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Access to International Volunteering

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This analysis examines rates of international volunteering among various demographic groups in the United States using data from the 2005 Current Population Survey. We use logistic regression analyses to address the importance of inclusion. Those most likely to serve overseas are white, highly educated, young, foreign-born individuals without dependent children in the home and not employed full-time. As a type of volunteering implemented primarily through the nonprofit sector, these findings suggest implications for recruitment and retention of volunteers who serve abroad.

Key words: *volunteer(-ism, -ing), international, inclusion, access*

The development of inclusive approaches to recruiting and retaining volunteers from all groups is of increased importance in the United States as well as worldwide (Merrill 2006; Caprara, Bridgeland, and Wofford 2007). This is particularly the case, because the body of evidence continues to grow regarding the positive benefits of volunteering for the volunteer. Depending on the form of volunteerism, such benefits may include increased mental and physical health, life span, personal development, civic-mindedness and trust, and employability (Wilson and Musick 1999; Wilson 2000; Willigen 2000; Cook and Jackson 2006). Given such benefits, critical questions can be asked about who volunteers and why.

A fundamental tenet of the volunteer inclusion argument is related to justice or possible systematic exclusion, which can be intentional or not, but which means the beneficial effects of volunteering may be differentially experienced. In fact, evidence suggests that volunteers from disadvantaged circumstances actually may benefit significantly more from volunteer experiences (Adams et al. 1996; AVSO 2003; Spring, Dietz, and Grimm 2007; IVR 2006). For international volunteering specifically, disadvantaged volunteers often develop a strong sense of self-reliance and autonomy, disassociate themselves with negative labels and stereotypes in their home country context, and experience “role-reversal” that helps them gain a greater sense of participation and contribution by serving abroad (IVR 2006). Another concern is how exclusion of certain groups could limit the effectiveness of the volunteer effort and activities. For instance, through international volunteering, persons of color have the potential to challenge preexisting stereotypes in host communities, bring unique insight from their backgrounds into their volunteer placements, and act as influential role models (Sharma and Bell 2002; Spring, Dietz, and Grimm 2007).

Compared to other volunteer forms, many of the unique features of international volunteerism may make it less accessible to certain populations, including the intensive time commitment, participation costs, stringent eligibility requirements, as well as the overall lower supply of volunteer roles (Sygall and Lewis 2006; IVPA 2006; IVR 2006; Hong et al. forthcoming). In this sense, even if individuals have an interest in volunteering internationally, they may not have access to these volunteer roles (McBride, Sherraden, and Menon 2007).

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This study uses data from the volunteer supplement of the 2005 US Current Population Survey to assess which groups are most likely to volunteer internationally. This is the first study to assess the status and demographic predictors of international volunteerism in the United States using national population data. While no theory is tested, finding differences in the demographic profiles of those who volunteer allows us to better identify groups that may have differential access to international volunteer opportunities. Understanding these demographic trends is vital for developing inclusive approaches to volunteering, which has direct implications for the nonprofit sector. International volunteerism is a burgeoning field (Allum 2007; Randel et al. 2005), and the majority of programs are implemented through nonprofit organizations (McBride et al. 2004).

Possible Demographic Predictors of International Volunteering

In order to understand which characteristics may be associated with greater access to international volunteering, a number of variables were chosen based on literature addressing rates of volunteerism. Following a thorough review of the literature, we hypothesize that the likelihood of volunteering internationally may vary by personal characteristics, life roles, and social and economic status.

Personal characteristics

There appears to be a lifecycle pattern to volunteering, with rates peaking when people are well-established in their communities around the ages of 35 to 55 (Brown 1999; Wilson 2000; Lough and Spring 2007). However, this pattern may be reversed when volunteering abroad, with youth being less integrated in their local communities and therefore freer to travel abroad. Youth volunteerism has also been associated with higher-risk opportunities (Thompson 1993), of which international volunteerism may be ranked. Although retired older adults may also be more free to participate, they may be prevented from serving overseas due to health problems and decreased social networks (Brown 1999). While volunteering overall among older adults remains fairly steady when health status is controlled (Chambre 1993), a decreased ability to access health services overseas may prevent older adults from taking the risk. In addition, an age cap exists for some sending organizations, only recruiting those under age 68 or those retired less than three years (Keesbury 2003).

