is a Phd-student who wrote the article *Hvad de professionelle kan lære af de frivillige*. In his opinion, professionals could benefit from learning from the volunteers, which involves engagement to take on assignments that are not necessarily decided by the organizations.⁸⁶ Leader B said that there was no doubt about the culture being different within the organization because there are both volunteers and professional workers. It might result in a friendlier atmosphere where there is a great

⁸⁴ Perlt. 2004:59-60

⁸⁵ Aagaard. 2007:128

⁸⁶ Aagaard. 2007:148

focus on solving the assignments. By friendly, he means that if there were only professional workers, the work environment would easily get too professionalized. That is because the focus would be on being a professional social worker, so in the end that would be more important than solving the assignments. So in that way, the professionals could benefit from cooperating with volunteers. Leader B said, that with volunteers in the organization, there are always some “stupid questions” about work methods, asked by the volunteers because their background is so different. That is crucial for the development of the organizations. It could also be friendlier atmosphere because the paid workers are responsible for creating an atmosphere where the volunteers feel welcome.

Leader A agreed that the cooperation could benefit the organization, but was not sure whether the volunteers could get something directly out of the cooperation. Maybe it would help them to organize better, because the professional workers are responsible for organizing the work. That is so the volunteers can concentrate on doing what they want to and are interested in, instead of dealing with a lot of administration. The volunteers might also be able to benefit from supervision from the professionals, since they might not have as professional background.

Obviously, there are some different opinions on this subject and the results might be very different if I had interviewed someone from pure voluntary organizations, where there are no paid workers. However, all participants thought that there were some benefits from the cooperation, but they had different views on it. I believe that the cooperation could benefit all parties, where it fits in the organizational culture. Most importantly, I found out that all participants focused on the volunteers well-being when this cooperation was debated, for example by hiring paid workers to take care of the administration and take the responsibility, so the volunteers could focus on doing the voluntary work they came there for.

4.5. The volunteers' impact

According to Schein's theory about organizational culture, it is vital that the volunteers are willing to adapt but still given an opportunity to improve former methods of the organization (see section 3.1.). Therefore, I believe it could be difficult for the leaders to find a balance of how much impact from the volunteers' behalf, is desirable for

the organizations to function optimally. Leader A considers it to be up to the volunteers themselves how much influence they want to have. The volunteers' impact in his organization might be of a different degree because of the size of the organization. Everyone who is interested, have the opportunity to sit in management committees or start their own projects supported by the organization. That way, it is up to the volunteers themselves to find the area they want to work with. The opportunities are there, but it requires a will and imagination of the volunteers. In that way, there is a focus on the individuals' needs and well-being.

Leader B considers the new volunteers to be a source of inspiration to development and he hopes that it goes for the whole organization. Another purpose of the trial periods, then mentioned in section 4.3.3., is to give the new volunteers opportunity to discover the organizations on their own and afterwards the organizations could benefit from their fresh inputs and new visions at the organizations. I believe that it is extremely useful and often a great advantage when it comes to regular clients of the organizations. Leader B added, that in those situations, the older volunteers and the other personnel, have a tendency to stop experimenting, and start use the same methods all the time. But where there are new volunteers it is easier to see the clients' problems from a different perspective and try other methods, that could turn out to be useful.

Leader B also talked about that it is vital for the organizations not to develop from the volunteers and be too professionalized, so that there will not be room for the volunteers. I believe that the essence of voluntary organizations is the voluntary workforce and without that, the organizations would not exist. At the same time, it is also important to work with professional themes and methods, not just to benefit the organizations but also the individuals within them. However, if the organizations are too professionalized, there will be a crisis because it is crucial for the organizations to contain wholeness, where there is room for development. The same minute the organizations stop tolerating faults and imperfections, it will turn into processes of precipitation instead of learning processes. I agree with leader B when he considers development in coalition with the volunteers to be the key word, even though it is not always successful.

I believe that it is vital for leaders of voluntary organizations to focus on organizational culture and development processes in cooperation with their voluntary

workforce and give them a chance to have an impact to the organizations. To do that, there are several methods but it is most important to listen to them and what needs they have. It could also be an idea to make surveys within the volunteer group in order to get oversight. It is important for the leaders to find a balance of how much impact is desirable for the organizations. I believe that the desirable balance can vary from one organization to another, but it is still necessary that the volunteers have opportunity to influence the organizations in some ways.

