DECODING CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING IN SWISS NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS –

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

Corporate volunteering (CV) is a specific form of volunteering. It is characterized by cross-sector partnerships between nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and enterprises. CV is defined as an offering by companies that allows and supports corporate employees to volunteer for a good cause within or outside their official working hours. Mostly, CV projects take place in cooperation with NPOs specializing in the environmental sector or in human services. In the latter case, NPO beneficiaries such as socially deprived persons are important stakeholders. CV offers the potential to build a bridge on an organizational as well as on an individual level in cross-sector partnerships. However, CV has been mainly analyzed from the perspectives of companies while the role of NPOs and their beneficiaries remained vague. This cumulative thesis makes an original contribution to the field by exploring how CV is implemented in Swiss NPOs, how beneficial CV is to NPOs, and how NPO beneficiaries experience CV. These topics are studied in four papers, employing an exploratory and sequential methodological framework.

In paper 1, results based on a qualitative study of thirteen NPO executives are described. Experts were asked about their previous experience with CV by means of guideline supported structured interviews. Results show that managers tend to act more reactively in terms of initiating CV partnerships. Although they associate certain expectations with CV, such as increasing donations, they are currently not able to shape CV in a way that it is beneficial to them. Accordingly, the theme "negotiating on equal terms" is clearly a challenge for the NPOs.

In publication 2, the findings of paper 1 served as a basis to design a questionnaire addressed to NPOs. Results of 468 respondents show that NPOs received the type of donations which they desire most: donations in kind and cash donations. Most participants had heard about CV, but only about one in ten NPOs has already participated in one or more CV project(s). NPOs rarely initiate CV partnerships and seem to be overwhelmed by the propositions of enterprises seeking a CV partnership. The findings in paper 2 corroborate the idea of a reactive behavior of NPO managers found in paper 1.

In the third paper of this thesis, results of another qualitative study in form of group discussions are presented. This study aims at examining the unknown perspective of NPO beneficiaries on CV. In the course of this explorative study four themes emerged: Benefits
and challenges to NPO beneficiaries, involvement of beneficiaries in the development of CV partnerships, perceived quality of interaction between beneficiaries and corporate volunteers, and sustainability of CV. In summary, beneficiaries welcome change to their daily routines induced by CV. They also trust their NPO to find able corporate volunteers. Nevertheless, beneficiaries are neither integrated in the partnership process nor in the development of CV projects. Additionally, some beneficiaries experience CV as one-sided and they are concerned about missing reciprocity. They all regret the short-lived relation to corporate volunteers and would prefer more sustainable encounters.

Paper 1, 2, and 3 clearly show the need for an evaluation tool to support cross-sector partnerships based on CV. Thus, the development of an evaluation tool for CV cooperation is subject of paper 4. Based on group discussions and expert interviews, a formative instrument was developed in an iterative process. It allows to measure CV partnerships and to adapt them formatively. Practical application was tested in a case study, in which the importance of main and sub-criteria was weighted and their fulfillment was rated by involved actors (corporate volunteers, managers of NPO and company, and beneficiaries). Results were validated and discussed in a recommendation workshop with the study participants.

In summary, this thesis contributes to a more elaborate understanding of CV from the perspectives of NPO management and NPO beneficiaries. It also facilitates cross-sector partnerships focusing on CV. The findings indicate that the current practice of CV does not promote sustainable encounters, but creates additional costs for some NPOs. Presently, NPOs perceive CV as unbalanced to the advantage of enterprises. These results cast doubt on the win-win assumption which initiates CV in many cases. However, CV could still bridge gaps in cross-sector partnerships, if NPOs analyze their needs before entering a partnership, succeed to include their beneficiaries, and attain to offer a form of CV that adds value to their organizations.
Zusammenfassung

Corporate Volunteering (CV) ist eine spezifische Form von Freiwilligenarbeit. Sie entsteht durch sektorübergreifende Partnerschaften zwischen Nonprofit Organisationen (NPOs) und Unternehmen. CV wird dabei als Angebot von profitorientierten Unternehmen verstanden, welches es den Arbeitnehmenden erlaubt, sich als Freiwillige in oder ausserhalb ihrer Arbeitszeit für eine gute Sache zu betätigen, und dieses Verhalten fördert. Meistens finden CV Projekte in Kooperation mit NPOs statt, welche im ökologischen oder sozialen Bereich spezialisiert sind. In Letzteren spielen die Anspruchsgruppen der NPOs, wie sozial Benachteiligte, eine wichtige Rolle. CV hat auf organisationaler und individueller Ebene das Potenzial, eine Brücke zwischen NPOs und Unternehmen zu schlagen. CV wurde bisher hauptsächlich aus Sicht von Unternehmen analysiert, während die Rolle der NPOs und deren Anspruchsgruppen vage blieben. Diese kumulative Thesis trägt original zum Forschungsfeld bei, indem untersucht wird, wie CV in schweizerischen NPOs implementiert ist, wie förderlich CV für die NPOs ist und welche Erfahrungen die Anspruchsgruppen mit CV machen. Diese Themen sind in vier Manuskripten erforscht worden, wobei ein sequentieller, explorativer methodischer Rahmen angewandt wurde.

In Manuskript 1 werden die Resultate basierend auf einer qualitativen Studie mit 13 Führungskräften von NPOs beschrieben. Die Experten wurden über ihre bisherige Erfahrung in CV mittels Leitfaden gestützten Interviews befragt. Die Resultate zeigen, dass die Führungskräfte in Bezug auf CV-Partnerschaften eher reaktiv agieren. Obwohl sie durchaus Erwartungen an CV knüpfen, wie beispielsweise höhere Spendenannahmen, sind sie noch nicht soweit, die Bedürfnisse der NPO in geeigneter und nutzbringender Form gestalten zu können. Entsprechend ist die Thematik „Verhandlung auf Augenhöhe“ eine klare Herausforderung für die NPOs.

In Manuskript 2 wurden die Erkenntnisse des ersten Manuskriptes als Grundlage für die Entwicklung eines Fragebogens für NPOs genutzt. Die Resultate von 468 Antwortenden zeigen, dass NPOs diejenigen Spenden erhalten, welche sie am meisten wünschen: Sach- und Geldspenden. CV ist den meisten Teilnehmenden bekannt, aber nur knapp jede zehnte NPO hat bereits an einer oder mehreren CV-Kooperation(en) teilgenommen. Das reaktive Bild aus Aufsatz 1 wird auch in der Online Befragung bestätigt. NPOs initiieren selten CV-Partnerschaften und wirken eher überfordert von den Unternehmensanfragen bezüglich CV.
Die Erkenntnisse des reaktiven Verhaltens der NPO Führungskräfte werden auch durch das zweite Manuskript bestätigt.

Im dritten Manuskript dieser Thesis werden Resultate einer weiteren qualitativen Studie in Form von Gruppendiskussionen präsentiert. Diese Studie hat zum Ziel, die unbekannte Perspektive der Anspruchsgruppen bezüglich CV zu untersuchen. Im Zuge dieser explorativen Studie bildeten sich vier Themen aus: Vor- und Nachteile für Anspruchsgruppen, Einbindung der Anspruchsgruppen in die Entwicklung von CV-Partnerschaften, die wahrgenommene Qualität der Interaktion zwischen Anspruchsgruppen und Corporate Volunteers und die Nachhaltigkeit von CV. Zusammenfassend begrüssen die Anspruchsgruppen die Abwechslung in ihrem Alltag durch CV und sie vertrauen ihren NPOs, dass diese geeignete Corporate Volunteers finden. Nichtsdestotrotz sind die Anspruchsgruppen weder an dem Prozess der Partnerschaftsfindung noch an der Entwicklung von CV-Projekten beteiligt. Ausserdem erleben einige Anspruchsgruppen CV als einseitig und sie sorgen sich um die mangelnde Reziprozität. Sie bedauern alle die kurzfristige Beziehung zu den Corporate Volunteers und würden nachhaltige Begegnungen begrüssen.


Ungleichgewicht zu Gunsten der Unternehmen wahr. Diese Resultate werfen einen Schatten auf die vermeintliche Win-win-Situation in CV. Dennoch kann CV eine Brücke zwischen sektorübergreifende Partnerschaften schlagen, wenn es den NPOs gelingt, ihre Bedürfnisse zu analysieren, bevor sie eine Kooperation eingehen; wenn sie es schaffen, ihre Anspruchsgruppen zu integrieren, und wenn es ihnen gelingt, eine Form von CV anzubieten, welche ihnen erlaubt, einen Mehrwert für ihre Organisationen zu generieren.
PART I: INTRODUCTION

Corporate Volunteering (CV) is a new phenomenon in Switzerland. This thesis aims to decode CV in Swiss NPOs with the ultimate goal to obtain a better understanding of the NPOs’ needs in order to be able to benefit from CV. The current practice of conducting CV is embossed by insecurity and even misunderstandings, but also by a promising undertone. The four scientific papers within this thesis highlight the different perceptions of CV namely from a managerial viewpoint, from the view of the NPO beneficiaries and from a cooperative perspective.

This thesis consists of two parts: part I contains five chapters and serves as an introduction to the four scientific papers presented in part II. The first chapter of part I provides an overview of the conceptual development of CV and describes CV in current Switzerland. In the second chapter, the research objectives of this cumulative thesis are presented, followed by chapter three in which the scientific methods are described. Chapter four provides the abstracts of the four articles and gives information on the development of each article. The main scientific and practical contributions of this thesis as well as the opportunities for further research avenues are outlined in the last chapter.
1. Conceptual framework

This dissertation is positioned within the field of organizational science. In this chapter, a conceptual framework about CV based on a literature review is outlined, followed by an overview of the Swiss volunteer market and the current state of CV in Switzerland.

1.1. Conceptual development of CV

Collaboration between private companies and non-profit organizations (NPOs) are increasing in importance (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012; Harris, 2012; Jamali, Safieddine, & Rabbath, 2008; Kolk, van Dolen, & Vock, 2010; Schiller & Almog-Bar, 2013). The increasing interest in this kind of partnership stems from private companies as well as from NPOs (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012). Concurrently, NPOs are facing new challenges in volunteer management, e.g., due to the evolution of traditional volunteer careers which calls for different management approaches, but also due to additional interest from third-parties (Haski-Leventhal, Meij, & Hustinx, 2009). Third-parties are investigating new areas, which are traditionally occupied by NPOs, such as community work. Third-party involvement by governments may facilitate volunteering, but also put NPOs under increasing pressure to deal with additional responsibilities that are outsourced by governments such as healthcare tasks (Anheier, 2009; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012; De Gibaja, 2001; Hustinx, 2010; Lewis & Verhoeven, 2010). Third-parties also include educational institutions that encourage volunteering, and finally it also includes private companies. The latter show an increasing interest in collaboration with NPOs, because they noticed that their “good” behavior pays off and that Milton Friedman’s quote “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits” is not valid anymore (Zimmerli, Richter, & Holzinger, 2007). In addition, many employees nowadays want more than “a nine to five job” and societal expectations have risen for companies to behave in a social and environmental friendly manner (Boehm, 2005; Grant, 2012). All of it points towards a shift in society’s understanding of the tasks of its employed members (Carroll, 1991; Habisch & Schmidpeter, 2003; Helmig, Gmürr, & Lichtsteiner, 2010; Raeder & Grote, 2005; Salamon & Anheier, 1996; Windsor, 2001).

A reaction or even solution to the above mentioned challenges could be CV. A “social alliance” between NPOs and for-profit companies in form of CV could indeed generate solutions for both parties.
In chapter 1.1.1 a definition of CV is introduced, followed by a more detailed analysis of CV’s development to an important instrument of cross-sector partnerships between NPOs and private companies in chapter 1.1.2 In the next chapter, a short literature review about benefits and challenges for NPOs that are conducting CV is presented, followed by chapter 1.1.4 that serves as an introduction to the role of NPO beneficiaries in CV. In chapter 1.1.5 the difficulties of finding the right CV partner and analyzing CV collaboration is discussed.