Although differences in volunteerism by gender are not generally supported when other variables are controlled (Lough and Spring 2007), there are some marked differences in domestic volunteer rates based on interactions with the types of activities performed, differences in human capital, life cycle stage, and availability of social resources. Men are more likely to engage in volunteer tasks that require greater human capital and free time (Wilson 2000; Barker 1993). Men also continue to be ascribed with greater social privilege in the United States, which is generally associated with higher rates of volunteering (Clotfelter 1999). As international volunteering requires a more rigid time commitment and may be more demand driven, men may be more likely to volunteer abroad.

Among those who volunteer in the United States and abroad, those of African-American heritage participate less frequently than whites (Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000; JBHE 1997), and as with income, these differences generally disappear when additional variables such as education are accounted (Brown 1999). It is hypothesized that African-Americans will be less likely to volunteer internationally. Individuals born outside the United States or of a foreign ethnicity, including those

of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, may be more willing to volunteer in their country of origin where they have ancestral ties. If they speak a foreign language, they also may be in greater demand by international programs, therefore increasing their eligibility status.

Life roles

Among that who volunteer within the United States, married people volunteer more frequently than single people (Lough and Spring 2007). Possible reasons include increased social networks with the spousal connection, and the increased likelihood of both spouses volunteering if one spouse volunteers (Freeman 1997). However, the marital status association with volunteerism is dependent upon the context under which activities are performed, specifically in regards to location and life course stage (Wilson 2000). Previous studies have not yet revealed how the international context may affect volunteering. However, because marriage hypothetically increases social networks and thus, knowledge about opportunities, married individuals may be more likely to volunteer abroad than single individuals, though this effect may be dampened if the couple has dependent children in the home.

Among volunteers within the United States, couples with children volunteer more frequently (Brown 1999; Lough and Spring 2007), but those with younger children spend fewer hours volunteering than those with older children (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994). This is likely because opportunities that arise from parenting networks are based locally, within schools, sports teams, and nonprofits that provide some direct benefit to their children (Wilson 2000). Because international volunteer opportunities that benefit and involve children may be less likely, it is anticipated that this same pattern would hold for volunteering abroad. In fact, some programs, such as the Peace Corps have strict policies stating that they are “unable to place couples with dependent children” (Peace Corps 2007). It is hypothesized that parents with dependent children in the home will be less likely to volunteer internationally.

Social and economic status

Education may be one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of volunteerism (Barker 1993; Clotfelter 1999; Wilson 2000). Not only because of its effects on personal motivations (Wilson 2000), but also because those with advanced education may have an easier time locating opportunities. They also may be in greater demand by countries or organizations requesting a particular skill set. These effects may be somewhat mixed, because non-relief programs typically require less education, while relief programs are likely to require higher educational credentials (Sherraden et al. 2006).

Studies have found a strong relationship between social class and volunteerism in Western Europe and the United States (Barker 1993; Clotfelter 1999; Smith 1994). Wilson (2000) suggests that this is not only a reflection of greater access to volunteer institutions, but also because higher-status professionals are those most likely to be asked to volunteer. Those with higher incomes may also have the luxury of leisure time that they can devote to volunteering. On the other hand, economic theory predicts that those with greater incomes should volunteer less frequently due to higher opportunity costs associated with lost time. Empirically, the effects of income on rates of volunteerism are mixed (Freeman 1997; Wilson 2000), with the conclusion that volunteerism draws largely from the middle and upper classes, but this depends on how the concepts are measured

(Smith 1994; Wilson 2000; Lough 2006). Furthermore, non-relief based international volunteer programs typically require participants to pay, while relief programs are more likely to pay travel costs and require greater educational requirements (Sherraden et al. 2006). A strong relationship between income and international volunteering is not expected, because these differences may disappear when other variables are controlled (Brown 1999).