4.6. Work environment

As mentioned in section 4.1., one of the leaders' functions is to create a good work environment. The importance of a good work environment can be crucial when it comes to holding on to volunteers. There should be focus on avoiding a negative psychological environment and not focusing on gossip, conflicts, and negative hierarchy.⁸⁷ Organizations that depend on voluntary workforce often run on a low budget. Therefore, a low budget could be their excuse for not making an effort to create a good physical work environment. However, I believe that it is possible to create a work environment that could influence the work of the volunteers despite of a low budget. By making the work environment warm and cozy, by using flowers, candles, photos and pictures, it is possible to create a good atmosphere with a low budget. By doing that, the volunteers are also likely to care enough to make their own contributions.⁸⁸

All the participants agreed on the importance of creating a good work environment with an atmosphere where the volunteers feel good, welcome, and acknowledged. I consider that a big part of the volunteers' well-being and should not be underestimated by the leaders of voluntary organizations. But even though the leaders are responsible for creating a good work environment, it can never be maintained without the workers input, and eventually the workers have most influences on the work environment (see section 3.5.). However, I believe that it is a part of the leaders' function to create ground for a good work environment that can help to increase the volunteers' well-being. That is likely to result in their recognition of a good work environment.

⁸⁷ De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:25-28

⁸⁸ Nash and Stewart. 2002:101

4.6.1. The volunteers' background

In relation to the organizational culture theories, I wondered about the importance of the volunteers' backgrounds and the relation to my project. That is why I asked the participants about their experiences and opinions concerning that. The participants agreed that it was not negative that the volunteers had different background. Their experience was that the volunteers were very different but the majority of them had similar motives and visions. Different backgrounds and visions can benefit the organizations in many ways and help meet the clients' needs. If everyone is the same, the danger is that people agree with the other ones too much, also in failures and each other's faults.

I think that variations of volunteers with different background are more positive than negative, and can benefit the organizations in many ways. The volunteers can "mirror" the society, and that helps the organizations to develop and meet the clients' needs.

4.6.2. Trusting the volunteers

Both the leaders mentioned that it was vital to trust the volunteers to do their job. Leader A trusted the volunteers just as much as the professional workers, because in the modern world, at least here in Scandinavia, people are in general very responsible and willing to make sacrifices for their assignments, no matter whether they are volunteers or not. As long as the volunteers stay inside the work frames provided by the organization, they have freedom to do their job. Therefore, I consider it the organizations' job to provide these work frames, and the volunteers' job is to be responsible for doing their job within those work frames. In order for that mechanism to work, it is necessary to give the volunteers freedom and trust them to do their job. Leader B felt the same way, but he also felt that it had to be mutual and go both ways. In his job it is important to be able to trust that the volunteers are capable of asking for help if it is needed, and not trying to cover up for mistakes. Therefore, I consider trustworthiness to be an important factor that leaders should focus on when they interview new volunteers.

I believe that it is crucial for the organizations and their leaders, to trust their volunteers, because if they do not, they will have to concentrate too much on the

volunteers instead of fulfilling the organizations' purposes. Trust is also important for the volunteers' sense of well-being like mentioned in section 3.5.1., and the participants do not seem to underestimate the value of that.

4.6.3. Democracy at the work place

According to the participants, it is important that the volunteers are heard and listened to, no matter whether they are new or experienced. Everyone should be treated the same way and in order to give the volunteers a chance to improve the organizations' former methods (see section 3.1.), it is necessary for the organizations to be open towards the volunteers' ideas. According to Ann Brixen's ideas, a democratic work structure can make it easier for the organizations to build on the volunteers' interests.⁸⁹ However, even though it is important for the organizations to develop with the volunteers, like I debated in section 4.5., then there are some limits. If the organization does not fit the volunteers, they should find another place to be volunteers. But I do agree, that with a democratic structure, it is easier for the organizations to grow with the volunteers and build on their interests, it just cannot be the only factor organizations have to develop.

The majority of Danish voluntary organizations have management committees, where the volunteers can vote persons to represent them. The critic is though, that the volunteers, specially the new ones, might find that there is a long way to the top and their voice will not be heard.⁹⁰ Leader A has a good experience with management committees and finds it important that the volunteers have a chance to present themselves and get elected for these committees if they are interested. In that way, the organization is run partly by the volunteers, along with the many member organizations, and the volunteers have a chance to go all the way to the top. I consider it positive, that the volunteers have a possibility to influence the organizations at a larger scale or have the option to concentrate on smaller assignments, which are just as important. The fact is that some volunteers are interested in the political work and other ones are interested in the practical work. In leader B's organization, there is also a management committee, where both the leader and represents of the volunteers, sit without a right to vote. However, they are

⁸⁹ Brixen. 2004a:19

⁹⁰ Brixen. 2004a:20-217

listened to and have the right to speak up, and that is quite important for the basic need of recognition.

