

Workshop Presentation

Topic: Innovations and Good Practices in Volunteering

A New Wave of Volunteerism, Voluntainment

Focusing on Good Practices in Korea

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Abstract

Promoting volunteerism in Korea since 2001 IYV has been a challenge and much effort has been made to promote volunteerism. However, according to the national survey by Volunteer21 in 2002, there was only a slight increase of 2.3% in annual volunteer participation from 14.0% in 1999 to 16.3% in 2002.

To involve more people in volunteering, the concept of “volunteering” had to be changed. “Volunteering” in Korea has implied “self-sacrifice”, “holy effort”, “difficult work” in people’s mind. From the year of 2004, ‘Volunteer21’ started an innovative campaign to promote a more accessible concept of volunteering, which is “Voluntainment” as a way to involve more people in volunteering in their daily life.

VOLUNTAINMENT is a new coinage from Volunteering + Entertainment implying more fun and joy of volunteering. We have offered various ideas for all ages and places that will make volunteering fun and enjoyable. And we have found that many volunteers, volunteer leaders and volunteer managers are interested in this new concept of volunteering and try to change their program to embody that concept. Especially in corporate volunteering VOLUNTAINMENT could be a good motivation for employees who have to volunteer in their work time. Moreover, VOLUNTAINMENT has been a good opportunity for people who don’t know how to manage in their off-duty Saturdays after the recent legislation of ‘five- work-day week’ in Korea. (Before then, five and half to six work days a week were legal.)

Now VOLUNTAINMENT is becoming a new wave of volunteering in Korea providing opportunities of successful and unforgettable experiences for various kinds of people of all ages and groups.

I would like to share this new wave of volunteering with many other volunteer professionals from Asia Pacific countries whose volunteering participation is still lower than other developed countries such as U.S and UK. This would most probably be a critical clue for them to promote volunteerism in their country and in their workplace at least.

My workshop will go like following.

1. Understanding VOLUNTAINMENT

- (1) Pleasure of Exciting & Amusing Activities
- (2) Pleasure of Learning
- (3) Pleasure of Making Friends
- (4) Pleasure of Being Absorbed

2. Successful practices of Voluntainment

- (1) Volunteering using traditional games, “*Let’s play*”
- (2) Volunteering with the disabled, “*Leisure buddy*”
- (3) Creative tips for volunteer management in *Cultural Performances and festivals*.

Conclusion

Participants are advised to discuss VOLUNTAINMENT practices by groups and share ideas on how to apply the concept in their country

1. Understanding VOLUNTAINMENT

What is VOLUNTAINMENT? It is a combination of ‘volunteerism’ and ‘entertainment’. If volunteerism means sharing and serving, entertainment comes from surprises, challenges, learning, and absorption of volunteering. The combination of these two brings about the effect of emphasizing the inner and outer pleasure of volunteering. VOLUNTAINMENT is rather a practical campaign than a theory.

Huizinga described human species as ‘playful’ in *Homo Ludens*(1938). He used ‘play’ as a generic word to represent others such as ‘learning’, ‘work’, and ‘games’. ‘Play’ in his context is a sincere inner-ward absorbing voluntary activity. Human species learn and make friends through plays, feel satisfied and happy through getting absorbed. This is the point where pleasure-seeking volunteering and playing become much closer to each other.

Pleasures of volunteering in comparison with those of playing are as follows: first, pleasure of exciting and amusing activities; second, that of learning and teaching; third, of making friends; lastly, of getting absorbed. These kinds of pleasure give such a strong impact to the receiving individuals or communities that they cannot fail to become healthy and happy.

The followings are guidelines to be used to create specific practices of amusing volunteering. They have been also set in our website, posters and leaflets to be

disseminated and used for various purposes.

1) Seeking the pleasure of exciting and amusing activities

If activities that fit volunteers' interests, hobbies, and leisure activities increase, the number of volunteers will increase and less people will think that volunteering is difficult.

⊕ Add volunteering to hobbies, group activities, trips, and leisure activities : If handicapped or parentless kids join activities such as amateur rollerblades, hiking, soccer, dancing, those activities will become amusing volunteering.

⊗ Transform routine volunteering with creative ideas : Adding the fun of writing a short note to a lunch box delivery service, playing digestion-friendly music during free meal service for the homeless, or redecorating volunteers' aprons will make volunteering more exciting.

⊗ Working with family : Volunteers want to work with family. Increasing the number of family volunteer program will also increase the number of volunteers and make volunteering more exciting.

2) Seeking the pleasure of learning and teaching

While Playing we can learn knowledge, interpersonal relationship, society and culture. Volunteering is also an activity where we can make new friends, learn about a new field, and multiply pleasures by sharing knowledge with others.

⊕ Volunteering with expertise

Researchers, scientists, artists, planners, or teachers can find volunteering more meaningful and career building if their expertise can be used. College students also can use their major studies in volunteering.

⊗ Volunteering with skills or hobby activities

Recently more Korean adults learn and enjoy cooking, knitting and crafting. If these skills are used to volunteer, their skills will improve and develop.

3) Seeking the pleasure of making friends

Playing together is more fun than playing alone. Synergy is created with playing

together. The same is true in volunteering. Meeting recipients, managers, and other volunteers and building relations with them often become more fun and important than volunteer activity itself.

Ⓞ Making friends while volunteering

Making friends is more precious than earning jewelry of any kinds. Recipients should not always be a person to be cared but often become friends of intimacy if treated as colleagues with trust and honesty.

Ⓜ Expanding communication skill through relationships with various people

Volunteering often expands capacities of communication, crisis management, and problem solving. Volunteers can learn to respect and consider others.