Due to time constraints, individuals working full-time would, hypothetically, find it difficult to take time off to volunteer abroad. Competing time demands have been associated with local volunteering as part-time employees are more likely to volunteer than those working full-time (Wilson 2000). However, data also indicate that retired and unemployed individuals volunteer less frequently than the employed (Brown 1999); suggesting that work-based responsibilities may be offset by network effects. Although these effects would apply across contexts, they may be more extreme internationally where the commitment may be significant and longer-term. As such, individuals working full-time may be less likely to volunteer internationally.

Methods

Data source

Data used in this article were from the September 2005 volunteer supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is a monthly, national population survey of approximately 60,000 households that is implemented by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. The volunteer supplement includes questions about service performed domestically and abroad. All members of surveyed households are asked about their volunteer activities for the previous year, and those who answer “yes” are further asked whether any of the volunteer work they have done since September first of the previous year took place in a foreign country outside the United States or any of its territories.

In 2005, nearly 30,000 individuals in the sampled households were asked about their international volunteer activities. Because the CPS survey is designed to provide information for all members in a household, about 70% of responses were self-reports; the remaining 30% of responses were answered by another member of the household in proxy for unavailable respondents. Approximately 150 individuals did not respond and were counted as missing.

Although the volunteer supplement gathers information on all household members 15 years and older, data used in the analysis include only those respondents aged 16 to 85 in 2005. These age limitations were used in order to be consistent with guidelines used by CPS in reporting voluntary activities in the United States, which includes civilian non-institutionalized individuals over 16 years of age who performed unpaid activities in an organization outside of the US and its territories (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006).

Raw data were cleaned and recoded as categorized in Table 1. All descriptive statistics and significance testing procedures were run on unweighted CPS data to more accurately represent sample characteristics (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006). Survey respondents totaled 105,737—including those who volunteered at least once internationally as the group of interest ($n = 393$) and two reference groups: those who did not volunteer internationally ($n = 105,344$), and those who volunteered nationally as a subgroup of those who did not volunteer internationally ($n = 27,991$).

Independent variables used in this analysis were recoded into categories that would most accurately measure the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of selected demographic characteristics by international volunteer status

Categorical variables ²	Volunteered internationally (N = 393)		Volunteered nationally only (N = 27,991)		Did not volunteer internationally ¹ (N = 105,344)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Gender						
Male	181	46.1%	11,369	41.2%	49,873	47.52%
Female	212	53.9%	16,229	58.8%	55,078	52.5%
Race						
Black	15	3.8%	1,766	6.4%	9,522	9.0%
White	346	88.1%	24,794	88.4%	88,268	83.8%
Other	32	8.1%	1,431	5.2%	7,554	7.2%
Ethnicity						
Hispanic/Latino ethnicity	35	8.9%	1,490	5.4%	10,981	10.5%
Non-Hispanic/Latino ethnicity	358	91.1%	26,108	94.6%	93,970	89.5%
Citizenship status						
Born in the US	331	84.2%	25,706	93.1%	91,372	87.1%
Born outside the US	62	15.8%	1,892	6.9%	13,579	12.9%
Marital status						
Married	218	55.5%	17,800	64.5%	58,167	55.4%
Not married	175	44.5%	9,798	35.5%	46,784	44.6%
Dependent child status						
With children under 18 yrs.	95	24.2%	10,087	36.6%	29,595	28.2%
Without children under 18 yrs.	298	75.8%	17,511	63.4%	75,356	71.8%
Student status						
Student ³	24	6.1%	1,218	4.4%	4,824	4.6%
Non-student	369	93.9%	26,380	95.6%	100,127	95.4%
Employment status						
Employed full-time	197	50.1%	15,367	55.7%	5,7081	54.4%
Not employed full-time ⁴	196	49.9%	12,231	44.3%	47,870	45.6%
Continuous variable	mean	<i>sd</i>	mean	<i>sd</i>	mean	<i>sd</i>
Age	42.6	17.3	45.4	18.0	40.9	16.8