A certain democracy is good, but there should still be some boundaries for how much the volunteers should be allowed to control. If the organizations required the volunteers to be a part of every decision making, it would be hard for the volunteers to concentrate about what they really are there for.⁹¹ I believe that the volunteers' motivation is not to deal with those aspects of the organizations, but to do something good and help (see section 3.6. and 4.2.). That might be the reason behind the structure in leader B's organization. He does not consider their work structure to be very democratic, but like in leader A's organization, there is a certain autonomy that allows the volunteers to do their job within certain work frames. As a leader, he is the one to make the last decision, unless it concerns the management committee, and he has not experienced negative views concerning that. The democracy involves that everybody are heard, and get to speak up. According to this, I think a democratic structure is important, but should not be a controlling factor for the organizations. The volunteers' motivation does not usually concern those aspects and they should be focusing on doing what they came there for. I believe it could also give them a safety feeling, if the organizations have certain stability and a steady ground. A safety feeling is one of the basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy (see section 3.3.) and contributes to one's sense of well-being. I believe that as long as the volunteers are heard and listened to, their well-being is served.

4.7. Lack of volunteers

If the organizations are suppose to function optimally, it is vital for the leaders to prevent a permanent lack of volunteers. In this context, it has to be considered that because it is voluntary work it is normal to have more flow in the work group. According to the participants, it is normal to have regularly changes in the volunteer groups and it does not have to be negative. It could be a part of keeping the organizations alive and developing. The development over the last decades has also resulted in volunteers changing work places and functions at a regular basis, in order to develop themselves

⁹¹ La Cour. 2004:102

personally and try something new. That is possible because the number of voluntary organizations has increased greatly, and that provides new opportunities for the volunteers.

I believe that it is important for the leaders to motivate the volunteers and make the work attractive to avoid lack of volunteers. If the organizations experience lack of volunteers, it could be necessary to fresh up the organizations' images and evaluate whether the organizations' values and purposes could be communicated in a better way. The other option would be to take a deeper look at the contents of the organizations, and see if any changes should be made. The volunteers might not find the purposes interesting enough, and that is likely to make them less motivated.⁹² Features like how the organizations welcome new volunteers, how they are informed about the jobs and the functions of the organizations, and how the organizations seek volunteers, are examples of the features the organizations should look into if they start experiencing serious lack of volunteers. It is easy for the volunteers to quit if they experience something they are not satisfied with.

I do think it is important for the leaders to try preventing lack of volunteers, because that could cause great problems for the organizations. It is also important to keep the popularities of the organizations alive, because that makes it easier for the organizations to recruit new volunteers. But even though the organizations are not dealing with lack of volunteers, I believe it is positive for the leaders to constantly look into the organizations' images, values, purposes and methods, and evaluate if they are still valid and essential. The organizations should never have to use most resources and energy on recruiting volunteers, because the organizations do not exist for their sakes, but for the clients.

4.8. Relations between well-being and voluntarism

In section 3.7., I debated the egoistic aspect of doing voluntary work. That is why I asked the participants whether they thought there were relations between well-being and doing voluntary work.

⁹² Majgaard. 2004a:12; De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:4

The consultants were both quite sure that there were relations and that was a positive fact, because there is nothing wrong with volunteers helping themselves while they help someone else. According to consultant A that was not acceptable in the past, but the development during the last decades had changed that ideology, and today, it is considered part of voluntary work. A part of the volunteers' well-being could involve relations to other people, help them in their crisis, learn from the experiences they get as volunteers, and develop as individuals. The experiences volunteers get during their voluntary work, can easily help them in their own lives, change their vision to the life, and provide them with something they would not have experienced otherwise, and that is also a part of the volunteers' well-being.