1.1.1. Definition of CV

Carroll (1991) describes the mission of modern private companies as comprising four guiding principles: perform as an ethical (be ethical) and philanthropic actor (be a good corporate citizen; also see Andriof & McIntosh, 2001) alongside a traditional economic (be profitable) and legal (obey the law) behavior. Attempting to fulfill these demands, private companies have been subsequently trying to position themselves as accountable players with reference to the catchword of “corporate social responsibility” (CSR). CSR can be achieved in several ways, e.g., by producing in an environmental friendly way, abstaining from child labor, focusing on work-life balance of employees or supporting social projects, etc. One specific type of CSR is “corporate volunteering” (CV). CV is described as in “a company encourages its employees to offer their time and expertise as volunteers to non-profit organizations. These volunteer activities can be undertaken within or outside the employees' official workload and time” (Meijs & van der Voort, 2004, p. 21). In other words, a private company supports and promotes its co-workers to volunteer for a "good" cause within or outside their official working time (and optionally in company's name) (Bürgisser, 2003; Meijs & van der Voort, 2004; Schubert, Littmann-Wernli, & Tingler, 2002; Tuffrey, 1998). Employees who participate in CV are called corporate volunteers. CV projects are most commonly performed with NPOs in order to institutionalize CV (Andriof & McIntosh, 2001; Austin, 2000; Carroll, 1991; Schubert et al., 2002; Windsor, 2001). CV can be conducted in NPOs that focus in the environmental domain and in NPOs that deal with social matters. The former usually involves corporate volunteers, who are working in the area of an environmental NPO, such as a nature reserve. Typical examples of ecological CV include cleaning a NPO area of debris, counting animals, or planting trees. CV in socially oriented NPOs bring together corporate volunteers and NPO beneficiaries on an individual level. Beneficiaries include residents who live on the NPO premises and who sometimes work in protected employment. Additional
beneficiaries are clients of a NPO who receive some kind of services, such as household support. Typical examples of such CV programs include shared working and different forms of chaperonage. Further characteristic activities of CV include mentoring programs or community days (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Types of CV activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Corporate volunteer gives regularly advice to a NPO member or client</td>
<td>Support young people finding an employment, usually 1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity or community days</td>
<td>An event where one or several corporate volunteer(s) work(s) on behalf of a NPO</td>
<td>A group cleans a river bed from debris during two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondment</td>
<td>An employee works for a NPO while being paid by the company</td>
<td>Legal adviser of companies supports NPO in legal questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid work</td>
<td>Corporate volunteers receive time of their employer to work for a charitable cause</td>
<td>Every second week one afternoon is used for driving handicapped persons to appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development assignment</td>
<td>Solving of a specific project for a NPO</td>
<td>IT-support for setting up a new homepage of a NPO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Grisi & Seppala, 2010; adapted by the author*

1.1.2. Emergence and development of CV

In the context of CV mainly two third-parties play a crucial role: Governments and private companies. The first are gradually outsourcing services, especially in the social area, to NPOs (Buestrich, Burmester, Dahme, & Wohlfahrt, 2008). This creates not only additional work, but it also increases the level of needed professionalism and the amount of administration, which in turn raises additional costs for the NPOs (Helmig et al., 2010; Salamon & Anheier, 1996). At the same time, governmental subsidies as well as private donations are decreasing due to financial constraints (Martínez, 2003; Roza, 2012; Salamon & Anheier, 1996). These developments lead to the conclusion that NPOs need additional human resources, mostly with specialized knowledge, to cover the outsourced tasks by the government. They also need a higher income to cover the additional costs. NPOs further require efficient management tools in order to keep costs low, but still being able to attract suitable volunteers. CV has the potential to cover exactly these gaps for NPOs: it generates additional human resources, some with specific knowhow in management or other professions, and it could generate additional income, if NPOs would either charge money for CV assignments or if the work of corporate volunteers exceeds all costs of NPOs’ preparation for a CV
assignment. However, governments also have the opportunity to facilitate volunteering and to provide incentives, such as tax reductions, that might ease some of the pressure they impose on the NPOs. Although government policies have direct consequences for NPOs, they usually do not directly interact with NPOs. Therefore, a closer look is taken at the role of the second third-party which plays most likely an even more crucial role in CV than governments: private companies. As mentioned above, private companies have increasingly recognized that neither investors nor the society are satisfied by high dividends, but that the behavior of a private company concerning child labor, environmental friendly production, investing into the community, etc., also plays an important role. Nowadays, CSR is considered to be an important part of management practices (Matten, Crane, & Chapple, 2003). Additionally, employees are increasingly looking for more than a job that pays their bills but for a task that brings sense to their lives. Instead of the classic “nine to five job”, these employees expect more of their employers (Grant, 2012). Again, CV offers a solution to private companies. In collaboration with NPOs, companies demonstrate their willingness to “give something back” to the community, and at the same time they have a possibility to enrich their employees’ jobs. The influence of CV on private companies and their employees has been a topic of several studies (see among others Kotler, 2008 or De Gilder, 2005).

In addition to the involvement of third-parties and their impact on NPOs’ management, NPOs are facing challenges in volunteer management. While volunteers traditionally felt committed to a certain organization throughout their lives – often religiously anchored – nowadays volunteering happens more sporadically (Hustinx, Lammertyn, 2003). These new types of volunteers are looking for opportunities to match their current needs and lifestyle, e.g., concerning their occupation (Brudney, Meijs, 2009). This development leads to the conclusion that NPOs need to adapt their volunteer management to attract new volunteers, but also to retain volunteers. In this context the terms volunteerability and recruitability emerged (Haski-Leventhal et al, 2009). Volunteerability describes individuals’ willingness, capability and availability to volunteer (Meijs, Ten Hoorn, Brudney, & Goodman, 2006; Meijs, Ten Hoorn, Tschirhart, & Brudney, 2006). Recruitability is understood as NPOs’ accessibility for potential volunteers, as well as financial and human resources needed to find as well as to retain volunteers. This term also includes the possibility of new or intensified networks and cooperation (Haski-Leventhal & Meijs, 2011). CV has the potential to influence positively
the volunteerability as well as the recruitability of NPOs. In terms of volunteerability, CV could improve the willingness to volunteer, because the employer encourages or even commits to volunteering. In addition, peer pressure could also lead to more (corporate) volunteers (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009). Availability to volunteer is also positively affected by CV because it is fully or partially conducted during working time of employees. Therefore CV facilitates the above mentioned change to more episodic and lifestyle matching volunteering. And CV potentially increases the capability to volunteer due to support and training of corporate volunteers by either the employer or the respective NPO (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009). Recruitability is also positively linked to CV. Accessibility is improved by granting a point of entry for interested employees to the world of volunteering in diffusing information on NPO programs, resources are partially provided by CV partners in terms of finances, time and human resources. Thus, private companies might relieve NPOs’ volunteer management to some extent. The range of NPO networks and corporation also increases since a partnership between an NPO and a private company is a prerequisite for CV collaboration.

In summary, CV as a collaboration instrument offers NPOs as well as other third-parties an interesting option to solve various issues. CV offers potential to NPOs in terms of volunteerability as well as recruitability. However, besides benefits CV comes with a series of challenges to NPOs. These are topic in the following chapter 1.1.3.

1.1.3. Benefits and challenges of CV

Studies about CV often imply that since private companies act according to a noble principle, CV must generate benefits and that all involved parties, either on an organizational or individual level, profit from CV (Harris, 2012; Van der Voort, Glac, & Meijs, 2009). Few studies deal with the impacts of CV on NPOs or warn about potential disadvantages (Pries, 2009). In the following paragraph, an overview of the benefits attributed to CV in NPOs is presented, followed by a section about challenges induced by CV.

CV activities provide NPOs with additional human resources (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert et al., 2002). Corporate volunteers offer additional workforce and, in the aftermath, might become new private volunteers for a NPO. Corporate volunteers provide
know-how transfer by applying their professional backgrounds in the service of a NPO (Allen, 2003; Austin, 2000; Quirk, 1998; Schubert et al., 2002). Allen (2003) and Quirk (1998) see in CV a potential for receiving additional resources from a company, such as donations in kind, using of a company’s machinery, etc. Another benefit is an augmentation of the corporate volunteers’ awareness of the NPOs’ tasks or difficulties (Allen, 2003; Schubert, et al., 2002). The opportunity to influence a company’s behavior towards acting in a more social or environment friendly way by conducting CV is portrayed by Allen (2003). Schubert et al. (2002) come to the conclusion that CV improves a NPOs’ campaign penetration. The authors mostly refer to the management exchange program „SeitenWechsel“, which is not considered as CV by its initiators, since its exchange is uniquely from for-profit to non-profit organizations (Amman, 2003). In a pilot project evaluation Ackermann and Nadai (2002) find that corporate volunteers and NPO beneficiaries profit the most from CV.

Previous research suggests that CV is not only an advantageous benevolent activity as sometimes portrayed, but also a creator of challenges. One challenge is seen in an increasing dependency on the for-profit partner. On the one hand, a financial reliance, on the other hand a difference in power, both could endanger the autonomy of NPOs (Allen, 2003; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Roza, Meijs, Hustinx, & Shachar, 2013). Quirk (1998) and other authors describe the fear of NPOs that their CV partners misuse their cooperation by using the NPOs’ reputation for their own agenda and publicity. These authors see CV as a latent reputational risk for NPOs (Allen, 2003; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Furthermore, CV does not only provide direct or indirect monetary support, but it also creates costs (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Roza et al., 2013). For example, NPOs are expected to offer specific CV programs or a meal for corporate volunteers. Some corporate volunteers are laypersons concerning their tasks at the NPOs. Their unqualified work could compromise the NPO missions (Samuel, Wolf, & Schilling, 2013). In addition, social pressure in companies could lead to involuntary corporate volunteers, who are not motivated to invest their abilities in a NPO (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002; Cheung, Lo, & Liu, 2012; Meijs, 2004; Quirk, 1998; Samuel et al., 2013; Sundeen, Raskoff, & Garcia, 2007).
Another reason why CV potentially poses a challenge to NPOs is the role as well as the place of corporate volunteers in the netting of private volunteers and paid staff. Private volunteers’ behavior itself in relation to paid employees has been an important topic in volunteer research (Liao-Troth, 2008). Depending on the goal of the NPO volunteer management is treated very similar to business management theory. This accounts especially for service delivery organizations, which usually exhibit a high level of professionalism and customer orientation (Meij, Ten Hoorn, Brudney, et al., 2006). Paull (2002) adds that volunteers expect well organized tasks, and that they anticipate recognition of all NPO’s members. The same holds true for corporate volunteers (Gentile, Lorenz, & Wehner, 2011). A corporate volunteer as an additional type of volunteer poses a new challenge to NPOs in the sense that the current (and yet very diverse) volunteer management offers no solution or best practice on how to handle private volunteers let alone corporate volunteers. This adds an additional layer of challenges created by CV.

1.1.4. NPO beneficiaries' perspective on CV

A majority of studies on CV is focused on an overall win-win implication (see e.g., Caligiuri, Mencin, & Jiang, 2013). Moreover, partnerships between NPOs and private companies are usually researched on a macro-level, while only few authors immerse on a micro-level (Kolk et al., 2010). This holds especially true for cross-sector partnerships including CV. Although several studies about e.g., corporate volunteers’ motivation and working ethic emerged, hardly any study looked at their counterparts: NPO beneficiaries (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002; Harris, 2014). To date NPO beneficiaries are rather unknown stakeholders of CV. Their role in CV is clearly inadequately researched (Harris, 2012). Many NPO beneficiaries are depended on their institutions. Thus, they are patronized on different levels by the organization (Checkoway & Gutiérrez, 2006; Kneubühler & Estermann, 2008). In addition, NPOs rarely allow beneficiaries to participate in decision making processes (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Beresford, 2004; Hardina, 2011). For that reason beneficiaries' views on CV and their experience with CV is usually deduced from NPOs managers. Ackermann and Nadai (2002) come to the conclusion that NPO beneficiaries (and corporate volunteers) profit most of CV. NPO managers also expect that contact to unpaid persons caring for NPO beneficiaries' well-being is perceived as a nice variety (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002). An improvement of the service delivery is also expected by Vandell & Shomow (1999) due to the higher ratio of
beneficiaries to caregivers. Oelerich et al. (2005) demand that beneficiaries are “systematically” included in the decisions. This would guarantee that beneficiaries’ perspectives are part of the solution and that their needs are known (Adams & Nelson, 1997; Hanssen, Markertl, Petersenl, & Wagenblass, 2008; McDaid, 2009; Oelerich & Schaarschuch, 2005). In consideration of this vagueness, CV cannot be described as an overall win and further research is needed (see chapter 2.2).

1.1.5. Analyzing and evaluating CV partnerships

Cross-sector partnerships between NPOs and private companies are found to be a necessity for implementing CSR (Austin, 2012). CV as a specific form of CSR requires an even closer look at potential partners. Finding the right CV partner that shares identical or similar common goals is indeed a difficulty (Atkinson & Mansfield, 1982; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009; Meij, Ten Hoorn, Tschirhart, et al., 2006). Reasons for NPOs to participate in CV activities are manifold, but not much is known about the process of initiating and starting CV partnerships. Austin (2000) attempts to categorize partnerships between NPOs and for-profit enterprises and developed a “collaboration continuum”-theory. He describes the twenty-first century as “the age of alliances”, in which partnerships are a strategic necessity (Austin, 2000; Austin, 2012). The "collaboration continuum"-theory consisted initially of three stages and was characterized by the following seven dimensions with increasing involvement at each stage: 1. Level of engagement, 2. importance of mission, 3. magnitude of resources, 4. scope of activities, 5. interaction level, 6. managerial complexity, and 7. strategic value. In the first of three stages, the philanthropic stage, partnerships consist of giving (company) and receiving (NPO) partner. This typically includes financial donations or donations in kind. In the transactional stage, partners have specific, limited agreements that consist of an exchange of resources such as a sponsoring event. At the integrative stage partners share the same values and social aspects. Their association has a strategic value to both parties (Austin, 2000). The collaboration continuum was later enriched by a fourth stage: transformational collaborations with the goal “to co-create transformative change at the societal level” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012, p. 736). CV is considered to be a result of a partially transactional to integrative collaboration (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012). Other authors come to a similar conclusion and describe CV as a possibility for NPOs to develop from a “receiver” to a “provider” or even “exchanger” (Westebbe & Logan, 1995, p. 31). Apart from
Austin’s collaboration continuum theory, no measurement tool for CV activities has been developed so far (Allen, 2003). See chapter 2.3 for further information on evaluation tools for CV.

