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Fulfilling President John F. Kennedy's Vision for the Peace Corps

Kevin G. Burt*

* Mr. Kevin G. Burt, a 2016 graduate of Webster University's Master of Arts in International Relations program, works as a management analyst for the United States Energy Information Administration, with previous professional endeavors throughout state and federal levels of government and the United States Coast Guard. He acknowledges with thanks the assistance of Profs. Robert P. Barnidge, Jr., and Thomas Kleiner. Email: kevinburt1@gmail.com.

Abstract

If responsibility for preparing American youth for volunteerism resides with academic institutions alone, can the Peace Corps be positioned to fulfill its vision? This paper explores the feasibility of measuring volunteerism by identifying American and international trends and utilizing academia (high school and beyond) as a foundation to prepare American youth for volunteering in, and subsequently positively impacting, less developed states. Quantitative analysis identifies trends among Americans, by education level and age, as well as United Nations reports on the importance and economic impact of volunteerism globally. Challenges exist in using this numerical data, however, as it measures different attributes of volunteerism across different time periods. Qualitative analysis illustrates opposing views on the effectiveness of the Peace Corps, in its current versus perceived role. Without a standardized methodology in measuring volunteer rates, and without the ability to measure impact quantitatively, significant limitations exist in the ability to develop methods of testing the proposed hypotheses. However, this paper argues that the United States possesses the resources – academic institutions and total number of young individuals – to provide organizations such as the Peace Corps an endless pool of potential volunteers, skilled, experienced, and with an understanding of global issues.

Keywords

Peace Corps, volunteerism, volunteering, academia

Introduction

Addressing thousands of students at the University of Michigan in 1960, then United States Senator John F. Kennedy challenged the young minds present with a call to service. Subsequently (John F. Kennedy nda), Kennedy received a positive response and “proposed ‘a peace corps of talented men and women’ who would dedicate themselves to the progress and peace of developing countries ... to involve Americans more actively in the causes of global democracy, peace, development, and freedom.” Since the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961 – in response to the Cold War – opposing thoughts on the effectiveness and impact of the program have given rise to the challenges of measuring volunteerism and the ability of the Peace Corps to fulfill its original vision (National Archives nd) of “sending idealistic Americans abroad to work at the grass-roots level ... [spreading] American goodwill into the Third World.”

The vision of the Peace Corps – that which is tied to the development of skills through academia – predates President Kennedy. Evidence shows that academia began preparing students for volunteerism and service as early as the 1930s. Peter Cunningham and Bruce Leslie (2011:140) argue that the “migration of scholars has long been a key factor in cultural transmission ... the most immediately apparent mode of cultural transmission, or even cultural transformation ... was teaching and educational administration.” This led many students to participate in international organizations such as the League of Nations. An additional example (Peterson 2011:230) cites a 1953 memorandum from the United States Department of State charging colleges and universities with the role of training “international missionaries of goodwill;” illustrating a long-term view that academia holds the potential, and arguably should have the responsibility, to prepare young citizens to serve.

With a standing vision, spanning over eight decades, and an avenue to fulfill this vision, why is the rate of volunteerism among America’s youth not greater? Why has the call to service, from the infamous 1961 inaugural address (Voices of Democracy nd), stemming from a time of personal empowerment to “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” gone unanswered? President Kennedy challenged American youth:

For every young American who participates ... will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace. (John F. Kennedy, ndb)

This paper asks whether the Peace Corps can be positioned to fulfill its vision if responsibility for preparing America’s youth for volunteerism resides with academic institutions alone. The impact of volunteerism is not easily measured, yet this paper outlines potential qualitative and quantitative approaches to doing so. Challenges rest with measuring the impact of volunteerism and with properly preparing volunteers for the often-experienced culture shock of serving in less developed states. Measurement mechanisms must be created to accurately develop programs in academia that will produce greater numbers of young American volunteers, prepared for cultural differences and possessing skill sets that will positively impact the localized areas served, over the long term, through education and economic development.