Both of the leaders also agreed that there were definitely relations. Leader A thought it could be because when the volunteers experience that they can help and make a difference for someone else, they get satisfied and happy with their input, and that is a part of well-being. He believes that voluntary work can improve the quality of life, but it is not necessary to be a volunteer to improve the quality. There are other ways to help people than doing voluntary work. So when helping others, you can help yourself and improve your life and well-being, no matter whether it is through voluntary work or not. However, I believe that voluntary work makes it a win-win situation for everyone involved, and could result in more interest for voluntary work. Leader B agreed with leader A on that it was not necessary to be a volunteer to increase well-being, because everyone who helps other people can experience the same, even though they do not do voluntary work. However, volunteers are often the ones who have the required surpluses, and are capable to help others. It could be possible to help other people without helping yourself for a period, but it does not hold in the end. Therefore, I believe that in the longer run, it is not possible to do something for others without benefiting from it personally, and that is a natural mechanism that should not be underestimated.

According to this, it is possible to increase your one well-being when helping others, no matter if it involves doing voluntary work or not. It is positive to benefit personally from helping others, and it could result in the volunteers holding longer and also in increased interest in general for doing voluntary work.

4.9. Methods to increase volunteers well-being

The participants all agreed that there were many things the leaders could do to increase volunteers' sense of well-being. This section is divided in systematic methods and individualized methods.

4.9.1. Systematic methods

Some organizations find it important for their volunteers' well-being to have courses, lectures or something educational and to evaluate their work regularly so the volunteers can have some sense of where they stand.⁹³ Leader A has experienced that the volunteers appreciate if they occasionally are offered some courses and lectures, where different themes related to their work, are debated. They are also offered to visit their head office in Copenhagen, to be informed about the work frames and the organization's policy. By giving the volunteers some courses and lectures, it benefits all parties. The volunteers feel like they gain something they can use and they are more likely to create a social network, and the organizations get better-qualified volunteers.

Leader B, said that they also made some effort to offer the volunteers some courses and lectures. However, he found it most important to emphasize on that being a rewarding experience for the volunteers. In his organization, they have an annual course weekend, where they try to spoil the volunteers and show them that their work is highly appreciated. One of the main goals with that weekend course is teambuilding and creation of social network among the workers, both the volunteers and the professionals. For the same reasons, they have Christmas arrangement, regular meetings, and other events. He emphasizes the importance of having a good atmosphere, where the workers acknowledge and recognize each other's work. Therefore, it is vital that the volunteers have an idea about whom the other ones are, and get to know them via some arrangements. That can result in the volunteers being more likely to work more; because the volunteers often arrange with someone they meet at these arrangements to have shifts together. That can be beneficial for the organizations.

⁹³ De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:30-31

Consultant A agreed with the leaders about the importance of such arrangements, and that it could benefit the volunteers, both in their work and personal life. She also said that some organizations they cooperated with had a good experience with giving their volunteers a recommendation they can use at the job market. That is often quite rewarding for the younger ones, who are doing voluntary work to seek experience before they go out at the job market. She also mentioned that some organizations had a good experience by holding individual conversation with the volunteers, so the volunteers would feel appreciated, and it gives both parties a chance to get to know each other better. She thinks it is important for the leader not to see the volunteers as a group, but as individuals, because they are so different.

It seems like the participants all agree on, that most of the systematic methods, organizations can use for their volunteers, all result in benefiting both the volunteers and the organizations. Therefore, my results are that those methods are extremely important for the volunteers' well-being, but I do not consider it enough, as I will debate in the next section.

4.9.2. Individualized methods

One of the most important functions of the leaders in voluntary organizations is to care about their volunteers' well-being. Often that can be done by having social events for the staff, having meetings and good policies, like I debated in section 4.9.1.. However, often it is more important to give compliments and appreciate the volunteers work at the daily basis.⁹⁴ But I believe that it should be possible to create a balance between systematic methods and more individualized methods, and tend to both sides.

The consultants agreed on that the organizations should look at each volunteers' competences and indispensability, and take the individuals' needs in consideration. The volunteers do not always request that much, sometimes a simple complement and solicitude is enough to satisfy the volunteers' needs. The organizations should never request more from the volunteers than they are ready for. Leader B thought that his most important function, concerning the volunteers' well-being, was to create acknowledging

⁹⁴ De Frivilliges Hus. 2007:29-30

context and work frames. To make an effort to get to know the volunteers individually, and find out who they are. His experience is that when he has managed to create a social connection to the volunteers, the volunteers feel more appreciated and worthy. Leader A also found it important to acknowledge the volunteers and compliment them. Because if they do not feel appreciated and acknowledged, they feel like their input is worthless.