In summary, current literature on CV focuses mainly on the perspective of companies and if NPOs are included, the focus is mostly on an overall win presumption. NPO internal processes of CV, and strategic aspects of participating NPOs remain unclear, beneficiaries’ involvement in CV is unknown. Moreover, so far there are no evaluation tools for CV partnerships that feature formative characteristic traits.

The following chapter gives a short overview of the Swiss volunteer market and the emergence of CV in Switzerland.

1.2. Swiss volunteer market and the current state of CV in Switzerland

NPOs have a long tradition in Switzerland (Helmig et al., 2010). The International Committee of the Red Cross was founded among others by the Swiss Henri Dunant in 1863. Subsequently, the Swiss Red Cross was founded three years later. Samaritan, and 5770 other Swiss NPOs receive not only financial support to the amount of 8.75 billion Swiss Francs1 by the government, foundations and private persons, but they are also supported by 1.3 million volunteers per year (BFS, 2011; Helmig et al., 2010). Every third Swiss older than 15 performs regularly as volunteer (Schön-Bühlmann, 2011). Nearly 325’000 volunteers belong to a NPO, which caters to sports and recreation, followed by 224’000 volunteers in social services (Helmig, et al., 2010). The Swiss Federal Statistical Office distinguishes between informal and institutional volunteering (Schön-Bühlmann, 2011). Informal volunteering implies for example neighborly and family support (babysitting, taking care of family members) or transportation services. Mostly older people or female homemakers are involved in informal volunteering. Institutional volunteering is conducted by NPOs such as sport clubs or cultural organizations. Most commonly people with a good professional background are part of the latter (Schön-Bühlmann, 2011). Swiss NPOs are also an important creator of employment. In FTE2 180’000 people or 4.5% of total employment were paid workers of Swiss NPOs (Helmig, Bärlocher, & Schnurbein, 2009). According to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit

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1 1 Swiss Franc ≈ 1 US$

2 Full-time equivalent
Sector Project (CNP), Switzerland’s paid NPO employees work mostly (82%) in services (social services, health care, education and research, economic development). The same field receives support of 26% of the volunteers. 14% of paid workers are employed in expressive NPOs (professional associations and labor unions, sports and recreations, culture, religion, and advocacy). And 65% of the Swiss volunteers are active in expressive NPOs. NPOs with an international area of activity, in environmental protection or as philanthropic intermediaries employ 5’100 paid workers (FTE) and have 2’000 active volunteers. CV belongs to the institutionalized form of volunteering. Nevertheless, data on CV is not collected separately by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. An indicator that CV is increasingly significant for NPOs is the fact, that in the last ten years traditional volunteer activities of the Swiss population declined by almost 20% (Schön-Bühlmann, 2011). This applies a certain pressure to NPOs to find other solutions for their tasks and it could explain why NPOs are interested in participating in CV.

Despite having a long tradition and therewith a fund of knowledge and experience, Swiss NPOs are facing a new challenge: Corporate Volunteering. In the 1960s CV has found its place in American companies, followed by companies in Great Britain which founded the umbrella organization “Businesses in the Community” in the 1980s (Kinds, 2000). In the meantime the Netherlands took a leading role in the European way of approaching CV (Enquete-Kommission, 2002). Collaboration between NPOs and enterprises are not a concept foreign to the Swiss landscape of partnerships. However, until ten years ago institutionalized CV projects took not place (Bürgisser, 2003; Gentile, Lorenz, & Wehner, 2009). The expression “Corporate Volunteering” has so far no German or French equivalent, and had to be paraphrased and explained to several participants of this thesis’ research investigations. Despite the comparably recent introduction of CV several studies on CV in NPOs were conducted in Switzerland. A driver for this could be the UN “international year of volunteering” in 2001. Bürgisser (2003) describes CV as an instrument for human resources development and volunteering as a part of a company’s strategy. She bases her findings on several scientific and other studies. Motives of NPOs are described as: Transfer of knowledge, increase of image, workload relief, networking (Bürgisser, 2003). Littmann-Wernli (2002) describes benefits of CV as know-how transfer and an exchange of

3 For example, an employee survey of Migros (Switzerland’s largest retailing company) or newspaper clippings.
information. Littman-Wernli (2002) refers to the program „SeitenWechsel”, a Swiss program which organizes one week stays in NPO for company managers in order to enhance their social abilities. Littman-Wernli (2002) acknowledges that CV can create additional costs, if CV activities need to be newly developed to fulfill the needs of for-profit partners. Schubert et al. (2002) summary benefits from CV for NPOs as follows: CV generates additional manpower, NPOs profit from a transfer of know-how and they are able to enlarge their radius of action, CV reduces prejudice and it’s a possibility to form a sustainable relation with a for-profit organization. Another research project about CV in Switzerland was conducted by Ackermann and Nadai (2002). As mentioned above, the authors evaluated a pilot project of Caritas Switzerland and included information from NPO managers in their analysis. Ackermann and Nadai (2002) come to the conclusion that corporate volunteers and NPO beneficiaries profit most from CV. However, the increase in public awareness is described as marginal (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002).

In summary, CV could be an interesting instrument for Swiss NPOs. Nevertheless actual know-how on their experience with CV is limited, which is specified in the next chapter.
2. Research aims

The literature review suggests that our understanding of NPOs’ role in CV is limited and theoretical considerations are often abstract. Only a few studies about CV immerse exclusively in the perspective of NPOs. They focus on CV as a beneficial instrument in the sense of a benevolent company that offers their services to a NPO in need (Pries, 2009). This thesis has therefore three main research aims: (i) understanding NPOs’ experience in CV on an organizational level (paper 1 and 2), (ii) an exploration of NPO beneficiaries’ perspective on CV (paper 3), and (iii) analysis and potentially measurement of CV partnerships (paper 4). The following chapters elucidate these research aims.

2.1. NPOs’ perception on CV and consequences of CV partnerships

How CV is perceived by the NPO managers and their beneficiaries is not yet clear. Therefore, this thesis shall contribute to a better understanding of the motivation of NPOs in participating in CV as well as NPOs’ expectations towards CV. Another research aim concerns the very beginning of CV partnerships. How do CV partnerships start and who initiates them? While studies about CV reveal information about benefits, they keep findings about internal processes of NPOs hidden. This thesis aims at contributing to a better understanding of how NPOs organize their internal processes concerning CV. E.g., is there a specific person in charge of CV? Are standardized CV projects offered or are they reinvented for each assignment? Which factors lead to a positive CV cooperation and which to a negative one? To date it is unknown how NPOs negotiate with enterprises about their CV partnerships; hence NPOs’ communication concerning CV is also under focus. Another research aims deals with the unknown strategies of NPOs concerning CV: Do NPOs motivate corporate volunteers to become private volunteers? What do NPOs expect in the short and long-run from CV partners (e.g., additional donations)?

As described above CV certainly generates benefits for NPOs. But who benefits to what extent from CV? The NPO as an organization (e.g., raising awareness), NPO employees (e.g., transfer of know-how), or NPO beneficiaries (e.g., receiving additional care)? This thesis aims at clarifying if benefits caused by CV are applicable and sustainable. Although literature reports about benefits for all involved parties, not much is known about challenges NPOs are facing due to CV. This thesis also aims at shedding light on challenges for NPOs caused by CV.
These research aims and questions are subsumed as perception of NPOs on CV and are addressed in paper 1 & 2.

2.2. Perspective of NPO beneficiaries on CV

The role of NPO beneficiaries in CV is inadequately researched. So far, no study or research about their involvement in CV has been conducted. Ackermann and Nadai (2002) found in their study that NPO beneficiaries profit together with corporate volunteers most from CV assignments. However, they did not directly interview beneficiaries, but received their information from interviews with NPO managers. For that reason one study of this thesis is exclusively dedicated to the beneficiaries’ perspective on CV. Their perspective is one of the main research questions of this thesis. Specifically following aspects were of interest: Since CV is supposedly a win for everyone involved: to what extent do beneficiaries benefit from CV? And are these effects sustainable? Beneficiaries’ participation in CV: e.g., are they actively involved in decision-making? What are their expectations and do they have fears? Since beneficiaries are part of social NPOs, another research aim is also to investigate their interaction with corporate volunteers, e.g., how do they perceive CV and corporate volunteers? Paper 3 seeks to answer these research questions.

2.3. Evaluation and formation of CV partnerships

CV partnerships are often accompanied by a lack of knowledge and incertitude. This is frequently caused by a certain degree of prejudices about a partner of a different sector, but also because of unknown expectations and preferences. To date intra-organizational evaluations, e.g., company’s employees were asked about their impression of a certain CV project and its implication on their commitment, are more common (De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Peterson, 2004). One research aim of this thesis is to design an evaluation tool that allows formative design of CV cooperation. Instead of individual expectation analysis or evaluation of existing partnerships, this tool is developed to include all involved parties (managers, corporate volunteers and beneficiaries). It addresses various questions about the importance of different criteria, but also their fulfillment. Therefore this tool should also allow the analysis of inter-sector partnerships beyond previously known intra-organizational evaluations. In order to reach this goal, questions about expectations (e.g.,
broadening horizon, integrating society) and key factors (e.g., CV assignments should not cost more than they generate benefits) for a successful CV cooperation were combined with a case study. Results of this formative evaluation analysis are presented in paper 4.
3. Methodological approaches

In this chapter an overview of the methods applied in this thesis is presented. To address the various research questions, qualitative and quantitative analysis as well as conceptual approaches to develop an evaluation instrument were employed.

3.1. Qualitative methodological approach of papers 1 & 3

The current research on CV in NPOs is mainly described indirectly by deducing from findings of CV studies in companies. To date perception on CV from NPOs and their beneficiaries remains vague. For that reason an explorative approach in form of a qualitative analysis was deemed appropriate for papers 1 and 3. Due to a similar starting position – little is known about CV from a NPO’s perspective – but different contexts and realities (managers vs. beneficiaries) qualitative approaches of papers 1 (expert interviews) and 3 (focus groups) were different. The next paragraph introduces the methodological approach applied in paper 1.

In under-researched fields, expert interviews are a valuable instrument that allows putting knowledge and experience of experts in the foreground and focuses on “(...) peoples’ expressions and activities in their local contexts” (Flick, 2009, p. 21; Mieg & Näf, 2006). Expert interviews allow collecting data on experts’ knowledge and comparing contents, differences, and similarities (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Scholl, 2003). In addition, NPOs’ relevant documents about CV, such as annual reports, were included in the final analysis. An interview guideline was developed in order to keep a red thread in all interviews and to allow comparability of the findings. This guideline was pre-tested in trial interviews with two NPO managers, who were not involved in the full study. Small adjustments in terms of specifications were made, e.g., an example explaining CV was added. Convenience sampling followed a reverse approach by asking companies and intermediaries for their CV partners. The goal was to have a representative sample of Swiss NPOs in terms of NPO’s size, field of activity, geographic location, and experience with CV. Names of participating NPOs were given and those fitting in the mentioned landscape were invited to participate in this study. Participating NPOs had very different levels of implementing CV. Some started CV projects only recently while others had several years of experience. Interviewed experts were either head of their NPO or were assigned responsibility for CV. The interviews took place from
November 2008 to January 2009 and lasted approximately one hour. Thirteen experts of eight different NPOs were interviewed. Interviews were held at the respective working place of the interviewees (their NPO). Interviews were conducted by two researchers and they were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by one person. For analysis, the tool ATLAS/ti was used. In a first step, interviews were coded by the first researcher along the lines of categories provided by the framework of the interview guideline (Fuchs-Heinritz, 2005; Maxwell, 2009). Concurrently, other topics were coded openly in order to build new categories during analysis phase following a qualitative content analysis approach (Maxwell, 2004). After the first round of coding two other researchers checked its validity. They were both familiar with research on CV but from a companies' view. Accordingly, they interpreted certain statements differently and sought clarification. Subsequently, codes were iteratively improved until all researchers agreed upon them. Interpretation of categories was performed in a group. This reduces influence of individual researchers and it increases validity of interpretation (Steinke, 2004). Categories were interpreted independently from each other and original transcripts. In a final step a "member check" as suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985) was performed. Results were presented in face-to-face meetings with individual interviewees as well as at a workshop with all interviewees. Their feedback on the interpretation of the material and on subsequent hypotheses was taken into account (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accordingly, categories were finalized and complemented with direct citations of interviewees.