Literature Review

Founded in Academia

Prior to President Kennedy's creation of the Peace Corps, research had already suggested academia's tie to volunteerism, dating back as early as the 1930s. The Universities of Utah, Stanford, Bowling Green, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Colorado State undertook a project to study "education and its relationship to dominant political ideologies and functions in the conditions of the Cold War ... [providing] a thesis of American exceptionalism and a desire to spread democracy." Quigley (2013:137) argues that the "Peace Corps was not designed to be a government-administered program. Rather, higher education institutions were envisioned as the essential delivery mechanism for Peace Corps training and programs." Did President Kennedy design the Peace Corps as an organization, "created to win hearts and minds in the non-aligned developing countries" (Rieffel, 2003), which should be tied to academic institutions, or did he recognize the skills offered by America's young educated population alone would positively serve less fortunate populations?

Volunteer Role

Rebecca Schein (2015:1111-13), an assistant professor at the University of California, argues that the original intent of the Peace Corps was to train American volunteers to serve as "amateur diplomats," in the Cold War era. The concept of "culture shock" propelled isolated Americans into situations that expanded their understanding of the world while simultaneously exerting American "soft power." Volunteers were viewed as flexible, inventive, and humble, "hallmarks of a new American statemanship, one embodied in artless amateurs rather than state officials or technical specialists." Additionally, volunteers were to "impart the skills and attitudes necessary for political and economic modernization." This expands the role of the American volunteers to positively impact those served as well as be positively impacted by those served. Unfortunately, the ability to successfully execute modernization did not come to fruition. According to Rieffel (2003), "Nation-building was the main objective ... when the first Peace Corps volunteers arrived in Ghana in August 1961. In retrospect, the complexities of nation-building were seriously underestimated."

Building on the concept of culture shock, Robert Hanvey's (1982:162-66) influential paper, *An Attainable Global Perspective*, discusses five dimensions to attain a global perspective: perspective consciousness, state of the planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. Global perspective, or "global cognition is characterized by new knowledge ... as such, knowledge and its rational use expands, human choices expand" (166). It is this new knowledge that provides a platform for change and positive impact. The dimension proposed by Hanvey can easily be translated into academic curricula to prepare volunteers, lessen culture shock, and instill a personal drive for volunteerism. Kenneth Carano, a former Peace Corps volunteer who served two years in South America teaching elementary school students (Carano 2013) – maintained a journal focused on the cross-cultural experiences – applying the work of Hanvey and the perceived impact of his efforts. Carano perceived a positive impact was made on those he was working with coupled with his understanding of the world.

Challenges with Volunteerism and Metrics

A geographic literacy study (National Geographic 2006:6-7) suggests academia's real challenges in preparing potential volunteers. In those studied, a mentality has been demonstrated that young Americans are not concerned with issues beyond the borders of the United States. Half of the respondents believe it is "important but not absolutely necessary either to know where countries in the news are located ... or to be able to speak a foreign language;" the study cites approximately 62 percent who cannot speak a foreign language fluently. The overall results of the study "suggest that young people in the United States – the most recent graduates of our educational system – are unprepared for an increasingly global future." If academia is populated with students who do not understand, or do not wish to understand, global issues, then has an additional challenge been identified in the Peace Corps ability to fulfill its vision?

A further complication is the inability to tangibly measure the impact of the Peace Corps due to a lack of metrics. Yet, should metrics exist? Hall (2007:53) suggests that the "Peace Corps was, and continues to be, rich in symbolic meaning for Americans ... [partially serving as] the lens through which Americans view themselves, their government, and their culture." The success of the Peace Corps relies not just on volunteers but those who believe American ideals have the potential to aid the citizenry of less developed states.

Individual organizational metrics to measure volunteerism are lacking. The United Nations General Assembly's (2011:XXII) *State of the World's Volunteerism* contends:

Fundamental misperceptions [regarding volunteerism] remain widespread in the Western world ... as to its nature and contributions. There is no agreed methodology for measuring the extent of voluntary engagement. However, most studies attest to the universality of volunteerism ... and impact.