According to the consultants, a very important factor in the acknowledgement process is to listen to the volunteers and allow them to influence the organizations. Some volunteers are shyer than others are, and it usually means a lot to them if the leaders make sure that their opinions are heard. That requires that the leaders are open minded, and willing to listen to the volunteers' opinions. It is quite important that the leaders provide work frames, so the volunteers know exactly what is requested of them. The leaders have to make sure, that there is something for the volunteers to come after, so they do not go home with the feeling that their work was worthless. If there are no assignments, it can be useful to discuss some of earlier experiences and give supervision. It can be very important for the volunteers that there is a follow-up on some of their earlier assignments, so they feel that they can continue their work in positive ways. Even though there are no assignments, the time could be used to work on the social network, learn to know each other and enjoy the company of other human beings.

I believe that acknowledgement and appreciation result in the volunteers increased well-being. Leaders of voluntary organizations should have a great focus on doing what they can in this context, using both systematic methods and more individualized methods. It could also been seen as preventing actions from the organizations' behalf, because if they do not make an effort to fulfill those needs, the volunteers will loose the interest in doing voluntary work, and that would eventually result in the organizations collapsing.

4.10. Summary

After the introduction, I debated the leaders' role where I found out that the most important functions of the leaders in relation to the volunteers, is to provide them with care, support and recognition. In a larger perspective, the leaders have to deal with a lot of administration, make the organizations visible outwards, create good work

environment, and create work frames based on the organizations' goals and values. It is also important for the leaders to spend time and resources finding the right volunteers, and provide them with good information about the assignments and the organization. The leaders also have to find volunteers they can trust; otherwise, it would result in the leaders using most of their energy and resources in checking up on the volunteers.

I consider it vital for the leaders to take the volunteers' impact in consideration and listen to them, when it comes to development processes. That way, the volunteers feel worthy and acknowledged. All participants thought it could benefit the organizations to have variations of volunteers with different backgrounds, so the organizations would be more likely to meet their clients' needs. I also found out, that it is necessary for the volunteers, at least in the longer run, to increase their own well-being via their voluntary work, to prevent them from burning out. If the volunteers are not benefiting personally from doing voluntary work, it is easy for them to resign in contrast with paid workers. The paid workers are partly motivated to continue their job by getting a pay check, but if the volunteers feel pressured and are not awarded for their input, there is nothing holding on to them. The leaders can award the volunteers using systematic methods and more individualized methods. Both of those methods are extremely important and necessary.

5. Conclusion

In this last chapter, I will discuss the main conclusions and introduce a process model that I have constructed in relations to the research results to give an example of an ideal voluntary work process. In section 5.2., the relevance is debated from the leaders' perspective, and thereafter I will end with some final words.

5.1. Main conclusions

At this point, it is necessary to relate the main conclusions to the research problem:

a. What can leaders of voluntary organizations do in relation to voluntary workforce, so the organizations can function optimally?

Leaders of voluntary organizations have multiple functions. They both have to be able to deal with the management in a larger perspective, and they have to work closely with volunteers and clients. The leaders' functions in relations to the volunteers, is mainly to care about them, support them in their work, respect their needs, and recognize their work inputs. The motive for many volunteers is to be part of a social network, so one of the leaders' functions should be to work on creating social activities, and good socialization processes. That is also a part of creating a good work environment that can be crucial when it comes to keeping the existing voluntary workforce and attracting new volunteers. In my opinion, the leaders should create a certain democratic work structure, were the volunteers have an opportunity to have impact to the organizations and contribute to the development of the organizations. In order for that to be a success for all parties, it is necessary for the leaders to find a good balance for the degree of the volunteers' impact.

I believe that it is important that the leaders spend time and resources to find volunteers with a profile that fits the organization, and approach the potential voluntary workforce in a desirable way. When new volunteers approach the organizations, the

leaders should make an effort to find the right volunteers and be sure that the assignments fit the volunteers' needs. A good idea to give the volunteers a good start is to have thorough interviews in the beginning, and afterwards trial periods with evaluation. By doing this, the leaders avoid problems in the longer run, and build up a work environment that has resources to focus on the volunteers' well-being. The desirable volunteer profile would include trustworthy persons with some surpluses in their lives that are motivated to do voluntary work. To prevent a lack of volunteers, the leaders should constantly work on the organizations' images, and regularly evaluate whether the organizations' values, purposes and methods, are still relevant.

b. What can leaders do to increase the volunteers' well-being?