Paper 3 started in a similar fashion. Literature research yielded limited knowledge about CV from NPO beneficiaries’ points of view. Instead of expert interviews, a different exploratory qualitative approach was chosen. Due to different constraints of the experts – which consisted of NPO beneficiaries – group discussions were performed. This approach was deemed appropriate in light of the stress conditions a single interview could trigger with, e.g., a mentally impaired person. Furthermore, its goal was to create a pleasant environment, in which opinions could be freely discussed. Group discussions are especially valuable, if subjective views of respondents are crucial, and additional knowledge can be generated by participants' exchange of thoughts and its possible modification (Kitzinger, 1995; Lamnek, 2005). A guideline was developed to ensure a red thread and to guarantee inclusion of all research questions (Schnell, Hill, & Esser, 2008). An introduction, conditions,
such as anonymity, and code of conduct were followed by key questions and optional questions.

Finally group discussions took place in five different NPOs, which were found by an intermediary. All group discussions were tape recorded and postscripts were written after each group discussion. One group discussion took place during a pre-test, since the set-up was not changed afterwards; these results were included in the analysis as well. Participants belonged to the same NPO and some of them already knew each other. At the end of the group discussions, a brief questionnaire collected data about participants' age and sex as well as number and duration of attended CV projects. During the group discussions two researchers were present. One researcher conducted the discussions and the other one had a role as an observer and took notes, e.g., about group dynamics. Group discussions lasted between 20 and 80 minutes. Depending on group composition Swiss German or English was spoken.

Analysis of group discussion was conducted in an inductive content analysis by identifying categories and going repeatedly through the material while adjusting categories (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002; Mayring, 2010). In addition to tape records and postscript, notes about the focus groups influenced final findings (Kitzinger, 1995). The latter were enriched by direct citations of individual participants.

3.2. Quantitative methodological approach of paper 2

Statistical data about Swiss NPOs is generally low (Helmig et al., 2010). Given that no large scale study on NPO’s view on CV has been conducted, a survey was developed in order to learn more about overall partnerships between companies and NPOs, and more specifically about CV partnerships. Based on results of paper 1, literature review, and a short survey of companies' philanthropic activities of the project CorVo.ch, this survey was programmed with 2ask.com, an online survey software. The companies' short survey was included in order to be able to compare results of both surveys (see Gentile & Lorenz, 2012). A pre-test (n=6) with NPO managers led to minor changes in the final questionnaire. Since the Swiss Federal Statistical Office doesn't raise detailed data on NPOs, a convenience sampling took place by sending the link of the survey to associated NPOs and other multipliers, such as

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4 See chapter 5.1 for further information on the project CorVo.ch
recruitment agencies for volunteers, intermediaries, national, and regional NPOs. Additionally calls for participation were placed in various professional journals and on websites of project partners. This survey was conducted from July 2009 until September 2009. A total of 468 valid questionnaires were filled in by participants. These NPOs represent approximately 235,000 volunteers accounting for about 20% of all Swiss volunteers (Schön-Bühlmann, 2011). Participating NPOs' field of activities compare to findings of Helmig (2010), thus the sample claims a good representativeness. The data was analyzed by statistical software SPSS and by excel. Despite the low case number of NPOs conducting CV and the convenience sampling method, given the explorative character of this study, results can be cautiously interpreted as a tendency.

3.3. Conceptual approaches of paper 4

In consideration of missing CV evaluation tools, a combination of several conceptual approaches led to a further development of the formative assessment tool (Deitmer et al., 2003). Since the goal was to develop a process oriented evaluation for an existing case, a collaboration between a construction company and a residential home for visually impaired persons, different methodologies were deemed appropriate (Yin, 2003). After literature review focused on measurement and evaluation tools in CV partnerships, most mentioned criteria were developed into a short interview guideline. This guideline was used in three expert interviews which were conducted with company and NPO managers. Findings were combined in order to generate dimensions by developing main and sub-criteria of a draft questionnaire. This draft was discussed with the experts and slightly adjusted according to their feedback. Then, it was tested for completeness and appropriateness in three focus groups with employees from the construction company and residents from the residential home. Focus groups are especially valuable, if additional information is derived from discussions among participants as opposed to expert interviews (Kitzinger, 1995). Already at this stage it became clear that the internal understanding of CV and its meaning varied among participants. In order to diminish the influence of misinterpreted criteria, all criteria were explained and complemented with an example from the three focus groups. Finally, four main criteria and 27 sub-criteria were developed. This qualitative approach was followed by a quantitative insertion: after the development of the survey with the mentioned criteria, a basis for further formative design of a partnership was established.
Firstly, participants from the NPO and the company weighted all four main criteria by distributing 100 percent points according to their individual opinion about the importance of every single criterion. This step was repeated for all sub-criteria. Subsequently, participants were asked to rate the degree of implementation of all criteria. All participants took part in at least one CV assignment. Subsequently they were able to rate criteria’s implementation. This procedure allowed for individual analysis of each partner, but also for analyzing intra-organizational differences. Finally, in the sense of a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), results were presented to the NPO and company’s managers in a recommendation workshop. With support of the findings and references to examples, the workshop led to a redesign of their cooperation.
4. Summaries of the scientific papers

In this chapter abstracts of all four papers are presented along with a short overview of each paper’s development.

4.1. Summary of paper 1

Title: Corporate Volunteering – Benefits and Challenges for Nonprofits

Authors: Olga Samuel, Patricia Wolf, Axel Schilling

Abstract: In the frame of corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate volunteering (CV) is almost exclusively studied from the point of view of companies, while the perspectives of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) are neglected. Hence, this article will focus on the perspective of NPO managers on CV cooperation projects with enterprises. In the center of this study lies NPO managers’ strategy and motivation for participating in CV, conception of CV activities, and the often cited win-win-aspect. Key findings suggest that a majority of the questioned NPOs lack a strategic behavior and management tools for undertaking CV cooperation projects with companies. Nevertheless, CV is widely perceived of as an opportunity and a promising way of raising donations. This study suggests that the key to successful future cooperation between NPOs and profit-oriented organizations lies in the processes of internal evaluation and subsequent strategy development.

Development: The first version of this paper was written by the doctoral candidate Olga Samuel and accepted as a poster presentation at the 11th European Congress of Psychology in 2009. A first version of this paper was submitted to VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations. Valuable feedback was given by two anonymous reviewers. However the manuscript was declined by one reviewer and subsequently by the editor. Taking into account both reviews, Patricia Wolf, who has profound knowledge in publishing, contributed to the methodology part and helped restructuring this manuscript into a more reader friendly version. Axel Schilling commented at various stages of this paper and helped to develop its content. After revising this manuscript it was handed in to the journal Nonprofit and Management Leadership. Four reviewers commented on the paper. Revisions were incorporated by Olga Samuel with partial support of Patricia Wolf. This paper was accepted in Nonprofit and Management Leadership in September 2012. Subsequently, it was published in Volume 24, Issue 2, pages 163–179.
4.2. Summary of paper 2

Title: Swiss NPOs’ Perspective on Corporate Volunteering

Authors: Olga Samuel, Axel Schilling

Abstract: CV is in the early stages of development in Switzerland and needs to be improved in order to be beneficial to NPOs and to fulfill the much cited overall win of CV. This quantitative study aims to shed light on Swiss NPOs’ view on collaboration in general and more specifically on CV. A total of 468 participants, mostly NPO managers and nonprofit CEOs, filled an online questionnaire. These NPOs represent approximately 235,000 volunteers. They account for about 20% of Swiss volunteers. General collaboration seems to suit NPOs which receive their desired support from companies (e.g., donations). Although CV is well known among participants, only 15% had already conducted CV projects. NPOs concede benefits to CV; however they act reactively and seem to put partners’ needs above their own needs.

Development: As part of the research project CorVo.ch (see 5.1 for further information) foundation of paper 2 in form of a quantitative study was conducted. After conclusion of this part first results were presented at a project conference by the thesis' author. This presentation received good feedback. Following first drafts of this paper, former supervisors decided to include its results into a book, which was a final deliverable of the project CorVo.ch. Subsequently, the content style was adapted to better suit the targeted audience and an original text was written in German. Axel Schilling’s valuable feedback was integrated during the development of this paper and Theo Wehner’s editorial inputs as well as an inductive analysis by Christian Lorenz and a research assistant were added as enrichment to the purely descriptive results. Finally this text was published as a book chapter (p. 101–114) in “Corporate Volunteering. Unternehmen im Spannungsfeld von Effizienz und Ethik.” by editors T. Wehner and G.-C. Gentile in 2012. For this thesis, the book chapter was translated into English.

4.3. Summary of paper 3

Title: Exploring partnerships from the perspective of HSO beneficiaries: The case of corporate volunteering

Authors: Olga Samuel, Lonneke Roza, Lucas Meijs
Abstract: Despite numerous studies on cross-sector collaboration, little is known about the perceptions and involvement of beneficiaries in partnerships between HSOs and companies. This explorative, qualitative study addresses this gap by providing insight into the beneficiaries’ perspectives with regard to a specific form of collaboration: corporate volunteering. Key findings suggest that beneficiaries’ perceptions are influenced by involvement in the development of the projects, the perceived quality of interaction, and the sustainability. We conclude that beneficiaries are welcoming the change in their daily routines, while acknowledging the lack of reciprocity. We argue that corporate volunteering does not necessarily produce a win-win situation.

Development: In the last months of the project CorVo.ch a qualitative research project about the situation of NPO beneficiaries in the context of CV was conducted by Olga Samuel and Karin Freiermuth. Data was collected and analyzed during the project CorVo.ch (2009–10), while the manuscript was written at a later stage. Preliminary findings of this empirical research were published in Sozial Extra, a semi-scientific German journal in 2012. The first version of the manuscript was rejected after reviews by the Journal of Community Practice. Taking into account these reviews and following a call for papers on cross-sector partnerships from the Journal Human Service Organizations Management, Leadership & Governance, the manuscript was further developed with the support of Lonneke Roza and Lucas Meijs. The evolved manuscript was submitted in October 2014. In February 2015 the manuscript was revised and subsequently resubmitted. The manuscript was accepted in Human Service Organizations Management, Leadership & Governance in May 2015.

4.4. Summary of paper 4

Title: Formative evaluation study on corporate volunteering

Authors: Olga Samuel, Gian-Claudio Gentile, Christian Lorenz, Jan Pries

Abstract: CV partnerships are accompanied by uncertainties about expectations. Goal of this study was to determine how to evaluate cooperation in order to find solutions to conduct satisfactory CV projects. Instead of evaluating final results, as it is common, this tool was developed with a formative character in mind. The development of this formative assessment tool included an actual cooperation and is based on a case study. Finally, this tool included four main criteria (such as values and visions or achievement of objectives) and 27 sub-criteria which were weighted according to participant’s importance and rated
according to their degree of implementation. The NPO as well as the company contributed on managerial, employee and resident’s level. Results show that the NPO criticizes their achievement of goals on the strategic-functional dimension, e.g., monetary benefits, while the company did not well on an ideological-integrative level, e.g., non-monetary values such as acknowledgement for their work of the NPO.

**Development:** A sub-goal of the project CorVo.ch (see chapter 5.1) included the development of a measuring tool of CV cooperation. This task required the combination of experiences of several previous studies on CV in context of NPOs and companies. The author of this thesis was the project leader. Based on a literature review on CV measurement tools and a management tool (Deitmer et al., 2003), two CV partners of the project CorVo.ch, who had a very open style of communication, agreed to participate. Members of the project team (Olga Samuel, Gian-Claudio Gentile, and Christian Lorenz) discussed in several meeting design and procedure of this study. This team also met to discuss milestones. In addition Jan Pries’ results, part of his master thesis, of Kelly’s repertory grid method of personal constructs were added to this study. This paper was written in close collaboration between the thesis author Olga Samuel and Gian-Claudio Gentile with useful comments provided by Christian Lorenz and Theo Wehner. Finally, this text was published as a book chapter (p. 127-141) in “Corporate Volunteering. Unternehmen im Spannungsfeld von Effizienz und Ethik.” by editors T. Wehner and G.-C. Gentile in 2012. For this thesis, the book chapter was translated into English.
5. Contribution

This chapter summarizes the doctoral candidate's contribution to each paper, followed by the scientific and practical contributions of this thesis. Finally, topics for future research are presented.

5.1. Doctoral candidate contribution to the papers

The research foundations of this thesis were laid during the project "Corporate Volunteering in Switzerland" (CorVo.ch): Practice, Knowhow Transfer and Recommendation for Organizations\(^5\), which was partially funded by the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI). This project was conducted at the ETH Zurich lead by Prof. Dr. Theo Wehner (former head of the Centre for Organizational and Occupational Sciences) and at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz) lead by Prof. Dr. Axel Schilling (head of the Institute for Nonprofit and Public Management).\(^6\) The latter institute was in charge of conducting research projects including NPOs, while the team at the ETH Zurich focused on research in for-profit organizations. All papers include collaborative parts, which are acknowledged in Table 2 and in the respective author notes.

