Recruiting Partnership Volunteers

The recruitment of volunteers is a process in which the Partnership invites potential candidates to participate in the Partnership’s volunteer activity. In this context, the recruitment of volunteers is a process that involves marketing of the Partnership in order that potential candidates will be prepared to invest volunteer hours.

Planning the Recruitment of Volunteers

The planning of the recruitment of volunteers to the Partnership should provide answers to the following questions:

1. **Who is the Partnership looking for?** The defined Partnership positions create a profile of a volunteer candidate’s optimal characteristics, experience and specific skills which can direct the recruiter to the desired market segment. Various segments of the market should be recognized and characterized. This is accomplished by understanding which benefits each segment can obtain by volunteering in the Partnership and which groups would be interested in these benefits. *When a Partnership is looking to recruit from specific target populations and people with specific characteristics and fields of interest, it should focus on that market segment, learn it thoroughly and create positions/projects whose benefits will be attractive to that specific market segment.*

2. **Where can the relevant population groups be found and what means can be used to make contact with them?** Consider where the relevant population groups can be located. What is the most efficient way of making contact with them and recruiting them to volunteer activity in the Partnership?

3. **Messaging** - The message the Partnership wishes to convey will relate to the specific market segment at which it is aiming, while placing emphasis on the benefits of volunteering in the Partnership that are likely to be relevant to this market segment.

Channels for the Recruitment from the Relevant Population Groups

With respect to recruitment channels, we can differentiate between different methods for recruiting volunteers:

- **GENERAL Mass Media Recruitment**
  In this method of recruitment, use is made of the mass media (local radio, local newspapers and the Internet) in order to reach large target audiences. This method of recruitment is particularly appropriate for ad hoc volunteers in the field for specific projects and is less appropriate for focused recruitment in a specific market segment, which characterizes the recruitment of volunteer leaders. The channel of recruitment includes:
    - Advertising in local newspapers
    - Advertisements on local radio/television
    - Ad banners on the Internet
    - Advertisements on websites that relate to volunteer activity/the Third Sector
• **FOCUSED Mass Media Recruitment**
  This recruitment method makes use of mass media recruitment methods as described above, with focus on a particular population. The channel of recruitment includes:
  - Advertisement in a newspaper read by the specific target population
  - Advertising on local radio, on TV channels and during programs that are relevant to the market segment (current affairs programs, economic programs, etc.)
  - Advertising on Internet sites, blogs and among specific communities that are of interest to the desired market segment

• **INDIVIDUAL Recruitment Focused on a Specific Population**
  This method of recruitment makes use of a personal, specific and focused appeal to certain people who fit the desired volunteer profile. The appeal can be in writing, through email, home meetings or personal conversations. The clear advantage of this method is the certainty that the appeal is being made to people who fit the desired profile. This encourages dialog between the recruiter and the potential candidates. Individual recruitment of volunteers includes:
  - Locating appropriate volunteers by means of existing Partnership volunteers – the method of “one friend brings another,” personal contacts of members of the Steering Committee, etc.
  - Locating volunteers by means of partner organizations and volunteer organizations in the community – personal recommendations of potential candidates from related organizations.
  - Locating volunteers through the local business community – appealing directly to key prominent figures in the local community.
  - Locating appropriate volunteers through the Internet – reading blogs and monitoring the communities and forums that users with the desired profile tend to visit frequently.
  - Locating volunteers through various Partnership events and activities – publicizing and exposing of volunteer opportunities in the Partnership at organized and other events held by the Partnership in the community.

• **INDIRECT Recruitment**
  As part of the Partnership’s publicity and public relations efforts, the Partnership can publish articles, stories or ads with regard to the Partnership’s activities and that of its volunteers. Such public relations activity is likely to result in individuals in the relevant market segment becoming interested in the Partnership’s activities and requesting to become part of those activities, even though there was no direct appeal made to them.

The recruitment channel that has been proven empirically to be the **MOST EFFECTIVE is a direct and personal appeal and a direct request** that a potential volunteer join the organization. Research has shown that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between an appeal to a volunteer and actual volunteer activity. The direct and personal appeal method is also proving itself as the most effective in the Partnerships.
Messaging

Create the most appropriate message to accurately reflect the position being offered and that will have the greatest chance of persuading the potential candidate. The success of the recruitment process will depend on clearly expressing the requirements of the position and the definition of its functions, the extent of support, the compensation and training potential candidate will receive and in appealing personally to the candidate.

An effective and convincing message will include the following components:

- **Information** on the Partnership, on the Partnership’s activity and on the specific position being offered to the volunteer (as described above).
- **Emphasis on the need** -connecting to the goals and the social and ethical significance of Partnership activity and the ways in which the volunteer can help advance those goals.
- **Emphasis on the benefits** of volunteer activity to the volunteer and to the Partnership.
- **If this is a personal appeal** it is important that the message include an explanation of why the individual fits the profile the Partnership is looking for.

**Emphasis on Benefits – What’s in it for me?**

The emphasis on the benefits of volunteer activity is a significant part of the message that the Partnership wishes to convey in recruiting potential volunteers. We can differentiate between three types of benefits that volunteers identify in volunteer activity: **functional benefit, psychological benefit and ideological benefit**.

Understanding the benefits of volunteering in a Partnership can provide a mapping of the groups that are likely to be interested in such benefits will help achieve a successful recruitment.

The benefits that interest volunteers are related to their motives for volunteering: Zionism and the love of Israel, the desire to advance themselves from a personal / professional / business / psychological point of view, the desire to change society, the desire to belong, etc. The motives of volunteers in a Partnership are likely to be organizational prestige, overseas connections, trips abroad, leadership, advancement of career, important social ties, etc.

Understanding the benefits of volunteering in the Partnership, together with understanding the possible motives of those in the relevant population group will help in building a message that broadcasts what the volunteers need to hear – a convincing message.

**Volunteer Recruitment Challenges**

**Should the Partnership focus on existing or new population groups?** Is the Partnership interested in focusing on existing population groups, on groups that are more accessible to it or those groups that have a tendency to respond positively, or is the Partnership interested in new market segments? Social inclusion and non-discrimination will lead to a situation in which the Partnership volunteers constitute a microcosm of society. Since the volunteers are the connecting link between the community and the Partnership, it is important to relate to the issue of recruiting volunteers from a variety of groups who do not fit the regular profile that characterizes most of the volunteers in the Partnership. If one of the goals of the Partnership is to expand its circles of influence and increase the diversity of its volunteers, then it must create a variety of positions that will be appropriate to a variety of volunteers from additional groups in the community.

**Recruiting the young to volunteer activity in the Partnership** – In some of the Partnerships, it is difficult to recruit volunteers in the 30-50 age group. Research has shown that most of the volunteers in this age group invest their volunteer hours in education-related areas, which are relevant to the parenting experience that characterizes this cohort. The busy lifestyle that is
characteristic of this stage in life, during which career and family are at the top of one’s agenda, means that numerous barriers to volunteering must be overcome. This includes emphasis on the benefits of volunteering in the Partnership; presenting volunteering in the Partnership as an opportunity for creating connections and improving one’s status and opportunities for career advancement; creating one-time and flexible positions that do not require a long-term commitment; and making the volunteer activity accessible to young people through a personal invitation to volunteer.

**How is the Partnership viewed in the community?** Positioning of the Partnership and its image among the public is a factor in attracting new volunteers. A positive image, a good reputation and prestige will result in a larger number of volunteers.