From the theoretical point of view and according to the research, the results are that there are strong relations between the leaders of voluntary organizations and the voluntary workforce. Therefore, leaders should definitely pay attention to their volunteers' well-being because the voluntary workforce has a great relevance to the organizations, like I will debate further in section 5.2..

The leaders have many possibilities to increase the volunteers' sense of well-being and one of them is to support the creation of a good work environment. A good work environment can be defined as an environment with a certain democratic structure that gives all workers, both volunteers and professionals, a chance to influence the organizations. In that way, they feel listened to, trusted and acknowledged, which is an important part for the sense of well-being. But the structure should not be too democratic, because then the volunteers might be forced to take on more responsibility than they are ready for, instead of focusing on doing the job they came there for. To create an ideal work environment for the volunteers, the leaders are often forced to hire some professional workers. They usually deal with the administrative part of the assignments and take on more responsibility, so the volunteers are free from it.

The leaders have more concrete options to increase the volunteers' sense of well-being. They can use systematic methods and more individualized methods that contribute to the volunteers' well-being. Most common options to increase the sense of well-being seem to be systematic in forms of education and creation of social networks. More

individualized, leaders can make an effort to appreciate and recognize each volunteer for their work. That requires that the leaders look at the volunteer group as a group of individuals. According to the results, the sense of well-being is achieved if the volunteers feel acknowledged and if they feel appreciated for their inputs.

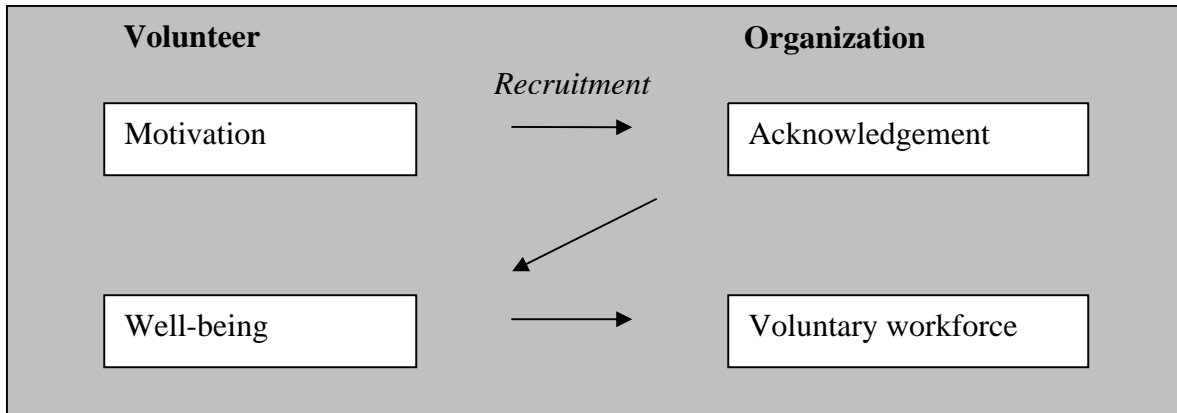
5.2. Relevance from the leaders perspective

In order to see the relevance for those results, it is necessary to look at why the volunteers' well-being is relevant for the organizations. The answer is, that without the volunteers the voluntary organizations cannot survive. It has been recognized, that voluntary work is in some ways egoistic. The research result show, that by helping others via voluntary work, the volunteers help themselves in a way. That is a part of the well-being, and if this optimal process is not achieved the volunteers will eventually burn out. The leaders have to "pay" the volunteers with something else then money and should therefore build the management up on motivation that is rewarding for the volunteers. If the leaders are not doing a good job, there is nothing holding on to the volunteers to keep on volunteering and eventually they are likely to leave. That is why it is vital for the leaders to be concerned about the volunteers' well-being and try to increase it.

By focusing on volunteers' well-being, the leaders might prevent lack of volunteers. When the organizations are popular and have good reputations, they get more requests from potential volunteers. So if the leaders try to hold on to the popularity, it gets easier for them to recruit new volunteers. It is a common knowledge that a bad reputation spreads out a lot faster than a good one, and often the volunteers are the ones to make the reputation. Therefore, if the volunteers achieve a sense of well-being via their voluntary work, it can both help to recruit more volunteers and help the organizations to hold on to their existing volunteers.