Table 2: Contributions to thesis' papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Paper 1</th>
<th>Paper 2</th>
<th>Paper 3</th>
<th>Paper 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature Research</td>
<td>OS, PW, AS</td>
<td>OS, AS</td>
<td>OS, LR, LM</td>
<td>OS, GCG, CL, JP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>OS, AS</td>
<td>OS, AS, TW, GCG OS, KF</td>
<td>OS, GCG</td>
<td>OS, CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of Paper</td>
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<td>OS, AS, TW OS</td>
<td>OS, GCG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>OS, GCG</td>
<td>OS, AS, TW OS, KF</td>
<td>OS, GCG, CL, JP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>OS, PW</td>
<td>OS, TW, AS OS, LR, LM</td>
<td>OS, GCG, JP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: OS: Olga Samuel; KF: Karin Freiermu th; GCG: Gian-Claudio Gentile; CL: Christian Lorenz; LM: Lucas Meijs; JP: Jan Pries; LR: Lonneke Roza; AS: Axel Schilling; TW: Theo Wehner; PW: Patricia Wolf

Drafts of paper 1, 2, and 4 were developed with financial support of the CTI, while revisions, final drafts and paper 3 as well as part I of this thesis were written without financial support.

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\(^5\) Corporate Volunteering in der Schweiz (CorVo.ch): Praxis, Wissenstransfer und Gestaltungsempfehlungen.

\(^6\) The doctoral candidate was employed 30% at the ETH Zurich and 70% at the FHNW from October 2008 until December 2010.
5.2. Scientific and practical contributions to field of research

The overall research aim of this dissertation was to contribute to a better conceptual and empirical understanding of CV in Switzerland and to contribute to a form of CV which is favorable to NPOs and its beneficiaries. Contributions are presented along the research papers as follows: current standing and implementation of CV in Swiss NPOs, findings on internal processes, strategy, internal, and external communication concerning CV, benefits and challenges on organizational level, and the role of NPO beneficiaries in CV. Finally, the development of a formative assessment instrument for CV partnerships is presented.

The first research goal, to understand how NPOs handle CV, was attained with the studies presented in papers 1 and 2. In general, they reveal that CV stands at its beginning in Switzerland. Although the concept CV is well known, NPOs still have limited experience using CV for their interests. Currently, NPOs rather react on companies’ demand for CV than actively offering CV projects on their own. Despite literature’s constant iteration that CV is a win-win for all involved, NPOs are still waiting to benefit. These findings, however, are most likely interrelated. Since NPOs do not state their expectations on CV, they are unable to benefit from CV. However, some NPOs mentioned to expect indirect benefits in form of additional donations by their CV partners. Results of NPOs’ internal processes concerning CV show a heterogeneous picture. Appointment of responsibility is allocated differently and expert interviews revealed a high uncertainty about CV’s importance compared to daily tasks of their NPOs. Together, the studies presented in paper 1 and 2 convey that a clear allocation of responsibility is crucial for successful CV projects. Hand in hand with responsibility of CV comes organization of CV projects. Current practice is that most NPOs create an individual program for every company. However, this is not a sign of wanting to provide extraordinary customer satisfaction, but a sign that NPOs are unable to convince companies of their needs. E.g., instead of asking for assignments which last one week with daily ten corporate volunteers, NPOs invent tasks for fifty volunteers that can be done in one day, because this fits better to companies’ requirements. This leads to the next challenge: experts pointed out that communication with companies on the same level are described as difficult. This provides evidence for Poncelet’s findings (2003), who states that NPOs perceive differences in power between them and their cooperation partners.
Another finding is that NPOs make no effort to advertise corporate volunteers to become private volunteers. This potential is currently untapped and explains why corporate volunteers pose no competition to private volunteers. Moreover, communication proves not only to be difficult externally but also internally. Other volunteers, NPO employees, or beneficiaries are badly informed about CV projects of their NPOs.

In terms of benefits, additional human resources in form of physical assignments are the most common benefit (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert et al., 2002). A transfer of knowledge is rather an exception, since most NPOs conduct CV projects once and in the time span of one day instead of repeating assignments. Management programs such as "SeitenWechsel" (Amman, 2003) focus on the development of company managers and not on a transfer of know-how for NPOs. If NPOs have the capability to influence their CV partners behavior as stated by several authors (Allen, 2003; Littmann-Wernli, 2002; Quirk, 1998) needs to be doubted. In terms of cost incurred (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998), results of both studies show that CV projects usually induce additional costs which are not carried by their CV partners for NPOs. The biggest challenge reported is perceived costs of cooperation (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Expenses for CV activities pose a challenge for NPOs as well as work of laypersons (Quirk, 1998; Sundeen et al., 2007) which is challenging for NPOs since they have to find appropriate tasks for corporate volunteers. NPOs indeed fear a reputational risk (Allen, 2003; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998) in the sense that companies might only conduct CV in order to benefit from an NPO's name. For this reason, several NPOs studied in paper 2 reported that they declined CV partnerships. A fear of dependency on a CV partner, as proposed by Allen (2003), Haski-Leventhal et al. (2009) and Quirk (1998), was not expressed.

In summary, current NPO strategies are most often insufficient for sustainable CV projects. Successful CV partnerships originate from NPOs that know and state their expectations and have a clear set-up of responsibilities and organization of CV projects.

Another research aim of this thesis was to include a stakeholder that is also supposed to benefit from CV, but has so far not been the main topic of scientific studies. For that reason, an exploratory qualitative study on NPO beneficiaries in the context of CV was included in this thesis. This study and its results are presented in paper 3. Since the focus of this paper
lies on NPOs that are solely taking care of people’s well-being, the term human services organization (HSO) was applied throughout paper 3 (Hasenfeld, 2009).

Beneficiaries are so far not involved in their HSO decision-making process concerning CV. Beneficiaries have no opportunity to shape CV projects or to contribute on another level than being illustrative examples of their HSO. Consequently, beneficiaries were not asked for their feedback on CV projects. However, beneficiaries are not afraid of meeting corporate volunteers. They expect their HSO to take care of them and to ensure that corporate volunteers are trustworthy. It is a common belief among beneficiaries that corporate volunteers are individually chosen by their HSOs, which is – according to available studies – not the case (Pajo & Lee, 2011). Nevertheless, the study revealed that beneficiaries are satisfied with corporate volunteers’ abilities. And they enjoy the additional attention they receive. As hypothesized by Ackerman and Nadai (2002), beneficiaries enjoy a change in their daily routines. Additionally, beneficiaries believe that CV contributes to diminishing prejudice against them. This result was correspondingly found by Ackermann and Nadai (2002). Yet, beneficiaries are also skeptical about CV. The main objection lies in the fact that there is no reciprocity in current CV practice. Beneficiaries complain that they have no opportunity to visit corporate volunteers in their working environment and that they sometimes feel "like in a zoo", when they meet corporate volunteers. Another critical point is seen in short onetime assignments. This hinders a sustainable interaction between beneficiaries and corporate volunteers, something that would be very appreciated by beneficiaries.

To summarize, CV projects have indeed beneficial aspects to beneficiaries. However, in order to truly benefit from CV, beneficiaries expectations – e.g., sustainable interaction on a personal level – should be clearly stated by HSOs and taken into account when conducting CV partnerships.

Finally, the last research aim included building an instrument that allows evaluating CV partnerships, but that also has a formative component. This study and its results are presented in paper 4. To date, measurement tools for intra-organizational evaluations dominate scientific studies (Lorenz, Gentile, & Wehner, 2011). However, this assessment tool is intended to deliver an instrument for measuring and forming inter-organizational partnerships. To this end, a mixed method design was employed (Yin, 2003). The qualitative
studies comprised of expert interviews, focus groups, and a repertory grid analysis. This led to the development of four main-criteria and 27 sub-criteria in form of a survey. Subsequently, the sub-criteria were weighted and rated by participants of the NPO and the company. Accordingly its analysis was conducted quantitatively. Results were critically discussed at a recommendation workshop which led to a formative redesign of the partnership. Overall, the following results were noteworthy to the researchers as well as to the management of the NPO and the company: (i) a drift between ideological-integrative and strategic-functional orientation of CV was observed. While the former includes non-monetary values, the latter describes more economically oriented beneficial aspects. (ii) Contrary to common belief, a strategic-functional orientation was more important to the NPO than an ideological-integrative orientation. This was especially true for financial return of their CV projects, which cost more than the NPO received in terms of corporate volunteers’ worth of work or what the NPO would have to pay if they hired external help. For example, one NPO would have preferred to use corporate volunteers’ financial know-how, e.g., for fundraising purposes, as opposed to their manual support in the NPO’s garden. (iii) This, however, diverged from the corporate volunteer’s desire to work outside of their professional daily life. For the company an ideological-integrative orientation was thus more important. It was essential to corporate volunteers that their CV assignment was meaningful and not just an alibi exercise (Jamali, Safieddine, & Rabbath, 2008). This is in line with findings of paper 3, in which beneficiaries emphasized the importance of an interpersonal exchange and that corporate volunteers get a real picture of their life instead of a superficial glimpse.

Overall, this thesis shows that CV is hardly a win-win for all involved parties. Moreover, this view proved to be obstructive to CV partnerships. Instead, a realistic view of expectations and open discussions about uncertainties might be helpful for CV partnerships.

This thesis’ findings conclude in three recommendations for successful implementation of CV from NPOs' perspectives: (1) NPOs know which CV projects are beneficial to them, (2) NPOs include their beneficiaries in CV processes and (3) NPOs communicate their expectations to their CV partners. These three recommendations could lead to sustainable CV partnerships, which are beneficial to NPOs and their beneficiaries.
5.3. Future research

Additional studies on NPOs conducting CV are required for an in-depth understanding of their role. They pertain to the following areas: the relation between corporate volunteers and private volunteers, further exploration on the NPO beneficiaries’ role in CV, the influence of third-party involvement, and studies with respect to cultural differences.

In paper 1 and 2 the perspectives of NPO managers on CV could be elaborated. However, they had difficulties answering questions related to the relationship between corporate volunteers and private volunteers. To date it is unknown whether corporate and private volunteers stand in competition with each other in the sense that private volunteers feel under pressure by corporate volunteers and to what extent NPOs consider corporate volunteers as complimentary to private volunteers. The inclusion of private volunteers in studies on CV would contribute to a better understanding of CV. Especially from a NPO’s perspective.

Paper 3 contributed to research on NPO beneficiaries involved in CV in that their perspective was explored. However, there are further studies needed which further elucidate their role in CV and which analyze interactions between them and corporate volunteers. Conducting such studies is no simple task due to different constraints of beneficiaries. However, exactly these circumstances show the reality in which beneficiaries perceive and experience CV. Studies that take into account the different needs of beneficiaries and research potential best practices concerning CV would add to a more balanced form of CV.

Third-party involvement changed the traditional triumvirate consisting of volunteers, NPOs, and beneficiaries (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2009). All four papers of this thesis involved cross-sector partnerships in the sense of non- vs. for-profit organizations. The influence of other third-parties on CV could not be included in this thesis. However, the topic itself is currently inadequately researched. While governments (financial) support for NPOs decreases, alternatives in terms of funding as well as recruiting volunteers in order to be able to fulfill their missions has become a question of great importance to NPOs (Roza et al., 2013). The role of governments in CV remains unclear. For example, governments could encourage and support companies to conduct CV with NPOs by granting tax reductions. The changing responsibility resulting from outsourced welfare tasks to companies will most likely affect CV. Only long-term studies of welfare states’ roles in CV would allow conclusions, if the task
of social and environmental commitment of welfare states can be successfully outsourced or not. Furthermore, it would shed further light on how welfare states could successfully support interaction between private companies and NPOs.

Although Switzerland has a long tradition in the NPO area, CV has not been an established form of cross-sector partnerships. Since CV seems to be an integral element of American culture, research objectives could include comparison of culture’s role in CV. E. g., why could CV not (yet) establish as well in Swiss NPOs as in American NPOs?

In summary, this thesis contributes to the development of the research field on NPOs role in CV in two ways: First, by investigating NPOs' perspective on CV and second, by analyzing NPOs' internal organization and strategic behavior. Another contribution of this thesis is the explorative insight in the role of beneficiaries in CV. Finally, this thesis resulted in a formative evaluation tool that enables analysis and redesign of CV partnerships.
References


PART II: SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

Overview of scientific papers

Paper 1
Title: Corporate volunteering – benefits and challenges for nonprofits
Methodology: Literature review, expert interviews
Approach: Qualitative, explorative, and empirical

Paper 2
Title: Swiss NPOs’ perspective on corporate volunteering (original title: Corporate Volunteering aus der Perspektive schweizerischer NPO)
Methodology: Questionnaire study
Approach: Quantitative, empirical

Paper 3
Title: Exploring partnerships from the perspective of HSO beneficiaries: The case of corporate volunteering
Methodology: Literature review, focus groups
Approach: Qualitative, explorative, and empirical
Accepted in: Human Service Organizations Management, Leadership & Governance

Paper 4
Title: Formative evaluation study on corporate volunteering (original title: Formative Evaluationsstudie zum Einsatz von Corporate Volunteering)
Methodology: Literature review, expert interviews, focus groups, survey analysis
Approach: Empirical, conceptual, and development of instrument
In the frame of corporate social responsibility, corporate volunteering is almost exclusively studied from the point of view of companies, while the perspectives of nonprofit organizations are neglected. Hence, this article focuses on the perspective of managers of nonprofit organizations on volunteer partnership projects with for-profit companies. In the center of this article lie nonprofit managers’ strategy and motivation for participating in corporate volunteering, conception of corporate volunteer activities, and the often-cited win-win-win aspect. Key findings suggest that a majority of the questioned nonprofits lack strategic behavior and management tools for undertaking volunteer partnership projects with companies. Nevertheless, corporate volunteering is widely perceived as an opportunity and a promising method of raising donations for nonprofit organizations. This article suggests that the key to successful future cooperation between nonprofits and profit-oriented organizations lies in the processes of internal evaluation and subsequent strategy development.