This comprehensive report, a first of its kind, cites the impact of volunteerism as a whole. "Volunteering is not a nostalgic relic of the past. It is our first line defense against social atomization in a globalizing world. Today, maybe more than ever before, caring and sharing are a necessity, not a charitable act" (2011:1). This paper uses the metrics from this and the International Labour Organization's *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* to understand global volunteerism and its impact.

With an opposing view to Carano's experience in South America, Robert Strauss (2008) – a former Peace Corps volunteer, recruiter, and country director for Cameroon – provides a point/counter-point view of the Peace Corps role and its ability to fulfill its vision. Strauss argues "the rush to fulfill John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign pledge was such that the Peace Corps never learned to crawl, let alone walk, before it set off at a sprinters pace." The cited challenges facing the Peace Corps include: volunteers who are young and inexperienced, coupled with inadequate levels of training; lacking the necessary resources required to address the needs of the poorest countries; and a failure in providing awareness to those served that the efforts are a direct result of the Peace Corps, which is a United States governmental organization.

State of the World's Volunteerism (2011:9) refutes the charge that “volunteerism is the domain of amateurs who are unskilled and unexperienced. This misunderstanding arises from the perception that professionalism, both in knowledge and behavior, is exclusively associated with a paid job.” Arguably, the current Peace Corps model appears to be lacking means to employ large-scale impacts on the communities served. The main website for the Peace Corps provides information on the top volunteer-producing colleges and universities. Within these figures students self-report the top five degree programs undertaken or completed. Consistently, the list does not include business or economics programs as common majors (Peace Corps 2014), potentially indicating why economic development – a necessity for sustainability in less developed regions – represents a small percentage of the Peace Corps efforts.

Peace Corps Positive Attributes

A fundamental aim of the Peace Corps is to build partnerships with host nations. The Peace Corps refers to this as “sustainable development.” According to Lieutenant Colonel John Teichert (2009:172), “focusing on sustainable development, the Peace Corps’ long-term presence is analogous to security cooperation activities.” Parallels between the organizational structure of the Peace Corps and the military are highlighted. A positive attribute of the Peace Corps structure is that it allows decision-making to occur at volunteer level, by those who are in the region and best understand it, versus unnecessary oversight from headquarters. According to Teichert (2009:175-76), Peace Corps Response teams involve volunteers with experience who have been trained, allowing immediate impact to areas in need of “humanitarian assistance ... natural disaster and post-conflict relief and reconstruction.” This refutes arguments that the Peace Corps lacks individuals with experience, country knowledge, and specialized skills and supports the idea that it is positioned to play a greater role in the education and economic development of regions that Peace Corps volunteers serve.

Since 1987, the Peace Corps has offered a master’s degree in conjunction with more than a hundred American universities. The list of colleges and universities that participate in this program is accessible, serving as additional information to generate a quantitative baseline. According to the Peace Corps’ website (2015c), to be accepted students must apply to the Peace Corps and a graduate school simultaneously. The graduate program project is undertaken when the volunteer serves abroad, ultimately addressing a need of the community served. Additionally, “students return to the United States with a broader worldview – and the skills and education to continue to make a difference at home.”

The Peace Corps (2015b) provides statistical figures on the colleges and universities that provide the largest number of volunteers, to the Corps, from 2003 through 2015. Within the 2015 statistics, schools are categorized by large, medium, small, and graduate. This quantitative information can be used to compare the number of individuals that volunteered versus the total population of students (recognizing that this information is specific to the Peace Corps and not indicative of those students who volunteered for other organizations), providing a baseline in an argument where metrics are scarce.

Research Design

This paper asks whether the Peace Corps can be positioned to fulfill its vision if responsibility for preparing America's youth for volunteerism resides with academic institutions alone.

Variables

This study's *dependent variable* focuses on the ability to prepare American youth to understand global issues. The argument is that the greater the exposure to, and subsequent understanding of, the array of issues challenging citizens of less developed states, the greater the inclination an individual would possess to serve others. The 2006 National Geographic study referred to above shows a somewhat isolationist view held by Americans in that they believe global issues do not bear significance to the United States or individuals' way of life. The study's findings indicate challenges for academia, and society, in preparing a young population for volunteerism, which subsequently impacts the volunteer and those served by the volunteer.