¹Sample includes those who volunteered nationally only

²154 cases missing

³Includes only those aged 16-24, full or part-time students

⁴Includes adult civilians employed part-time, unemployed, or not in labor force

Variables

Family income was originally a 16-category variable bottom-coded at less than \$5000 and top-coded at \$150,000 or more. In order to more accurately reflect income as a resource available to potential volunteers, and to more correctly use this aggregate variable, an individual measure—combined family income, was divided by total number of persons in the household. The resultant 109-category variable was then used in the model as a continuous measure.

The education variable was also a 16-category measure bottom-coded at “less than first grade” and top-coded at “doctoral degree.” The eight lowest categories measure education less than high school

diploma, while the remaining eight measure high-school diploma or higher. This variable was also treated as continuous in the model. The 23-category race variable was dummy coded into three categories, including White only, Black only, and Other. The Other race category included all non-White and non-Black races as reported by the respondents. CPS does not acknowledge Hispanic or Latino ethnicity as a race; therefore, this variable was included as a separate variable measuring ethnicity.

The remaining variables were all recoded into dichotomous variables. Marital status was divided into married and unmarried; married individuals were still married at the time of the survey, whereas unmarried individuals were single (never married), widowed, and divorced. The gender variable only allowed for two responses: male or female. Individuals were determined to have dependent children if their own children under 18 were present in the household. Those who never parented or who no longer had children under age 18 in the home were considered to have no dependent children. Citizenship status included native individuals born in the US or its outlying areas in one group and individuals born outside the US in the second group. Those born outside the United States included native citizens born abroad of American parents, foreign-born non-citizens, and United States citizens born abroad but legalized through naturalization. Students included only those aged 16 to 24 who were enrolled full- and part-time in high-school, college, or university during the week of the interview in September 2005.

Analysis

In order to estimate the probability of an individual volunteering internationally, this assessment was conducted using two separate binomial logistic regression analyses with a dichotomous outcome variable (volunteered internationally or not) and 12 explanatory variables. All observations were independent and linearly related to the logit of the outcome variable. Although a stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine the most parsimonious model, all variables were retained in the model to understand the legitimacy of the proposed predictors.

The purpose of the first model was to understand differences between individuals who volunteered internationally and other adult civilians who did not volunteer internationally. Therefore, all individuals in the sample were used in the analysis ($N = 86,967$)—those who volunteered at least once internationally as the group of interest ($n = 343$) and those who did not volunteer internationally or domestically as the reference group ($n = 86,624$).

In order to more specifically test the predictors of the international component of volunteering, a second model was used to compare those who volunteered at least once internationally with those who volunteered nationally ($N = 24,708$). The purpose of using those who volunteered nationally as an additional reference group was to remove unexplained variance between those who volunteer and others in the US population. Therefore, the second model more specifically assesses the issue of access to international volunteerism in the United States.

Findings

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of select variables by the group of interest (international volunteers) and the two reference groups (national volunteers¹ only and those that did not volunteer internationally). Total sample sizes for these groups are slightly larger in Table 1 than in Tables 2 and 3 due to missing values on various predictors. The mean and standard deviation of the education and income per household member variables are not included as the numerical values are not substantively meaningful. All numbers reflect unweighted sample statistics.

Descriptive statistics reveal that sample size for all predictors is adequate, thus allowing logistic regression to use all predictors with sufficient power. Table 2 presents the results of the logistic regression model, which compares international volunteers to those in the United States population who did not volunteer internationally. Although 105,498 observations were read, 18,531 were dropped due to missing values on the predictors—resulting in a total N size of 86,967. The Hosmer Lemeshow test statistic indicates adequate model fit ($\chi^2 = 13.30$, $df = 8$, $p > .05$). Although the pseudo R-square is quite small (Max-rescaled R-square = 0.044), indicating that a relatively low amount of variance in international volunteerism is explained by the predictor variables, the model c-statistic ($c = .702$), indicates that the logistic equation accounts for a fair amount of discriminative power in the model.