Keywords: nonprofit management, corporate volunteering, qualitative research


Authors’ note: We express our gratitude to the Swiss Confederation’s innovation promotion agency (CTI) for funding our research; we offer our thanks to Gian-Claudio Gentile, Christian Lorenz, Theo Wehner for their valuable feedback, Robin and Simeon for reading the article at an early stage and for helping to develop this article, Alexandra for her proofreading, and four anonymous reviewers.

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1. Introduction

In the late twentieth century nonprofit organizations (NPOs) became increasingly important for U.S. society and Northwest European countries because governments were gradually outsourcing various tasks to them (Salamon & Anheier, 1996). At the same time, society increasingly expected companies not only to be profit-oriented but to behave according to social and ecological standards and to take responsibility for their actions (Carroll, 1991; Habisch & Schmidpeter, 2003; Windsor, 2001). According to Carroll (1991), society demands that companies take over moral (“Be ethical” and philanthropic responsibilities (“Be a good corporate citizen;” see also Andriof and McIntosh, 2001) along with their traditional economic (“Be profitable”) and legal responsibilities (“Obey the law”). Businesses are trying to position themselves as being accountable players in the arena of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Eells and Watson (1976, p. 247) define CSR as follows: “In its broadest sense, corporate social responsibility represents a broad concern with business’s role in supporting and improving that social order.”

The idea of Carroll’s four-layered pyramid made its way into management practice during the 19802 and '90s. In the early twenty-first century, CSR is a widely accepted part of companies’ responsibilities (Matten, Crane, & Chapple, 2003). CSR includes a wide range of actions, including employee volunteering outside of a company’s core tasks. Corporate volunteering (CV) occurs when “a company encourages its employees to offer their time and expertise as volunteers to non-profit organizations. These volunteer activities can be undertaken within or outside the employees’ official workload and time” (Meijjs & van der Voort, 2004, p. 21). Since many NPOs strongly depend on contributions of volunteers, cooperation with corporate volunteers and companies offer a variety of possible benefits for nonprofits. In addition, CV is an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to spread their missions to a wider public. According to Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003), in the late twentieth century volunteerism underwent a change from lifelong commitment to self-realization and more sporadic volunteering, which led to an overall increase of interest in volunteering (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). Much literature has focused on companies however, and leaves out nonprofits’ perspectives on corporate volunteering. Few studies have aimed to understand nonprofits’ reasons for participating in CV and how they organize it (see Austin, 1998; Lee and Higgins, 2000; Quirk, 1998). In this study the authors explored the
perspectives of nonprofit managers who have experience in carrying out volunteer partnership activities with for-profit companies. This article addresses two key questions: (1) what motivates nonprofit managers to take part in CV collaborations? (2) Is the often cited win-win-win situation a reality? We have drawn on empirical research conducted in eight Swiss NPOs. The data stem from thirteen interviews with managers of the nonprofits. Results show that CV offers benefits and challenges for nonprofit organizations.

2. Literature review
Research up to the early twenty-first century has thus far been mainly conducted from a profit-oriented perspective, or the so-called business case (Enquete-Kommission, 2002; Habisch & Schmidpeter, 2003). The majority of studies have focused on the perspective of for-profit companies and neglected the perspective of nonprofits (see among others studies by Bürgisser, 2003; De Gilder, Schuyt, and Breedijk, 2005; Herzig, 2006; Jonker and de Witte, 2006; Peterson, 2004).

2.1. Strategic aspects of CV cooperation
Current literature suggests that the participation of nonprofits in partnerships with for-profit companies is a strategic necessity. Since many nonprofits strongly depend on the contributions of volunteers, and for-profit companies can promote employee volunteering without partnership with nonprofits (Atkinson & Mansfield, 1982), various researchers have recommended that interested nonprofits should offer specific benefits to companies who encourage employee volunteering in order to position themselves in a competitive environment (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996).

Austin (2010, p. xi) highlighted the need for a strategy and an open mind-set for all involved parties at a meta-level. He emphasized the importance of personal relationships and strong commitments and noted seven key points for strategic cooperation: connections with purpose and people; clarity of scope; congruence of mission, strategy, and values; creation of value; communication between partners; continual learning; and commitment to the partnership. Herman and Renz (1999) suggested that the use of “correct management
practices” like goal setting, working with volunteers, and financial analysis leads to more professionalism in CV partnerships with nonprofits. Kaplan (2001) emphasized the importance of measuring and analyzing the performance of NPOs. A balanced scorecard would support not only financial but also nonmonetary objectives of nonprofit organizations (Kaplan, 2001). However, few studies have provided insights into concrete processes and structures that are applied by nonprofits in CV-related partnerships.

2.2. Win-win-win aspect

Several studies have suggested that CV partnerships between nonprofits and for-profit companies constitute a win-win-win situation for the involved company, for the nonprofit, and for the employees (Pinter, 2006; Quirk, 1998; Tuffrey, 1998). Because the current study focused on nonprofit managers’ perspectives, we looked for the “win” from their point of view in our literature review. Benefits for nonprofits from CV are seen in additional human resources provided to the nonprofit organization by the corporation. Corporate volunteers add additional physical and mental labor to the existing force of nonprofit volunteers (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, Littmann-Wernli, & Tingler, 2002). Another benefit is a transfer of knowledge, for example, new expertise in a specific field like information technology or in management (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, et al., 2002). Further benefit is seen in the possibility of influencing an enterprise by exchanging values and missions or by influencing behavior (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, et al., 2002). CV is also said to reduce cost for the nonprofit, either through financial support or through access to further resources of the partner company (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998). However, Ackermann and Nadai (2002) evaluated a pilot project of Caritas Switzerland and concluded that benefits such as an increase in public awareness both for nonprofits and companies at an institutional level are marginal.

Apart from recognizing the benefits accruing to the nonprofits, studies have acknowledged that CV partnerships with for-profit companies create costs and challenges for the nonprofit as well, for example, because partnerships might create financial dependency in as well as imbalances of power (Allen, 2003; Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, & Hustinx, 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Another challenge is seen in a potential risk to a nonprofit’s reputation when partnering with a for-profit company. A for-profit company might use cooperation with a nonprofit to secure a better reputation for itself that is not justified (Allen, 2003; Poncelet,
Although collaborations have the potential to reduce costs for a nonprofit, a partnership can also raise costs in the form of expenses the nonprofit has to carry in order to develop a program for corporate volunteers (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). A less often mentioned issue is the qualifications of corporate volunteers, who are in most cases laypersons who are not familiar with the nonprofits’ tasks. The danger of having unmotivated corporate volunteers has also been mentioned (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002; Quirk, 1998; Sundeen, Raskoff, & Garcia, 2007). Quirk (1998) noted the importance of finding a stable balance of interests among all involved parties.

2.3. The research gap

To summarize, current studies have suggested that CV-related cooperation with companies result in both benefits and challenges for nonprofits. However, it remains unclear how nonprofit managers experience those benefits and challenges and what they expect from such cooperation in terms of investments and return.

This study’s goal was to find answers to the two questions: (1) how and why do nonprofit managers decide whether or not to participate in CV collaborations? (2) From the perspective of the nonprofit managers, does the often-cited win-win-win situation apply? Because of the lack of literature describing how nonprofits and for-profit enterprises start volunteer collaborations, the authors researched the process of how nonprofit managers became involved in CV. Consequently, we assessed whether nonprofit managers apply any guidelines for determining their involvement in CV cooperation (for example, whether they accept all companies as partners, and whether they are willing to adapt to specific demands of their partners).

3. Methodology

Because the present literature on CV and nonprofits is rather scarce, the authors adopted an exploratory and qualitative research approach (Dart, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Girtler, 2001; Maxwell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Siegfried, 2000). Qualitative approaches are used to study peoples’ knowledge and practice in a particular field of interest—in this case
the perspectives of nonprofit managers on corporate volunteering. Following Flick, our study focused on "peoples’ expressions and activities in their local contexts" (2009, p. 21). In addition, document analysis was employed.

3.1. Sample
The authors conducted expert interviews with thirteen managers of eight Swiss nonprofits. In order to generate a holistic overview, we selected nonprofits that were operating in different fields, such as social support, environmental conservation, and community activities.

We recruited nonprofits from for-profit companies and brokering centers (which work with companies and nonprofits to enable cooperation) that actively support and had conducted CV partnerships. Names of participating nonprofits were solicited; the authors invited those fitting in size, field of work, geographic location, and experience with CV to take part in this study. The nonprofits’ experiences with CV were manifold: some nonprofits had only recently started CV programs, while others had several years of experience. Table 3 presents an overview of the nonprofits that participated in this study.

Table 3: Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPO</th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Organizational Structure</th>
<th>Field of Activity</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>CV since</th>
<th>Employees (FTA)</th>
<th>Volunteers (p.a.) without CV</th>
<th>Annual Turnover (2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F./A.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>G./J.</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Social and ecological</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2588</td>
<td>46730</td>
<td>780m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>H.</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>13m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Z./S.</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Ecological</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.25m CHF</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Ecological</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.065m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>N./S.</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.585m CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>D./M.</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Social and ecological</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.5m CHF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Annual turnover in million(s) CHF (=1US$)

NPO A looks after visually impaired and blind older people who live permanently in the facility. Approximately sixty volunteers per year entertain the clients by reading to them or taking them on walks.
NPO B is the umbrella organization with twenty-four nationwide nonprofit sections, which provide services ranging from babysitting to disaster management. It provides rules and mission statements, coordinates national campaigns, and serves as point of entry for other nonprofits and clients. Corporate and other volunteers are included only for a Christmas campaign.

NPO C represents one of the sections of NPO B. It acts financially independently and deals mostly with the coordination of its volunteers and clients, who are supported in manifold ways such as a handicapped person being driven from point A to point B.

NPO D is another umbrella organization with two local sections; it deals mostly with international projects in children’s support. The national campaigns with volunteers and, in exceptional cases, corporate volunteers are used to raise donations for their international projects.

NPO E is an organization that locally supports nature conservation and protection of endangered birds. Volunteers and corporate volunteers support the organization by observing and counting birds as well as cleaning and farming the territory of the nonprofit.

NPO F protects nature and builds natural habitats for different kind of animals. Corporate volunteers mostly clean rivers and ponds and plant bushes, while volunteers observe and count animals and plan the layout of the territory.

NPO G stems from an American nonprofit and focuses on educating schoolchildren about different professions. It works mostly with individual corporate volunteers who present their daily work lives in the form of presentations or project weeks to children and young adults.

Finally, NPO H, a section of a nationwide organization focuses on support of mountain farmers. Volunteers (mostly young adults) live for several weeks with the farmers and support them in farming. Corporate volunteers are usually asked to stay at least for five days, but exceptions are the rule.

3.2. Data collection

Data collection consisted of thirteen semi-structured interviews with experts from the eight nonprofits. Documents such as volunteer programs, annual reports, and media articles concerning CV were studied as well. Interviews were conducted with managers who either were heads of the respective nonprofit or were assigned responsibility for corporate
volunteering. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and took place at the respective workplaces of the interviewees.

According to Flick (2009), expert interviews are appropriate sources for researchers who seek orientation in a new field of study. Interviews allow for the collection of data on knowledge held by experts who are active within a specific field of interest and enable researchers to comparing contents, specifying differences and similarities of perspectives (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Maxwell, 2009; Scholl, 2003). The interviews were conducted by a senior and an assistant researcher. They were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim and reviewed by each interviewee.

The interview guideline contained questions drawn from the literature review and was divided into two parts, each of which included a set of open-ended questions. The first set of questions included an introduction and asked for the reasons why nonprofit managers engaged in CV activities with private companies. It aimed at understanding motivational factors and objectives that are operative in the decisions of nonprofit managers for and/or against such engagements. It also inquired about the cooperation processes and organizational embedding of corporate volunteering, for example, responsibility, contact with other volunteers, strategy. The second set of questions enquired about the impacts nonprofit managers expected or experienced with corporate volunteering engagements, that is, benefits, challenges, evaluation. The interview guideline was tested in trial interviews with two nonprofit managers who were not involved in the study and adjusted it accordingly.

4. Findings

The following section presents the results from the nonprofits’ perspectives and focuses on the two key questions: (1) how and why do nonprofit managers decide whether or not to participate in CV collaborations? (2) From the perspective of the nonprofit managers, does the often-cited win-win-win situation apply?
4.1. Strategic aspects

The opportunities offered by corporate volunteering were widely recognized by the nonprofit managers interviewed, and they intended to tap its full potential. They were positively inclined toward CV and were motivated to expand their existing cooperation.

