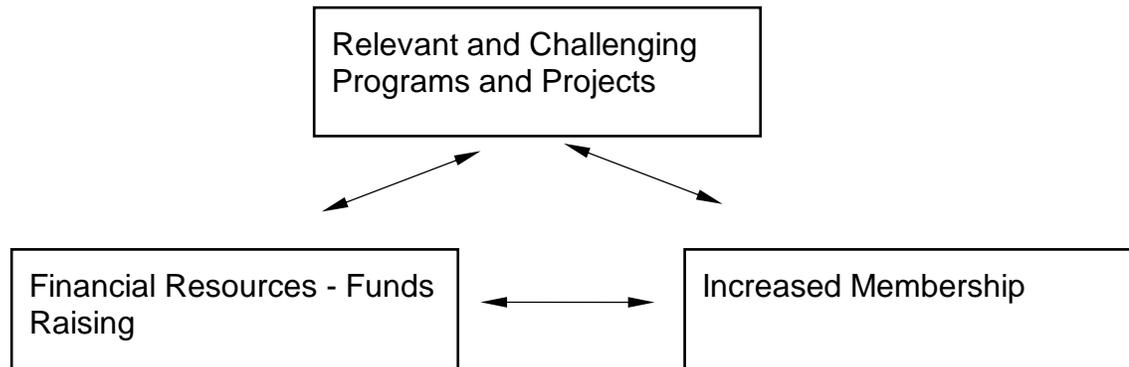


OD in all volunteer organizations - The case of Hadassah Israel

Volunteers organizations throughout the world face the need to become more professionalized in order to survive and to better fulfill their goals which usually are:



In many cases becoming more professionalized mean more employed staff including in managerial positions - a change that might raise philosophical issues in an all volunteers organization.

In this presentation a window is opened to the inside of an OD process carried out in Hadassah Israel - A all women, all volunteer organization. This presentation will be than a basis for a discussion about OD in all volunteer organizations.

The stages of the professionalization prior to the introduction of the OD consultant were:

1. Courses and workshop designed mostly to develop the volunteers and the leadership (existing and prospected).
2. Courses and workshop designed to improve aspects such as P.R., Funs raising etc.

The OD process included diagnose followed by the development of a strategic plan called Hadassah 2002 that included improvement on 3 levels. All three levels were supported by extensive training and development activities:

All organizational level:

- Developing of a mission and a strategic program.
- Installation of a steering committee and sub committees.
- Improving basic organizational processes such as desicion making and time management.

- Improving the organization structure mostly through empowering the vice presidents and creating a management forum and through better job descriptions.
- Introducing a PR consultant.
- Employing an organizational manager.

Chapter level

- Mentoring program for new and existing chapters - mostly to the chapter presidents.
- Improving information in the chapter and between chapters and head office.

Members (volunteers)

- Training and workshops (is perceived as an internal motivator).
- Improving coverage for personal expenses connected with volunteering work.

The all plan was developed with the intention of making the volunteers more professional and not to keep buying external knowledge.

Example for intervention - Inter - cultural Relationship

One of the “big issues” in Hadassah Israel is the two different cultures (English speakers - mostly ex-American Jewish women that came to live in Israel and Hebrew speakers each group has its own chapter and their activity is different). The subject was treated as a “Pandora Case” - better not to be touched. In the first stage I wrote a letter to all the membership. Followed are parts of the letter:

Diversity, Unity & Uniqueness

A year has passed since Hadassah-Israel decided to embark on “Hadassah 2002” - a five year process aimed at further development of the organization, its projects, its chapters and its members. Through this undertaking, in the spirit and tradition of Hadassah, you have expressed your desire to make an even greater contribution to Israeli society.

After a year of fascinating work together with you, I would like to relate to one topic in particular:

Diversity, Unity & Uniqueness

Diversity:

Hadassah-Israel has 1600 members. Each member is a world unto her own, though different from her colleagues, together contribute to Hadassah-Israel.

The diversity of the Hadassah chapters is mostly, though not only, expressed in two emphases of activity:

- Support of Hadassah institutions in Israel: Takes place mostly in Jerusalem, mainly through fund raising, with a strong emphasis on the connection to HWZOA and Hadassah-International.
- Activities in the community: Take place throughout the country, mainly through direct active volunteer work, in cooperation with local community bodies.

And yet, all members raise one flag and belong to one organization. How?

Unity:

- The secret of each group is in its inner consolidation in relation to the external world. In volunteer organizations this consolidation is expressed in a shared goal, important enough to each volunteer, individually, and to all the volunteers as a group. The individual member meets with difficulty in achieving a goal on her own, and believes the group improves her chances for its achievement.

When the groups grow in number and expand the difficulty in maintaining inner consolidation increases. This difficulty is twice as hard in an organization comprised of members from different cultures. Hadassah reflects the melting pot of Israeli society and the challenge is not easy: Each member has the responsibility of accepting and appreciating activities in different fields, different methods and processes, different working hours and even the use of a different language (Hebrew and English).

Uniqueness:

It's no coincidence that the apparently contradictory concepts of diversity and unity cause confusion. An increasing sense of uniqueness is crystallizing within Hadassah-Israel based on the fact that volunteers and chapters can design a wide range of functions and areas of activities as long as they work within the framework of the organization's objectives and procedural rules.

The organization sets activity goals for itself. The chapters are then invited to choose areas of activity which relate to the needs of the community and the needs and abilities of the respective local chapters and their volunteers.

This concept, unique to Hadassah-Israel, is its strength for it enables the individual member and each chapter to take entrepreneurial initiative and find personal expression.

Considering this direction, it appears that Hadassah-Israel faces significant challenges in the following areas:

- Learning about the different activities taking place in the organization's respective chapters while giving legitimization to the "different and the other" to act in their way and according to their understanding.
- Constructing the main office as a body of support for all chapters and projects, particularly in encouraging initiatives, "spreading the Hadassah spirit", promoting good budget management, and providing guidance for the different chapters.
- Development of the member as a volunteer and leader so that she can lead and expedite a variety of activities.

Stage 2

A workshop was built using the 7 Forms of Interaction Model (a subject for another presentation at this conference). The aim of this workshop was to learn to appreciate the differences between the two cultures and the strength that combining forces could bring to the organization. In each workshop a more or less even number of Hebrew and English speakers participated. The workshops were carried out in both Hebrew and English.

The workshops include the following parts:

1. A play describing a joint project carried out by an English and Hebrew speaking chapters. The play was acted by two volunteers.
2. Working separately (English - Hebrew) with two facilitators on issues such as : strengths and weaknesses of my group/ the other group, projects I want to volunteer for etc.
3. Working together on the same issues.

The workshops were a big success on the emotional level. On the practical level (working together) some more work has to be carried out. In the coming year more of these workshops will be carried out and parallel a stage 2 of the process will be introduced facilitating actual common projects.

Questions for discussion:

1. Apparently democracy in all volunteer organizations.
2. Relationship between paid staff and volunteers.
3. Professionalization \longleftrightarrow Losing the volunteer spirit.