Table 2: Logistic regression model of international volunteerism in *US population* in 2005 (N=86,967)¹

Variables	logit	SE	Odds ratio	Wald χ^2	p
Gender (male)	0.072	0.112	1.075	0.418	0.518
Age	-0.018*	0.004	0.982	20.916	<.0001
Race					
Black	-0.622*	0.277	0.537	5.063	0.024
Other (Non-Black and Non-White)	-0.196	0.219	0.822	0.805	0.370
Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)	0.056	0.211	1.057	0.070	0.792
Birth location (born outside US)	0.377*	0.172	1.457	4.773	0.029
Marital status (not married)	-0.144	0.134	0.866	1.150	0.284
Dependent child status (with children)	-0.405*	0.150	0.667	7.285	0.007
Income per household member	0.019	0.024	1.020	0.675	0.411
Student status (student)	0.251	.0264	1.285	0.899	0.343
Education	0.275*	0.025	1.317	117.42	<.0001
Employment status (not employed full-time)	0.571*	0.125	1.770	20.84	<.0001

¹18,531 cases dropped due to missing values on the predictors

When international volunteers are compared against all others in the US population, few personal characteristics have any effect on the likelihood that individuals will volunteer abroad. Gender, Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, and student status do not have a significant effect, whereas, age, birth location, and race do. Controlling for other variables in the model, for each year increase in age, the odds of a person volunteering internationally decreases 1.8%, and for each categorical increase in education (16 categories), the odds of volunteering internationally increase 32%. Those born outside

¹ “National volunteers” refers to volunteers within the United States.

the United States are 46% more likely to volunteer internationally than those born in the United States, and blacks are about one-half times as likely to volunteer internationally compared to whites.

As for life roles, marital status is not a significant predictor, whereas the presence of dependent children in the home is statistically significant. Those with dependent children are one-third less likely to volunteer internationally than those without dependent children in the household. As for social and economic status, income appears to have no effect on the likelihood of individuals in the United States population to volunteer abroad, whereas, education and employment status do. Controlling for other variables in the model, individuals not employed full-time are 1.8 times more likely than those employed full-time to volunteer internationally, and for each categorical increase in education (16 categories), the odds of volunteering internationally increase 32%.

Table 3 presents the results of the second logistic regression model, which compares those who volunteered abroad to those who volunteered nationally only. Although 28,145 observations were read, 3,094 were dropped due to missing values on the predictors. The Hosmer Lemeshow test indicates good model fit ($\chi^2 = 5.09$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.75$). As with the previous model, the pseudo R-square is quite small (Max-rescaled R-square = 0.041), but the model c-statistic ($c = .667$), indicates a fair amount of discriminative power.

Table 3: Logistic regression model of international volunteerism in *US volunteer population* in 2005 (N=25,051)¹

Variables	logit	SE	Odds ratio	Wald χ^2	p
Gender (male)	0.321*	0.113	1.378	8.082	0.005
Age	-.0188*	0.004	0.981	21.120	<.0001
Race					
Black	-0.468	0.278	0.626	2.842	0.092
Other (Non-Black and Non-White)	0.016	0.219	1.017	0.006	0.940
Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)	0.337	0.211	1.401	2.560	0.110
Birth location (born outside US)	0.889*	0.173	2.433	26.546	<.0001
Marital status (not married)	0.056	0.139	1.057	0.159	0.690
Dependent child status (with children)	-0.798*	0.151	0.450	27.79	<.0001
Income per household member	-0.289	0.025	0.972	1.388	0.239
Student status (student)	-0.203	0.265	0.816	0.592	0.442
Education	0.178*	0.026	1.195	47.216	<.0001
Employment status (not employed full-time)	0.418*	0.125	1.519	11.24	0.001