The *independent variables* include:

1. The ability of academia to provide the soft and hard skills needed to serve the citizens of impoverished states;
2. The ability to modify the Peace Corps' current vision to concentrate on education and economic development; and
3. The ability to gain public support to enhance the Peace Corps' mission, serve the Peace Corps, and engage in academic pursuits that acknowledge world issues.

Arguably, if academia provides focused avenues to prepare young minds with global perspectives, then potential volunteers would be better prepared, and potentially greater numbers of individuals would volunteer. Despite the altruistic desire to serve, if volunteers are not prepared to engage in making substantial impacts in the localized areas served, then the Peace Corps will not be able to achieve its original vision. Organizations such as the Peace Corps need to provide a clear vision of what skills are necessitated in potential volunteers so that high school and college and university can inculcate these skills. Academic institutions can then design curricula that provide soft and hard skills necessary to understand globalization and its impact, particularly as regards less developed states. The vision of the Peace Corps must be modified to focus primarily on education and economic development.

Hypotheses

Five hypotheses have been developed.

H1. If responsibility for preparing American youth to volunteer in organizations such as the Peace Corps were returned to academia alone, then volunteers would

be positioned to provide impactful education and economic development to the citizens of less developed states.

H2. If responsibility for preparing American youth to volunteer in organizations such as the Peace Corps were returned to academia alone, then the Peace Corps would be able to fulfill its original vision.

H3. If responsibility for preparing American youth for volunteerism belonged to academia alone, then volunteers would be better prepared to volunteer in less developed states.

H4. If the responsibility for preparing American youth for volunteerism belonged to academia alone, then students would better understand global issues.

H5. If academia incorporated business and economic development issues in its volunteerism curricula, then American volunteers would provide a greater global impact to less developed states.

Using secondary research, the methodologies will be both qualitative and quantitative. Metrics will be sourced from the United Nations, the United States Department of Education, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, and volunteer organizations. To partially address the shortcoming of metrics, primary research would be used to conduct surveys. Separate instruments would be generated to survey: academia (high schools and colleges and universities) regarding current curricula on global affairs and volunteerism; current and former Peace Corps volunteers; the Peace Corps organization; the United States Department of State; the United States Department of Education; and the United States Department of Labor. This research is “exploratory,” meaning that it attempts to identify ways to measure volunteerism, though no standardized approach yet exists. It seeks to provide a foundation for future advanced methodologies to continue the work. Casual research and cross-sectional designs would also be considered.

The objective of the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (2011:i) is to “make available comparative cross-national data on a significant form of work [volunteerism] which is growing in importance but is often ignored or rarely captured in traditional economic statistics.” A mechanism to measure volunteer rates has been devised:

$$\text{Volunteer Rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{Estimated number of volunteers in the reference period in the country}}{\text{Population of the country above the minimum age}^1 \text{ during the reference period}}$$

Mechanisms should be devised to compare the data provided by the United States Department of Labor and the United States Department of Education regarding students who volunteer (compared to the total population of citizens within the same reference period and age range). It

¹ The United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics provides volunteer information on those ages sixteen and above. This research uses sixteen years of age as the minimum age for volunteering.

is currently not possible to measure who has volunteered, categorized by degree level, versus current enrollment numbers. The degree level – according to United States Bureau of Labor Statistics data – does not distinguish between individuals who volunteered while enrolled and individuals who volunteered after completing an academic program.

Preliminary Analysis

Several sources have been identified to provide numerical data for comparison. The proposed usage of these values will be displayed in tables, to be inputted in future derived equations, to illustrate the actual number of American youth volunteering versus the potential of American youth volunteerism. The following sources highlight the current state of volunteerism and support the hypothesis that academia (high schools and colleges and universities) needs to implement specific curricula and paths for learning about and understanding volunteerism on a global level.

No agreed upon methodology or tools exist to measure the impact of volunteerism, domestically or internationally. Data produced in United Nations reports draws from surveys and individual state reports that measure differing aspects of volunteerism across different time periods. The United States Department of Labor measures the number of American volunteers, subcategorized across an array of factors, but does not relate how much time or the number of occurrences in which an individual volunteered.