5.3. Process model

In relation to the research results, I created a simple process model that can be useful for leaders of voluntary organizations:



The model consists of four key words; motivation, acknowledgement, well-being and voluntary workforce. The procedure can be described briefly in a following way:

a. *Volunteer's motivation*

The volunteer feels motivated to do voluntary work and seeks voluntary work at a voluntary organization.

b. *Acknowledgement from the organization*

After the recruitment process, the organization focuses on acknowledging the volunteer's input in different ways.

c. *Volunteer achieves a sense of well-being*

The acknowledgement leads to a sense of well-being that gives the volunteer a reason to continue the voluntary work.

d. *Continuance of voluntary workforce*

For the organization, the process results in a continuance of voluntary workforce.

5.4. Continuance of the research

The research problem could, without a doubt, be approached in other ways. It is possible that the results would have been different if I had used other methods, theories,

or participants, but that does not change the importance of the results of this project. Everything can be examined from more than one point of view and it would have been impossible to use more perspectives in this project because of the size of it. I believe that it is possible to continue with this research problem and make further investigations in this research area. It could for example be interesting to approach the research problem by using other perspectives and build the project up in a different way. Another perspective could involve quantitative research methods, or investigating the research problem from the volunteers' point of view.

5.5. Final words

In this essay, I have dealt with a twofold research problem. On one hand I have examined what leaders of voluntary organizations can do to make the organizations function optimally, and on the other hand I have dealt with the importance of volunteers' sense of well-being and what leaders can do to increase it. The results from the research show that leaders seem to realize the importance of this, and there seems to be an effort made to hold on to the voluntary workforce. It is important for organizations that rely on voluntary workforce, to make the work place attractive and to make the work rewarding for all partners.

The leaders have multiple tasks in order to increase the volunteers' sense of well-being, and the results showed that there is a focus on the volunteers' well-being. However, there is always room for improvements, and I hope that this project will help leaders to maintain the focus on the importance of volunteers' well-being, and raise a debate about the leaders' functions in relation to this.

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Pictures

Pic. 1: Graduate Student Life Handbook at the University of Maryland. (2008) *Basic Needs*. Found on the 07.03 2008. Internetsite:
http://www.union.umd.edu/GH/basic_needs/index.html)

Attachment 1**Interview guide for leaders****Leader role**

- Hvad synes du er din rolle som leder i forhold til de frivillige?

Organisational culture

- Hvad er det mest karakteristiske ved jeres organisationskultur?
- I hvor høj grad tror du at der er en fælles opfattelse af organisationens opgaver og prioriteter? Hvis ikke, hvordan klarer I konfliktsituationer?
- Betragtes de nye frivillige som inspirationskilder til udvikling eller forventes de at tilpasse sig for at blive accepteret?
- Findes der en formel job beskrivelse for de frivilliges arbejde?
- Holder I fast i jeres organisationskultur, eller synes I at den skal udvikles i samarbejde med jeres medarbejdere, både nye og gamle?
- Går I efter en special type af frivillige når I skal til at finde flere? Hvilke kvalifikationer skal de have?
- Har I en oplæringsprocess, hvordan fungerer det?
- Hvad er det vigtigste element i jeres ideologi i forhold til jeres medarbejdere?
- Bærer jeres organisation præg af at mange af jeres medarbejdere har en forskellig kultural baggrund?
- Har I problemer med at integrere folk med forskellig kultural baggrund?
- Hvordan fungerer organisationen i sammenhæng med dens omgivelser? Er den aktiv, ledende eller dominerende, eller passiv og tilpas med dens omgivelser?
- Fokclinter I på fortiden, nutiden eller fremtiden?
- Hvordan handler organisationen generalt i konfliktsituationer i forhold til de frivillige?

Well-being

- Tror du at det er en relation mellem at lave frivilligt arbejde og velfærd?
- Tror du at de frivillige laver frivilligt arbejde til at de selv skal have det bedre?
- Hvad kan der gøres til at pleje de frivillige velfærd? Både visuelt (belønningssystem) og de mindre visuelt (klap på skulderen)?
- Er det vigtigt, at have foredrag og kurser for at pleje de frivillige?
- Hvor meget tror du, at komplimenter og anerkendelse af de frivilliges gode arbejde er værd?

Motivation

- Har I en slags politik til at motivere de frivillige til at fortsætte med at arbejde hos jer? Hvis ja, hvad er den?
- Er det noget I synes kunne gøres bedre?

- Hvad tror I at er jeres frivilliges motivation for at arbejde hos jer?
- Har i en slags belønningssystemer for at give de frivillige en følelse af at være til gavn?