¹3,094 cases dropped due to missing values on the predictors

The logistic regression results of the second model are similar to the first model except, when compared with those who volunteer nationally only, international volunteers are more likely to be male, and differences by race are no longer significant. When international volunteers are compared against those that only volunteer nationally, Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, race, and student status do not have a significant effect, whereas, age, gender, and birth location do. Controlling for other variables in the model, for each year increase of age, the odds of a volunteer going overseas decrease 1.9%; males are 1.4 times more likely to have a volunteer experience abroad; and foreign-born volunteers are 143% more likely to volunteer internationally than native-born volunteers.

Consistent with the first model, marital status is not a significant predictor, while the presence of dependent children in the home is a statistically significant predictor. National volunteers with dependent children are about half as likely to volunteer abroad as those without dependent children in the household. Social and economic status variables are also consistent with the first model: income has no effect, whereas, education and employment status do. For each categorical increase in education, the odds of volunteers serving internationally increase 20%. Individuals not employed full time are 1.5 times more likely than those employed full-time to spend some or all of their volunteering time abroad.

Discussion

This study examined the status of international volunteering among the United States population using a nationally-representative population survey. A number of data limitations should be acknowledged in the interpretation of these findings. Statistics obtained from the CPS contain both sampling and non-sampling errors due to data collection methods. Among these, about 30% of CPS responses were answered by proxy, which could introduce bias if responses were systematic for a particular group (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006). Also, questions based on recall may misrepresent the accuracy of data. Grouping of the data into binary variables may also diminish some of the variation that could be captured within groups. For example, non-traditional students and older students completing graduate studies would not be well represented in the student category as it was modeled nor would those employed part-time or those belonging to an alternative racial category. Further studies may need to examine these discrete categories. Moreover, the overall variance explained by these models is minimal. In this sense, individual characteristics, while statistically significant, may explain little. There are other predictive factors that are not captured. Nevertheless, even with these limitations, there are a number of valuable implications from this analysis.

Some groups volunteer more frequently—and in different ways than others, due to both individual and institutional barriers (IVR 2006; Sherraden, Lough, and McBride 2008). Knowing who does and does not volunteer abroad helps to identify groups for whom participation barriers may exist. Based on these findings, there are possible implications for expanding access to international volunteering by individuals who are older, have less education, are employed full-time, and have dependent children. These implications pertain both to program development and volunteer management, which speaks to both promising approaches and continued challenges for inclusion.

In order to generate more inclusive approaches, nonprofit management can implement a number of changes to increase institutional access. Research has identified three important components of access that can be advanced including: 1) availability, 2) eligibility, and 3) flexibility (Morrow-Howell et al. 2003). Addressing each of these components, volunteer programs can maximize available volunteer positions, market programs to more diverse populations, modify eligibility requirements, broaden recruitment and screening procedures, and remain flexible to the needs of a diverse volunteer base (Sundeen, Raskoff, and Garcia 2007; Roaf, Tierney, and Hunte 1994). Establishing more diverse executive boards (Brown 2003) and creating personal recruitment environments may also help attract and retain individuals that would otherwise fail to volunteer (Handy and Cnaan 2007). Beyond these general implications, the following considers the implications of specific findings.

Among volunteers, race appeared to have little consequence in determining who serves abroad. However, the fact that African-Americans tend to volunteer abroad less frequently than other racial groups in the United States population may reflect their lack of access to volunteering in general (Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000), or may reflect a greater tendency among people of color to volunteer within their home communities (Amin 1999; IVR 2006; JBHE 1997). However, it has been demonstrated that marketing materials impact who volunteers (Bussell and Forbes 2002; Andreasen and Kotler 2003). When the brochures and websites do not include pictures that reflect human diversity, then certain demographic groups may be less likely to respond. Additionally, many people learn of volunteer opportunities through others who have volunteered themselves (Rehberg 2005; Anheier and Salamon 1999; Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000; Sundeen and Rasko 2003). This creates a reinforcing pattern when people of color or other minority groups are not volunteering abroad.