The United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics disseminated an economic news release in 2015, “Volunteers by How They Became Involved with Main Organization for Which Volunteer Activities Were Performed and Selected Characteristics,” providing a wealth of information on the characteristics of Americans who volunteered between September 2013 and September 2014. Although not specific to international organizations, the information highlights potential trends when reviewing age and education levels. The data indicates that the majority of volunteers hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, are over the age of twenty-five, and are employed. This illustrates a gap that young Americans, and the less educated, are less likely to volunteer.

Table 1.2. Total Number of Volunteers by Education Level, 2014 (in thousands)

High School diploma or less	12,175
Some college or associates degree	15,494
Bachelor’s degree or higher	26,619

Table 1.1. Total Number of Volunteers by Age, 2014 (in thousands)

24 years old and under	8,469
25 years old and over	54,288

To supplement Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (2015a; nd) captures current data on enrollment in colleges and universities. The data used provides a baseline regarding a breakdown of enrollment

numbers, degree level, and type of college or university. An estimated 2.7 million bachelor's, or above, degrees were awarded in 2015. Additionally, the Institute's statistics on educational institutions in the United States cite over 7,000 postsecondary Title IV institutions.² The numbers ultimately support the argument that a gap exists in the number of students who volunteer and the total student population.

Table 1.3. U.S. college enrollment, anticipated, 2015 (in thousands)

U.S. college enrollment	20,200
Undergraduate programs	17,300
Post-baccalaureate programs	~3,000

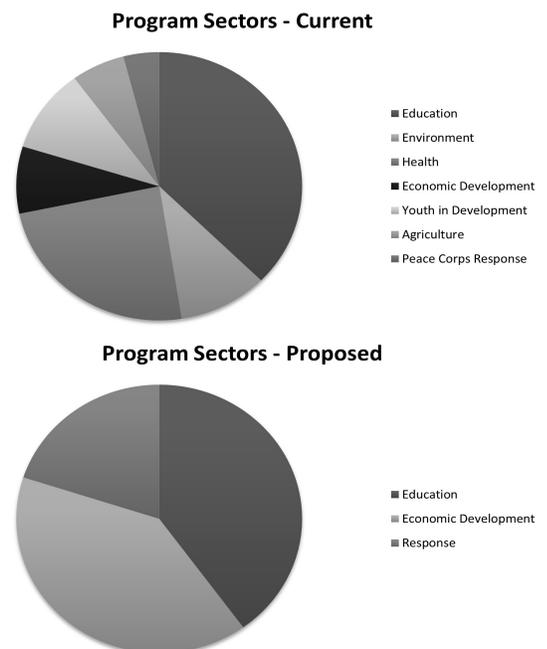
State of the World's Volunteerism (2011:20) provides a host of data points that measure different attributes of volunteering over different periods of time. The data supports the United Nations' fundamental belief that volunteerism is universal and impactful. Broad global statistics on volunteerism, from varied sources cited within the United Nations report, include: Over 60 million people volunteered in the United States at least one time in 2004; over 16 million people volunteered in Bangladesh in 2010; over 90 million adults volunteered in the European Union; and the "John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (CNP) estimates that, between 1995 and 2000, the number of volunteers contributing through voluntary organizations in 36 countries, taken together, would make the ninth largest country in the world in terms of population" (20). The report further notes the impact that volunteerism has on the economy, with the CNP estimating the "economic contribution of volunteers in the 36 countries to be 400 billion US dollars annually."