Workplace, work environment and social integration

- Gør I noget, til at gøre arbejdsstedet mere attraktivt for nye frivillige? (er det varmt, hjemmeligt....)
- Er det noget I synes kunne gøres bedre?
- Stoler I på jeres frivillige? Synes du at det er vigtigt at de føler at I har tillid til dem?
- Kan du definere jeres arbejdsklima? Hvad er de vigtige elementer?
- Har I demokratisk arbejdsstruktur? Hvordan fungerer det og hvad er jeres erfaring?
- Hvis, det er sådan, i hvor høj grad? Oplever du, at det er vigtigt for de frivillige?
- Kan du nævne noget positivt og negativt i forhold til demokrati der bygger op på bestyrelser?
- Synes I, at det er vigtigt at de frivillige er med til at bestemme? At de har en slags stemmeret?

Professionals and volunteers

- Hvilken begrundelse har I haft for at have både frivillige og ansat personale i jeres organisation?
- Tror du, at det er en anderledes kultur i organisationen fordi I har både frivillige og ansat personale?
- Hvilke fordele og hvilke ulemper har det, når både frivillige og lønnede medarbejdere arbejder sammen?
- Hvordan er arbejdsdelingen mellem de to grupper?

Attachment 2

Interview guide for consultants

Leader role

- Hvad synes du er lederens rolle som leder i forhold til de frivillige?

Organisational culture

- Er det vigtigt, at det er en fælles opfattelse af organisationens opgaver og prioriteter? Hvis ja, hvordan klarer man situationer hvor det er ikke en fælles opfattelse?
- Skal de frivillige betragtes som inspirationskilder til udvikling eller skal de forvente at tilpasse sig for at blive accepteret?
- Er det vigtigt at der findes en formel job beskrivelse for de frivilliges arbejde?
- Er det vigtigt at holde fast i sin organisationskultur, eller synes du at den skal udvikles i samarbejde med medarbejderne, både nye og gamle?
- Skal organisationer gå efter en special type af frivillige, som de tror at passer ind i organisationskulturen, når de skal til at finde flere?
- Er det vigtigt at have en oplæringsprocess for nye frivillige og hvordan skal den fungere?
- Skal organisationer fokcliente på fortiden, nutiden eller fremtiden?
- Hvordan skal organisationen handle i konfliktsituationer i forhold til de frivillige?

Well-being

- Tror du at det er en relation mellem at lave frivilligt arbejde og velfærd?
- Tror du at de frivillige laver frivilligt arbejde til at de selv skal have det bedre? (egoistisk hjælp?)
- Hvad kan der goeres til at pleje de frivillige velfærd? Både visuelt (belønningssystem) og de mindre visuelt (klap på skulderen)?
- Er det vigtigt, at have foredrag og kurser for at pleje de frivillige?
- Hvor meget tror du, at komplimenter og anerkendelse af de frivilliges gode arbejde er værd?

Motivation

- Er det vigtigt at have en slags politik til at motivere de frivillige til at forsætte med deres arbejde? Hvis ja, hvordan skal den være?
- Synes I generalt, at organisationer kunne være bedre til motivere de frivillige?
- Hvad tror I generalt at er de frivilliges motivation for at arbejde som frivillig?
- Opfodrer I organisationer til at have en slags belønningssystemer for at give de frivillige en foeelse af at være til gavn?

Workplace, work enviroment and social integration

- Er det vigtigt at organisationer gør noget, til at gøre arbejdsstedet mere attraktivt for nye frivillige? (skal det være varmt, hjemmeligt....)
- Er det noget I synes generelt kunne gøres bedre?
- Er det vigtigt at organisationen stoler på de frivillige? Synes du at det er vigtigt at de frivillige føler at organisationen har tillid til dem?
- Kan du definere et godt arbejdsklima? Hvad er de vigtige elementer?
- Er det vigtigt at have en demokratisk arbejdsstruktur? Hvordan fungerer det bedst og hvad er jeres erfaring?
- Kan du nævne noget positivt og negativt i forhold til demokrati der bygger op på bestyrelser?
- Synes du, at det er vigtigt at de frivillige er med til at bestemme? At de har en slags stemmeret?

Professionals and volunteers

- Hvilken begrundelse er der for at have både frivillige og ansat personale?
- Tror du, at det er en anderledes kultur i organisation hvor der er både frivillige og ansat personale?
- Hvilke fordele og hvilke ulemper har det, når både frivillige og loennede medarbejdere arbejder sammen?