More highly-educated individuals may be more likely to volunteer abroad because professionals with a technical skill set are in greater demand by host countries, and thus, are actively recruited (Keesbury 2003; Plewes and Stuart 2007). The most frequent reason people volunteer internationally is because they are approached by an organization (Lough 2006). With this understanding, another reason for higher volunteer rates may be an increased exposure to opportunities in educational institutions. This can be witnessed through the growth of international service learning and university alumni travel trips, which are gaining in popularity at many universities. Personal interest sparked by an increased knowledge of global society may be yet another reason for greater rates of volunteering among educated individuals. A more in-depth study on the role of education in international volunteering would help determine whether those with a lower education fail to volunteer based on personal desire or whether they are denied access to international volunteer experiences.

Differences in international volunteerism based on age operate on similar dynamics, although the effects are somewhat dampened. While young people are slightly more likely to volunteer, the effect size is relatively small. Age does not seem to be a *practically* significant barrier to access. This may change as America ages, however, as “institutional lag” often fails to keep up with individual preferences, thereby possibly limiting access for older adults (McBride 2007; Hong et al. forthcoming). With this said, there are a number of noteworthy initiatives and practices, including “Encore! Service Corps International,” where former Peace Corps members volunteer again later in life in a modified version of the standard model, thus, allowing them more flexibility yet the opportunity to serve.

Results of this study also indicate that opportunities may be limited for those with substantial personal responsibilities, as indicated by having dependent children in the home and full-time employment status. It is likely that those with strong local obligations are sufficiently preoccupied with raising children or working that they have little desire or ability to volunteer abroad. However, it is also possible that these individuals fail to locate programs willing to accommodate children, or that employers are unwilling to allow sufficient leave time for those employed full-time to volunteer overseas. Promising movements that may help promote inclusion and programmatic flexibility include the growth in corporate volunteering schemes that support international opportunities for full-time employees (Tichy, McGill, and St. Clair 1997; Hills and Mahmud 2007; Vian et al. 2007), and opportunities for volunteers to serve abroad together as an entire family (The Volunteer Family 2008).

Conclusion

This study outlines the typical international volunteer in the United States, which suggests that certain demographic groups may not have access to *or* may choose not to participate in international volunteering. The intersection between program requirements and individual characteristics demands further study, especially as the demographic of the United States continues to change. If these barriers are systematic and individuals in these excluded groups have the desire to serve, then more can and should be done to leverage their participation and impact (Caprara, Bridgeland, & Wofford, 2007).

While inclusion may appear to be a social good, it is also necessary to weigh both supply *and* demand issues (IVR 2006). It is important that volunteer managers prioritize the needs identified by the host community or host country during volunteer recruitment. For example, while volunteering abroad may be desirable for a volunteer with less education, it may not be for the host community. On the other hand, not all international volunteer opportunities are aimed to provide technical assistance to host communities. Volunteer experiences may themselves provide powerful educational experiences based on cross-cultural exchange (Sherraden and Benítez 2003). In this sense, formal educational requirements may be counterproductive, begging the question as to how sending programs can include more people across the demographic spectrum.

While perhaps difficult to achieve, positive benefits of diversification may outweigh the costs. Program staff report that the difficulties of recruiting certain types of individuals paired with the increased expenses associated with recruitment and facilitation make inclusion difficult and sometimes “unrealistic” (IVR 2006, p. 61). To address this concern, public or private support can greatly increase the capacity of organizations to create a more representative volunteer demographic. The recent introduction of the federal Global Service Fellowship bill is an attempt to promote inclusion based on public support (Caprara, Bridgeland, and Wofford 2007), whereby stipends would be provided to cover costs. With globalization and the simultaneous reduction and amplification of cultural differences, access to international volunteer opportunities for Americans is an important policy and program goal.

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