

Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management (519 and 905 Areas)



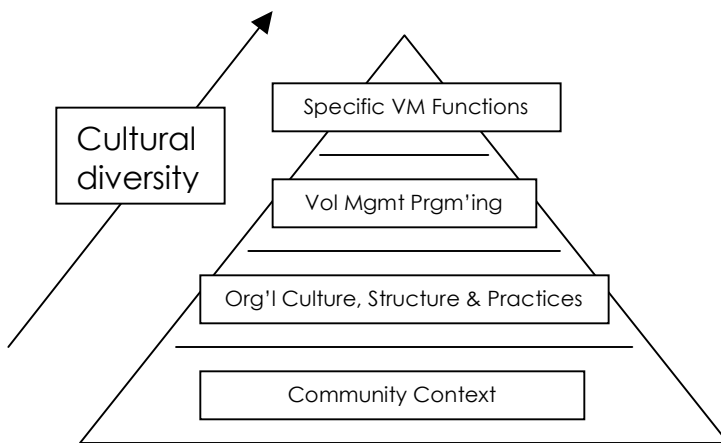
519 Regional Forum – held in Kitchener, ON on November 20, 2008.

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Building a Framework for Understanding How to Advance Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management

During the Community Dialogues (Nov 2007-Mar 2008), participants brainstormed the volunteer management challenges and issues they faced when involving a culturally diverse base of volunteers. The Project Team and the Local Partners (the organizers of the Community Dialogues) reviewed all the information and created the following model to help understand the various themes and issues. In other words, it is a model to help us understand how diversity management and volunteer management fit together.



Cultural diversity principles need to be incorporated into each level of the pyramid starting with the broad base, the pyramid's foundation. Efforts to advance cultural diversity within the organization (and specifically within volunteer management) can only increase as the organization works through and moves up through each level of the pyramid.

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A Project of:
The **Social Planning Council of Peel**
in collaboration with the Social
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Framework cont'd

While work to advance cultural diversity in volunteer management can take place at the top of the pyramid, without the base of organizational support and community readiness, these efforts will not advance cultural diversity in volunteer management.

Starting at the pyramid's base, all organizations exist within a community context including all the people they serve and/or engage in their work. At the broadest level of the pyramid, therefore, is the **"Community Context"** or the readiness of each community to reach out, involve and interact with people from diverse backgrounds. The next level (**"Organizational Culture, Structure and Practices"**) has to do with the readiness of an organization – both in terms of valuing volunteer management and valuing cultural diversity. The **"Volunteer Management Programming"** level refers to issues that cross over multiple volunteer management functions whereas the top level (**"Specific Volunteer Management Functions"**) captures the issues that relate entirely to one specific function on the Volunteer Management Cycle.

In November and December two Regional Forums were held to take the Community Dialogue information a step further. The 519 Regional Forum was held in Kitchener on November 20th and the 905 one was held on December 3rd in Oakville. During both of these gatherings, the above Framework was presented and participants commented on the usefulness of the model, ways it could be improved as well as placed where they felt their own community fit on the framework. Participants felt the framework made sense but also made some suggestions that will be incorporated into the framework for presentation at the Final Forum.

Learnings from the Literature

The goals and aims for this project are being replicated around the world. There are projects and research taking place in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Europe, the United States and Canada on how to move forward with Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management. Specifically, how can we apply these learnings to the framework? Five specific resources were selected from the 130 + available from the Project's Inventory of Resources:

1. A New Canadian's First Decade of Volunteering: Examining Ways to Involve New Canadians in Canadian Organizations (2004) – <http://www.pillarnonprofit.ca/documents/FinalReportNewCanadians.pdf>

Description: Pillar Nonprofit Network surveyed organizations in London, ON to see how they have incorporated New Canadians into their volunteer base. At the same time, they surveyed New Canadians to find out what they need from organizations. From this information, the Pillar study presents strategies for recruiting new Canadian volunteers (meaning immigrants to Canada within the last ten years).

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2. *A Part of Society: Refugees and Asylum Seekers Volunteering in the U.K.* (2006) -- <http://www.tandem-uk.com/APartofSociety.pdf>

Description: Based on case studies of ten organizations across the UK that are all outside the refugee sector, and that are all successfully involving refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers, this report is for policy makers, volunteer managers and others wanting to encourage and develop diversity in volunteering.

3. *Building Caring Communities: The Contributions of Immigrant Volunteers* (2006) – <http://www.volunteerconnections.net/buildingCaringCommunities.pdf>

Description: Community Volunteer Connections in Richmond, BC used Appreciative Inquiry to investigate successful experiences of pairs of immigrant volunteers and volunteer coordinators. Ten volunteers emigrating from nine countries and nine volunteer coordinators participated in two focus groups.

4. *Questioning Volunteer Management: A Position Paper* (2007) – http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/Questioning_Volunteer_Management_Discussion_Paper_Nov07.pdf

Description: This discussion paper is Jennifer Woodill's attempt at challenging traditional volunteer management practices and suggesting possible new and creative ways of working with volunteers from a social inclusion perspective.

5. *Training Manual – Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Language Backgrounds* (2007) – http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/files/362D8AEPOW/VA_CALD%20Training%20Manual_final.pdf

Description: Volunteering Australia designed this training manual to enable trainers to deliver customized training designed to:

- Lay the groundwork for recruiting new volunteers from diverse language and cultural backgrounds
- Develop an inclusive organizational culture and culturally sensitive practices
- Successfully recruit and retain volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds

The strategies and actions recommended in these five resources describe practical ways to increase cultural diversity through the various levels of the pyramid framework. In upcoming Newsletter issues we will look at how the literature specifically addresses each level of the pyramid.

Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is an Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) funded project. The Social Planning Council of Peel is coordinating this project in selected communities in the 519 and 905 areas.

Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management is a three-year initiative developing the organizational and community capacity of local partners in the 519 and 905 areas to engage and support a more culturally diverse volunteer base.