The interviewees mentioned three strategic objectives that were to be achieved through corporate volunteering partnerships. First, they described CV as an opportunity for corporate volunteers to become familiar with a working environment other than their office space. One example was the manager of NPO F, who expressed his wish to raise the awareness of volunteers on how agriculture is connected with environmental protection: “We see ourselves as intermediaries between the interests of nature and the interests of agriculture” (M., NPO F). Second, the interviewees’ motivation lay in the opportunity to undertake projects that they would not be able to realize without corporate cooperation. Third, three nonprofits described CV as a point of entry for additional donations.

In the implementation of strategies, only NPO G, which emerged from an American nonprofit, presented a clear strategy. Six out of eight nonprofits had no explicit written strategy on how to deal with requests for CV cooperation.

Interviewees outlined the following reasons for the lack of integration of corporate volunteering into the nonprofits’ strategy: It was challenging to find a CV project that matched all of the needs of the nonprofit and still was attractive to companies. The interviewee from NPO A was concerned that some enterprises intended to use her nonprofit as an experimental ground in order to “socialize” the companies’ employees. She also suspected that companies might implement corporate volunteering only for publicity reasons. NPO managers were worried that the names of their organizations might be misused, and they were not willing to risk this. Manager G. (NPO B): “You also have to look at the reputational risk. They always combine it from the beginning with the use of our logo. Maybe I say that overdramatically, but I think we have a very valuable logo, which saves lives in other places.”

4.2. Organization of work

There were major differences in the internal organization and responsibility for corporate volunteering at the nonprofits studied. Smaller-sized nonprofits tended to designate this
responsibility to executives. At larger nonprofits the designated person was usually also responsible for all other volunteers or for fundraising. In two nonprofits the respective managers reported on the need to decide who would be in charge of corporate volunteering activities in the future.

Interviewees reported that the corporations initiate cooperation in most cases. Nonprofits D and G actively approached companies. Usually, partnerships developed from personal contacts and were rather coincidental: “There is not really a plan on how we proceed” (S., NPO D).

Interviewees from larger nonprofits reported on ethical rules concerning the type of company with which they cooperate. These rules were intended to circumvent collaboration with a “bad” company, for example, a company involved in weapons production or child labor. “Of course alarm bells went off, . . . especially with everything that sticks to their name, what we are bringing into our house, something like bloody diamonds or whatever all those things are called!” (F., NPO A). NPO D requested that an external organization analyze their potential partners. Five nonprofits cooperated only with companies who shared the same or at least similar altruistic values.

Nonprofit managers complained about their rather powerless (perceived) positions that would not allow them to encourage long-term cooperation, even though continuity was an important concern for the nonprofit. “Everything is somewhat short-winded. By now this is characteristic for many of those encounters or cooperation” (H., NPO C). The interviewees indicated that most for-profit companies cooperate with a variety of charitable organizations and did not wish to enter into long-term commitments with a particular nonprofit. This uncertainty was seen as a burden by the nonprofit managers. The commitment of the companies was often seen as superficial and affected the managers’ views of their cooperation negatively: “This is absurd! Those are alibis! Until now I experience this with companies almost only in that way.” (J., NPO B).

Another challenge was seen in the fact that companies were often unclear in what they expect from cooperation with nonprofits. Because of the lack of clear expectations on both sides, nonprofits have not developed standardized proposals to offer to companies who wish to enter into volunteer partnerships with them.

Communication was often described as one-sided and not taking place at the same eye level. For example, NPO H was invited to develop a large project for a company at short notice that
was discarded later. “This shows the mentality of these persons. In my opinion, this is absolutely arrogant” (D., NPO H). Or manager M. (NPO F): “I don’t have the impression that I may demand anything, because everything is voluntary.” Interviewees also reported on problems that stemmed from misunderstandings in communication, for example, mutual expectations were not clarified in advance.

The work with corporate volunteers lasted in most cases for one day and had an event character. Projects were often announced at short notice with the expectation that the nonprofits would optimize planning and workload. The nonprofits were unable to choose the corporate volunteers, and the number of corporate volunteers presented a problem for the nonprofits. The group sizes varied significantly and quite often differed from the initially announced number of volunteers.

Nonprofits complained that corporate volunteers were often unprepared for the tasks involved, especially those involving hard physical labor. Socially oriented nonprofits faced the challenge that some corporate volunteers were averse to interacting with the nonprofits’ clients, such as the disabled. Interviewees from ecologically oriented nonprofits noticed that corporate volunteers sometimes arrived poorly equipped, for example, in sandals for an assignment in the Alps.

The interviewed managers noted that corporate volunteers characterized their most appreciated assignments as follows: First, the projects were easily accomplished. Second, corporate volunteers were given clear instructions on the projects’ implementation. Third, they needed to see the sense of and be able to identify with the tasks. Last, the volunteer’s accomplishments needed to be visible at the end of a project.

In all cases, corporate volunteers had very little to no contact with other volunteers of the nonprofits. All nonprofit managers of the sample considered corporate volunteers to differ strongly from other types of volunteers. In particular, in contrast to corporate volunteers, the motivation of other volunteers at the nonprofits was regarded as intrinsic. Corporate volunteers were usually considered to be more interested in spending a day with their colleagues outside their offices than in furthering the nonprofits’ goals.

Although the nonprofit managers recorded data on corporate volunteers, they rarely used this information systematically. In some cases, the nonprofit managers worked with a number of anonymous corporate volunteers, or the companies provided them with a registration list that the nonprofits did not use for any further purpose. Correspondingly,
seven out of eight nonprofits were unable to tell whether their corporate volunteers continued working as normal volunteers for the nonprofit after having completed the CV assignment.

An evaluation of the corporate volunteers’ experience was conducted only superficially at NPO E.

All interviewees affirmed that they expressed their gratitude to the volunteering company by means of an oral or written acknowledgment after a CV assignment. Two of the nonprofits had standardized thank you letters in which they inquired whether the company would be interested in another assignment.

4.3. Benefits and challenges

Nonprofits rarely measured their benefits and challenges systematically. NPO G stated that he assessed the area cleansed from damaging plants by corporate volunteers via GIS (geographic information system). Nonprofits G and D calculated the hours that they used for CV assignments, although none of the other nonprofits kept track of income or expenses concerning corporate volunteers.

Nonprofit managers described their benefits as follows: Five of the nonprofits considered corporate volunteers as support for their work and that of their regular volunteers. The labor of corporate volunteers was regarded as free of charge or at least as low cost.

According to the interviewees, the group size of corporate volunteers allowed nonprofits to manage various projects that otherwise would not be possible, such as a jubilee celebration. An additional benefit was seen in the increased understanding by companies of the needs of nonprofits. For example, the manager of NPO E hoped that corporate volunteers had learned something about society and would accordingly change their behavior in the future.

Corporate volunteers were also considered to have brought fresh and new ideas to the nonprofits. Publications of corporate volunteer assignments by the companies were considered, with some reservations from the nonprofit, as gratis advertisements.

A further benefit was seen in donations, which were more likely to flow as a result of the cooperation, as well as the funding of other projects. For example, although NPO A did not charge a fee for corporate volunteer cooperation, donations and indirect saving of marketing costs generated sufficient income for funding specific projects. “It’s not the assignment which brings us money, but because the companies give us donations afterwards.”
All nonprofit managers complained that they experience difficulties in covering their costs. For most nonprofit managers, CV was a costly business: hours of planning, implementation, post-processing, and additional amenities such as lunch for corporate volunteers burdened the nonprofits’ budgets. However, to some managers, the issue of cost calculation was an important question for the future, and they expressed some ideas on how to evaluate challenges. The manager of NPO F stated that he would like to calculate the hours of corporate volunteers with an hourly rate of a gardener and charge the corporate partner with these costs. Six out of eight nonprofit stated that they had as yet not defined budgets for their CV cooperation and were consequently not aware of their costs.

5. Discussion and conclusions
Over the last ten years, volunteer partnerships with for-profit enterprises have become an increasingly important issue for all the nonprofits of this study. These nonprofits look at corporate volunteering as initiatives by the corporations and not as a different form of volunteerism, as suggested, for example, by Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003). Nonprofits A and G emphasized the importance of an exchange of corporate values, and they were not willing to accept a one-way (giving only or receiving only) cooperation. Instead they tried to strengthen their cooperation not only on managerial level but also between corporate volunteers and its residents.

Although Herman and Renz (1999) suggested that management tools used by corporate volunteers could lead to more professionalism for nonprofits, thus far, the nonprofits studied have developed hardly any strategies for coping with for-profit partners. Subsequently they were not successful in combining their own needs with those of the companies with which they collaborated. The interviewed nonprofit managers described a variety of models by which they organize and structure their involvement with corporate volunteering. But there seemed to be no best practice scenario among the nonprofits. Their efforts to professionalize these activities appeared to follow a trial-and-error approach. Although the interviewees were clearly motivated to give corporate volunteering a chance, in most cases the initiative originated with the companies. This is reflected in the nonprofit managers’ rather vague answers about motivational factors. The cooperation between the
nonprofits studied and companies originated rather from coincidence than from a clear strategy on the part of the nonprofits.

Several authors (Ackermann & Nadai, 2002; Allen, 2003; Austin, 2000; Herman & Renz, 1999; Kotler & Andreasen, 1996; Poncelet, 2003) have strongly advised nonprofits to develop strategies for successful cooperation with companies. Nonprofit managers first need to understand how they can benefit from collaboration with for-profit companies. However, as long as internal responsibilities remain unsettled and no assessment of the nonprofits needs is accomplished, developing an effective strategy seems a difficult if not unachievable task. In the words of Allen (2003): Nonprofits have to create their own social case. The lack of a strategy and how to fill that lack thereof could be a topic for further research.

Benefits (Table 4) such as additional human resources, transfer of knowledge, influence on companies’ behavior, or cost reduction were difficult to find among the studied nonprofits. Although cost reduction did not occur for the nonprofits, corporate volunteering was considered a point of entry for corporate donations. In the short term, additional human resources were created. In terms of influence, NPO A had some impact on its partners, mainly because NPO A’s manager took the matter in hand and offered very direct feedback to the partners. No benefit of cost reduction occurred at any of the nonprofits; rather the opposite was stated. However, challenges (also presented in Table 4) were identified more easily, and some of the interviewed managers doubted that current corporate volunteering could keep up with its potential. Companies seemed to understand their position as benevolent and demonstrated little understanding of the difficulties a nonprofit faces. Communication between nonprofits and the for-profit companies seemed to be dependent on the experience and willingness on the part of both the nonprofits and the companies to accept different realities of nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies. The nonprofits also feared risks to their reputations, but few nonprofits declined partnerships because of that fear. All the nonprofits complained of additional expenses, which arose due to additional resources they needed to create a volunteer project as well as costs for food and tools for volunteers, as challenges of cooperation. Nevertheless, there was a high barrier to nonprofits charging fees for their participation in corporate volunteering, and such a practice was strongly disputed internally among the nonprofits. However, charging a fee would provide a way to bind companies closer to nonprofits and to enforce mutual commitment,
which would benefit the nonprofits because it could present a point of entry for formal contractual agreements.

Table 4: Findings concerning benefits and challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offerings of CV</th>
<th>Effects on NPO</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>Assignment of physical and mental labor</td>
<td>Short-term creation of human resources for unessential work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of knowledge</td>
<td>New expertise</td>
<td>Transfer of knowledge barely existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Exchange of values and visions</td>
<td>Hardly any influence nor exchange of values and visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influence on companies' behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost reduction</td>
<td>Access to further resources of partner</td>
<td>Point of entry for donations, no cost reduction occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Financial dependency</td>
<td>No financial dependency, but difference in power and eye level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference in power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputational risk</td>
<td>Misuse of NPO’s logo</td>
<td>Companies use their CV activities for marketing purposes; fear of misuse of NPO's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whitewash for enterprise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of cooperation</td>
<td>Consumption of resources</td>
<td>High costs of cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenses for CV activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laypersons</td>
<td>Unqualified corporate volunteers</td>
<td>Unqualified corporate volunteers pose (especially in social NPO) an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmotivated corporate volunteers (social pressure)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another challenge described in the literature is the volunteer assignments of laypersons who were not familiar with the mission of the nonprofits, which might influence the quality of their work at nonprofits. This challenge was especially mentioned by social nonprofits. NPO A solved this by asking that specific tasks be assigned to the corporate volunteers that excluded an exchange with the residents or clients of the nonprofit. The role of the nonprofits’ residents remains vague and is recommended for further research. In general, corporate volunteers were not highly appreciated by the nonprofits. The absence of track records on and general measure of ignorance about the nonprofits’ corporate volunteers were surprising.

To date, a win-win-win situation as suggested by several authors (De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Herzig, 2006; Peterson, 2004) appears to be an aspired state rather than an achieved reality for the nonprofits. Benefits for the questioned nonprofits were perceived as potential rather than actual and corporate volunteering is seen as a point of entry for further
donations but not for a shared understanding in the sense of shared moral values between nonprofits and companies as suggested by Austin (2000).