According to the Peace Corps website (2015a), "Peace Corps Volunteers live and work alongside the people they serve. They collaborate with local governments, schools, communities, small businesses, and entrepreneurs to create sustainable, community-based projects that address changing and complex needs." The current allocation of resources to program sectors, however, challenges the ability of the Peace Corps to make sustainable long-term impacts. Education currently represents 37 percent of the Peace Corps' efforts, with only eight percent dedicated to community and economic

Figure 1.1. "If volunteers were a nation"

1.	China	1,306 million
2.	India	1,094 million
3.	United States	296 million
4.	Indonesia	229 million
5.	Brazil	186 million
6.	Pakistan	158 million
7.	Bangladesh	144 million
8.	Russia	143 million
9.	"Volunteer Land"	140 million

Source: John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project



² Title IV Institution: "An institution that has a written agreement with the Secretary of Education that allows the institution to participate in any of the Title IV federal student financial assistance programs" (United States Department of Education, n.d.).

development. Fulfilling the original mission of the Peace Corps would be accomplished with resources devoted to three categories. Education and economic development would be divided equally at 40 percent with Emergency Response at 20 percent of the Peace Corps' efforts. In the proposed program sectors, the current program sectors not included would fall under either education or economic development. Consolidating the core program areas allows the Peace Corps to realign its efforts for a more impactful outcome while defining for academia the skills that the Peace Corps needs from potential volunteers.

Discussion

To accurately measure volunteerism, multiples aspects must be accounted for, such as the number of individuals volunteering, the time spent volunteering, the organization being volunteered at, domestic or international, and the impact made by the volunteer's efforts. The first three of these aspects are quantitative, with the fourth aspect (impact made) being qualitative. Data sets must delineate the education levels, ages, and employment status of volunteers at the time of volunteering.

Effectively challenging academia to serve as the foundation for volunteerism first requires academic institutions to understand the potential role(s) of the volunteer(s). Responsibility for defining volunteer roles, while illustrating a wide range of situations, resides with volunteer organizations. After volunteer organizations have provided academic institutions with criteria, then the second, and equally important, requirement of generating mechanisms to measure the impact of volunteerism can be pursued. Quantitative measurement affords both the volunteer organization and academia the opportunity to benchmark the success or failure of the impact made on the citizens and economies served. If the Peace Corps realigned its core program areas, for example, academia could build curricula saturated with economics, business, and policy making. Academia could further play a substantial role in creating tools used to measure volunteerism. Challenging potential volunteers with understanding how to measure their impact would prove a useful exercise for volunteers, those served, academia, and other stakeholders. Challenging students not only to creating a project to help a localized population of a less-developed state but in how to develop the project in a measurable way should also be considered.

Challenges in Fulfilling President John F. Kennedy's Vision

Globalization

In Henry Kissinger's *World Order* (2014:234), the former United States Secretary of State states:

No country has played such a decisive role in shaping contemporary world order as the United States ... the real challenge of American engagement abroad was not foreign policy ... but a project of spreading values that it believed all other peoples aspired to replicate.

Academia must exercise caution in the curricula that it develops to prepare potential volunteers for service in less developed states. Little question exists that citizens of all nations wish for the freedoms possessed by the citizens of the United States. However, this is not to say that the citizens of all nations wish for American values. One such example (Rourke 2011:143) is the

perception of globalization: “Critics of globalization contend that people within countries are divided into ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ and that the world is similarly divided into have and have-not countries.” Such a perspective might be prevalent among the communities served by volunteers, requiring the volunteer to understand opposing views to American ideals. This view does not necessarily hold that globalization is right or wrong: any given view by an individual is dependent upon the circumstances that the individual faces. Arguably (United Nations General Assembly 2011:xxi), “people often feel powerless in the face of globalization; like flotsam and jetsam on the waves with no stable anchor. Volunteerism can be an anchor for people as they effect change in their own community.”

Volunteerism Is Universal

As *State of the World’s Volunteerism* (2011:xxiii) notes, “putting people at the centre of development ... means making progress equitable and broad-based, enabling people to be active participants in change.” Academia, as well as volunteer organizations, must understand and instill the concepts of ownership and accountability in both volunteers and citizens served by volunteers. If the communities served are not taught and provided the tools to sustain and build upon the efforts made by volunteers, then volunteer projects will not experience positive long-term success. Academia must prepare volunteers to teach others about their efforts and how to continue them after volunteers have finished serving, something that is particularly crucial in the area of economic development. Volunteers must be trained in identifying and cultivating relationships with local citizens who are capable and interested in the betterment of the community. The ability to teach others is not inherent in all persons; this requires significant efforts in developing curricula that provides tools on how to teach.