Ⓝ Activating on/off line team activities

Many Korean people are subscribed to on-line hobby groups and share information on-line. Virtual hobby activity is becoming more popular due to its around-the-clock availability and usefulness in information sharing. Maintaining relationship through on/off line volunteer clubs after a project is finished also generate a pleasure of volunteering.

4) Pleasure of being absorbed

Exciting games make us lose sense of time because we are absorbed in playing the game. It is also called a ‘flow’, which means the state of being absorbed without self-consciousness. With that kind of absorption volunteering will become more fun.

Ⓞ Volunteers take initiatives in all projects

Volunteer managers must trust volunteers so that volunteers can take responsibility to the project that they are participating in. Volunteers don’t like to be intervened or supervised.

Ⓜ Take the full responsibility to the project even if it’s difficult

New, difficult, challenging tasks can give the pleasure of testing and overcoming limitations if full responsibility is taken until they are completed.

Ⓝ Concentrate on one activity

More satisfaction and results can be won when one is steadily concentrated on one

task rather than moves from one to another task.

2. Successful Practices of Voluntainment

1) Volunteering using traditional games, “*Let’s Play*”

ϕ An activity of both volunteering and playing done by a volunteer group in Gwacheon, a city of residential and administrative functions with government building complex inside it.

② Volunteers teach traditional games that can be played without many tools to elementary school kids who are losing spaces for playing in urban community and instead indulged in computer games. Played games are rope jump, stick hitting, and throwing boards.

③ Volunteers consist of middle and high school students and housewives.

④ Volunteers find tools and methods of traditional games and practice beforehand. Elementary school students who have no one to take care of them after school are called to join and play the games with volunteers. Volunteers have found about 50 kinds of traditional games and published a guidebook that were distributed to schools and kids in the city.

⑤ reviews by participants : ‘It’s new and surprising that playing becomes volunteering.’ ‘I hope to continue playing.’

⑥ elements of VOLUNTAINMENT : A volunteering combined with leisure activity; teaching what has been learned; making friends with kids in a natural way; losing sense of time while playing games

2) Volunteering with the disabled, “*Leisure buddy*”

ϕ A program done by a Korean organization for the disabled. It provides an opportunity for both the disabled and non-disabled to do various leisure activities together. It makes cultural activities more accessible to the disabled.

‘Leisure Buddy’ : Perth City in Australia introduced and practiced this program as a way of cultural gap filling. The disabled, elderly, migrant workers, and citizens became buddies and enjoyed cultural activities together. This city was mining area and had

cultural corruptions growing until this program was introduced. Afterwards, cultural welfare of the isolated has improved and a healthy leisure culture has settled in this community. Cultural environments have improved where buddies work, discounts for the disabled and their company have settled, and understandings of different populations have expanded. 'Leisure Buddy' has settled as a cultural movement.

2 Volunteers become friends with the disabled who lack opportunities for leisure activities.

3 Volunteers consist of college students and company employees

4 Volunteers go once a month with the disabled to cultural events, such as operas, movies, forests, paragliding, or water skiing. They become friends and spend time together. Volunteers are asked to identify barriers for the disabled to access the activity and request an improvement while attending it. Participations are open to public. College students and company employees most highly participate.

5 reviews by participants : 'There was a joy of mixing together' 'It was an opportunity to get out of prejudice on the disabled and laugh together' 'exciting and interesting' 'It was a time to make a big laugh'

6elements of VOLUNTAINMENT : seeking the pleasure of exciting leisure activity and making friends; an activity of both fun and campaign for the right to mobility or cultural access of the disabled

3) Creative tips for volunteer management in *Cultural Performances and festivals*

1 A volunteer manager in Jeonjoo Sound Festival created a management method that makes volunteering exciting.

2 Creating a 'volunteer supporting team' and ways to recognize volunteers such as 'volunteer daily' 'volunteer lounge' 'volunteer manito' and 'volunteer award.'

3 Volunteers consist of college students and residents

4 Creative tips to motivate volunteers in fests

- Volunteer supporting teams : raising volunteers' morale by supporting them with snacks and counseling while they are working inside ceremony or ticket box or guiding people.
- Volunteer daily : publishing and distributing a daily newspaper that runs articles and photos of volunteers
- Volunteer lounge : preparing a space for volunteers to have a rest , chat, or nap.
- Volunteer manito : arrange a manito for each volunteer during the festival who can become an anonymous supporter and reveal the identity of the manito at the end
- Volunteer award : Awarding volunteers who have touched clients or showed a good example when the fest is over.
- Reviews by participants : 'I want to do it again' 'It was difficult but worth it. I met many friends.' 'All are like family'
- Elements of VOLUNTAINMENT : using various ideas to cultivate volunteer ownership; seeking the pleasure of making friends through 'volunteer manito'; volunteers flowing into advertising and attracting audience.

Conclusion

There are times, while volunteering, to witness death of dying patients or to participate in restoring disastrous sites. Some people say these cases cannot be exciting for the volunteers. However, if the volunteers flowed into the work, how difficult it may be, and felt rapport with other involved people there are elements of pleasure inside the volunteers.

Volunteers often participate not because of noblesse oblige, but because of the desire for valuable and pleasant feelings of participation. When volunteers and volunteer managers pay more attention to joy, satisfaction, and inner benefits of volunteers, more elements of pleasure of volunteering will be found.

The reason volunteers should get happier through volunteering is not only for the increase of volunteers but also for that of communal happiness due to happy volunteers. Happiness becomes a vital power to change society.

We hope countries in the Asian Pacific region attempt to practice VOLUNTAINMENT by modeling after our VOLUNTAINMENT cases that have been successful in Korea.

References

Huizinga, Johan, 'Homo Ludens', 1938.

Website

<http://www.voluntainment.net>

<http://www.cowalk.org>