Contrasting with the preliminary trends identified among American citizens, *State of the World’s Volunteerism* (2011:9) further cites “empirical research indicates that volunteerism is prevalent among the income poor who undertake voluntary work to benefit themselves and their communities. Their ... local knowledge, skills, labour and social networks often play a critical role in surviving stresses and shocks.” The United States Department of Labor (2015) statistics indicate volunteerism occurs more often among educated individuals than less educated individuals. This either identifies a differing trend in the United States versus other global states or the inability of Bureau of Labor Statistics data to capture efforts made on the localized level in impoverished communities. Academia could aid in potential volunteer training that includes building, or building upon, social networks and leveraging the skills of impoverished states’ citizens for the betterment of the community.

Altruism Versus Experience

Academia provides a foundation for altruistic inexperienced volunteers to become altruistic experienced volunteers. Recognizing that first-hand experiences will most often occur once the volunteer has been stationed in a less developed state, academia could provide smaller first-hand experiences in conjunction with classroom instruction. Requiring student participants to engage in regular volunteer experiences at locations that serve less fortunate individuals would lessen the culture shock. Participants could be required to build upon the local volunteer experience by identifying ways to measure its impact, increase organizational efficiencies, and expand the organizational outreach. By working closely with the members of an organization,

and those it serves, volunteers would be provided insight and invaluable skills for more in-depth experiences.

Volunteerism Is Impactful and Serious

In addition to specific skill sets taught through academic institutions, such as economics or business development, volunteer development must include skills in negotiation and conflict management. To further offset the culture shock often experienced by volunteers serving overseas, potential volunteers must be exposed to cultural differences and conflict; providing the opportunity to understand the potential gravity of volunteers' actions and the situations that might be encountered. An example cited in *State of the World's Volunteerism* (2011:67) states: "In Sri Lanka ... the healing process between the two ethnic groups involved in ... conflict is being assisted by thousands of volunteers from the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement ... trained in peace building, crisis intervention and non-violent dispute resolution." It is not expected that academia can easily generate volunteers, without prior experiences, to negotiate large-scale ethnic situations, but academia can provide fundamental knowledge in how to recognize such situations and how to best report them.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the global need for measuring volunteerism, both in the numbers of volunteers and in the impact made by volunteers. Tools have been developed to assist states in this process, but a standardized method must be identified to domestically and internationally understand the status of volunteerism. Organizations such as the Peace Corps must develop metrics to measure the impact of their volunteers and work closely with academia on the development of mechanisms and the foundation to prepare volunteers for service. The United States possesses over 7,000 Title IV Postsecondary Institutions with an enrollment population greater than twenty million students (United States Department of Education 2015a; 2015b), illustrating the potential resource pool for the Peace Corps. "In 2015, more than 23,000 people applied to be Peace Corps volunteers – a 40 year high" (Peace Corps 2015a). Additionally, the Peace Corps partners with thirty-nine colleges and universities for undergraduate and graduate studies. Despite these facts, the current role of the Peace Corps falls short of President Kennedy's vision. Further research is needed to address the gaps and identify tangible methods to drive the Peace Corps – and the overall value and importance of volunteerism – to its fullest potential. The threat to security and stability continues to increase globally. According to Rieffel (2003), the task of fighting such threats becomes "easier to the extent that people in developing countries appreciate what Americans are doing ... personal relationships have always been the best way to promote American ideals. Fostering these relationships has been the greatest success of the Peace Corps." Additionally, as previously cited (United Nations General Assembly 2011:1), "volunteering is not a nostalgic relic of the past. It is our first line defense against social atomization in a globalizing world. Today, maybe more than ever before, caring and sharing are a necessity, not a charitable act." Finally, volunteerism further imparts skills and character traits that potentially remain with, and better serve, the volunteer for a lifetime. Molly Coeling (2009) wrote of her personal experience, serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic, citing, "from the Peace Corps, I know I can not only survive but thrive anywhere ... I can understand ignorance and intolerance ... I can understand that people are the same; it is the circumstances that vary." Arguably, individuals with the above experience and perspective possess the ability to endlessly make positive contributions on a localized or global level.

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