This qualitative study explored the potential of corporate volunteering, but it also identified difficulties and challenges from the perspective of nonprofit managers. As Allen (2003) stated, in general, corporate volunteering is strongly dominated by the business case, while the social case is neglected. That also was a finding of this study. The following suggestions (see Figure 1) for nonprofits, in order to improve volunteer cooperation between nonprofits and for-profit companies, emerged from this study:

1. A process to define goals and clarify expectations with partners at the beginning of each project would be beneficial for nonprofit. In addition, focusing on potential challenges is recommended.
2. The implementation of a strategy and accordingly of strategic measurements (monetary and nonmonetary) would be beneficial.
3. An evaluation of CV assignments might enable a continuous optimization of all projects and of a CV strategy

**Figure 1: Suggestions for improvement**

Limitations of this qualitative study were the term “corporate volunteering,” which was not well known by some of the questioned individuals because of language differences. This was solved by translating the term into the native languages of the interviewed managers. The
size of the sample was rather small for an explorative study, but it covered the landscape of
Swiss nonprofits in field of action, type of organization, number of employees and
volunteers. Questions about benefits were in most cases answered as challenges and
required follow-up questions in a few cases.

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Swiss NPO’s Perspective on Corporate Volunteering

Olga Samuel, Axel Schilling

CV is in the early stages of development in Switzerland and needs to be improved in order to be beneficial to NPOs and to fulfill the much cited overall win of CV. This quantitative study aims to shed light on Swiss NPOs’ view on collaboration in general and more specifically on CV. 468 participants, mostly NPO managers and nonprofit CEOs, filled in an online questionnaire. These NPOs represent approximately 235,000 volunteers. They account for about 20% of Swiss volunteers. General collaboration seems to suit NPOs which receive their desired support from companies (e.g., donations). Although CV is well known among participants, only 15% had already conducted CV projects. NPOs concede benefits to CV; however, they act reactively and seem to put partners’ needs above their own needs.

Keywords: corporate volunteering, collaboration, third sector, explorative study


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1. Introduction

In recent years, welfare states have been cutting subsidies for NPOs. Concurrently, the number of volunteers has been stagnating (Helmig, Gmüra, & Lichtsteiner, 2010). At the same time, CV allows companies to respond to rising societal demands to act more responsibly. Corporate volunteering (CV) between NPOs and enterprises might help to ease the consequences of these developments. CV has often been described as a win-win situation (Pries, 2009). As part of the research project CorVo.ch,8 two studies about CV between business enterprises (hereinafter companies) and NPOs were conducted. The focus lied on the perspective of NPOs. Aims of these two studies were to provide an empirically sound basis so as to better describe and understand the application of CV in Swiss NPOs. Main interest was in the implementation of CV, i.e., "how" in analogy to Austin (2000). In a first step, an exploratory qualitative study was conducted in order to analyze experience, expectations and opinions of NPO executives, who had implemented CV. Thirteen executives or persons in charge of CV from eight NPOs were interviewed. The first study served as a basis for this second study comprising an online survey and a quantitative analysis.

In the context of charitable commitment and cooperation of NPOs with companies, experiences of NPOs that have actively implemented CV are collected. After a brief literature review, a description of the methodology and a summary of the results of the qualitative study, results of the quantitative study are presented.

2. Current state of knowledge

The majority of scientific literature on CV focuses on the perspective of companies (see Bürgisser, 2003; De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Herzig, 2006; Jonker & de Witte, 2006). Austin (2000) examines CV from the perspective of companies as well as of NPOs and analyses how a successful collaboration can be achieved. In this context, the author develops a model with levels of cooperation varying in intensity (see also Lorenz & Spescha (2012) in this volume). An integrative and thus highest level of successful cooperation can only be

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7 Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) are legal organizations which are not profit oriented, reinvest their profit in their organization and do not pay out their members (Salamon, Sokolowski, & List, 2004).

8 See chapter 5.1
attained when all involved parties conceive of CV as an instrument of cooperation. Several studies assume that CV represents a win-win situation (Pinter, 2006; Quirk, 1998; Tuffrey, 1998). The focus of these studies is mainly on the perspective of companies, while the view of individuals and NPOs is not sufficiently taken into account. Where assumptions of CV effects are made for NPOs, a number of advantages can be found (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Presumed advantages of CV for NPOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPOs</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>Assignments in social or environmental areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowhow transfer</td>
<td>New expertise, management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing partners</td>
<td>Transmission of values and visions, impact on partner's behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost reduction</td>
<td>Door opener for further corporate resources and financial support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through social or environmental assignments, corporate volunteers act as additional human resources for NPOs (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, Littmann-Wernli, & Tingler, 2002). Corporate volunteers can offer benefits in form of knowledge transfer to NPOs (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, et al., 2002). Another positive effect is suspected in an increasing influence of NPOs on their partners by conducting CV: NPOs have an opportunity to convey their values and visions with the ultimate goal that corporate volunteers will become more sensitive to NPOs' concerns and that they carry that knowledge into their own companies. Ideally, this should influence the behavior of companies positively from the perspective of NPOs (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, et al., 2002). CV can also function as a door opener for further engagements of a company. E.g., it can open up new resources for project sponsorship. Through partnership with companies NPOs might be able to increase their radius of action. For example, by an international reach of their cooperation partner (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998; Schubert, et al., 2002). A partnership with businesses has a potential to improve NPOs’ financial situation by the free work of corporate volunteers and by possible additional (financial) support from a partner company. Further effects include savings of recruitment costs and savings in marketing expenses (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998). While above mentioned authors assume a win-win situation, they also describe disadvantages for NPOs by participating in CV (Table 6). A partnership with a company can lead an NPO in a relationship of dependency, e.g., financially. Also differences in power between NPOs and
companies are observed. This topic is investigated in environmental NPOs by Poncelet (2003). Some NPOs feel insecure and intimidated by their partners’ size and internationality. The communication between companies and NPOs is affected accordingly. Negotiations take place under the premise of an imbalance in power (Poncelet, 2003). The risk that a partner enters into a partnership solely to benefit from a NPOs’ good reputation is also noted as a drawback (Allen, 2003; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Thus CV partnerships may represent a certain reputational risk for NPOs. CV projects often lead to cooperation costs for NPOs, such as initiation costs or expenses for corporate volunteers’ lunch (Allen, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Furthermore, indirect costs are incurred by an often high number of corporate volunteers, for whom appropriate tasks must be found in order to not affect a NPO’s daily tasks (Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, & Hustinx, 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998). Moreover, there is a risk that other sources of support, such as sponsorship, are adjusted downwards due to companies CV projects (Allen, 2003; Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2009; Quirk, 1998).

Table 6: Presumed disadvantages of CV for NPOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NPOs</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputational risk</td>
<td>Misuse of NPO’s name, clean bill for companies</td>
<td>Allen, 2003; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation costs</td>
<td>Consumption of NPO’s resources, investment for CV projects</td>
<td>Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Poncelet, 2003; Quirk, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laypersons work</td>
<td>Unqualified corporate volunteers, involuntary corporate volunteers (social pressure)</td>
<td>Quirk, 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NPOs prefer using corporate volunteers as workers for practical and craft activities. Corporate volunteers might work in a garden, clean river beds or plant trees in protected forest. As corporate volunteers often have no or little experience with these tasks, their work is usually laypersons’ work. Subsequently, this means even higher costs for the NPOs, since corporate volunteers need more instructions. In addition, authors (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2009; Quirk, 1998) fear that corporate volunteers may not engage voluntarily but feel pressured by their company or co-workers to participate. This could ultimately affect their motivation and the quality of work (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2009; Quirk, 1998).

This brief literature review demonstrates that CV cannot be described as an overall win for NPOs. CV partnerships involve a multitude of players with different preferences and needs.
In addition, there is a lack of knowledge about strategic anchoring of CV, internal processes and structures and the organizational implementation of CV within NPOs.

3. Development of a quantitative survey

This study’s survey is based on the above literature review, and results of an earlier qualitative study, whose results are briefly introduced:\(^9\) The qualitative study consisted of semi-structured expert interviews and dealt with assumed and postulated advantages and disadvantages of CV in NPOs. Thirteen NPO managers were interviewed from eight NPOs about their experience with CV. Specifically, the following aspects were discussed:

- What understanding do NPOs have of the term CV?
- Why do NPOs participate in CV?
- How CV is internally implemented?
- What measures are taken to advertise CV projects of NPOs?
- What has so far been the experience with CV?

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and contents were anonymized. A content analysis revealed central issues, which might be summarized as follows:

- The term CV is known to the NPOs, but hardly used.
- The expectations are low towards CV.
- The initiative for CV stems mainly from companies.
- A strategy for CV was not (yet) implemented in any of the NPOs.
- The implementation of CV projects is dominated by preferences of the company.
- The internal organization of CV projects is heterogeneous.
- There is low internal and external communication about CV.
- Disadvantages, such as the increased effort required additional costs, are central to the NPOs.
- The experience with CV is mixed, but NPOs continue to see the potential of CV.
- Corporate volunteers are sometimes distinguished from individual volunteers.
- Agencies and consulting organizations play so far no role in CV.

\(^9\) Samuel, Wolf, & Schilling (2013)
Results were validated in a workshop with the interviewed experts. The resulting landscape of themes from the qualitative survey and an existing short questionnaire about philanthropic activities of Swiss companies (see Gentile & Lorenz (2012) in this volume) served as a basis for this study in form of an online questionnaire. The short questionnaire about philanthropic activities of companies was added in order to allow for comparability between enterprises and NPOs on CV topics. The NPO questionnaire was complemented by previously introduced findings of the qualitative study. A pretest (n=6) was conducted with NPO executives. Only minor changes were necessary to design the final version of this questionnaire. The link for the online survey was sent to associated NPOs and multipliers (recruitment agencies for individual volunteers, national and regional NPOs, intermediaries). Additionally, calls for survey participation were launched in various professional journals and on websites of educational institutions.

The aim of the qualitative study is to provide an empirical basis to reflect Swiss NPOs’ perspective on CV. The following dimensions of the questionnaire are included:

■ Forms of support by companies: NPOs are asked what needs they have (donations, donations in kind), which forms of cooperation take place (mentoring, CV) and how often. The study inquires about conditions which are necessary from a NPO perspective to receive the support desired.

■ CV as a form of cooperation: Here it is specifically inquired about cooperation that take the form of CV. Therefore the level of knowledge of the concept CV is collected and how NPOs have already dealt with the topic CV. Participants are also asked whether they already explicitly decided to decline a CV cooperation and if so, for what reasons.

■ Implementation of CV: In the qualitative study, it was noticed that CV is mostly initiated by companies and that individual assignments were designed for each company. Therefore, questions about the initiation of CV partnerships and program development are included in this questionnaire. In addition, the study inquires about strategy and internal implementation (responsibility for CV). Expert interviews showed that neither internal nor external communication about CV was sufficient. Accordingly, participants are asked how they communicate about CV and whether CV is used as a marketing tool. This is followed by further questions about CV design: How often do NPOs perform CV assignments, what is the duration of assignments and with how many partners are NPOs cooperating? It is also

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10 As with the brief survey for companies, CV was introduced by a short example.
investigated whether CV assignments are embedded in long-term partnerships (reoccurring assignments with the same company during at least two years).

- Corporate volunteers, individual volunteers and intermediary organizations: In the literature CV is also described as a field for executives (Herzig, 2006; Quirk, 1998). This study is equally interested in whether individual corporate volunteers are distinguished from corporate volunteers, and if so, why they are distinguished and whether this has any consequences. In the CV market intermediaries in form of CV experts and agencies are increasingly present. There are also specific trainings for volunteer coordinators offered (Schäfer, 2009). In relation to this, it is asked whether there is a need for such a support, and what experiences NPOs have with external intermediaries and what role they play.

4. Results

4.1. Sample
This online survey was conducted from July 2009 until September 2009. A total of 468 valid questionnaires were filled in by participants. These NPOs represented approximately 235,000 volunteers. Questionnaires were filled in by mostly NPO leaders or presidents (70% of the sample). Of the 468 participants, nearly a fifth were active in healthcare, 37% in social services and 46% allocated themselves to other (nature, culture, leisure). The structure of the participating NPOs was composed as follows: 49% described themselves as umbrella organization (32%) or section (17%), the other 51% as an independent organization. Around one third of the NPO employed up to five co-workers (including part-time), 30% employed between six to twenty, and another 15% employed between 21 to 50 co-workers. Every fifth NPO employed over 50 workers. On average 50 volunteers were engaged in umbrella organization per year. And 66% of the sections and independent organizations had one to fifty volunteers supporting them.

4.2. Support forms
The most common forms of company support were donations, followed by donations in kind. This corresponded to the needs expressed by NPO and also provided for the most frequently asked support form. Support of companies could be described as passive,
charitable activity. However, this was not criticized by the NPOs. In contrast, CV as an active form of cooperation was not mentioned as a central want. 80% of participants expressed that they had never asked actively for CV projects. Not all support forms were desirable and as Poncelet (2003) describes, there are cases in which collaborations also fail. For NPOs, as indicated in this survey, cooperation must be especially "suitable". Frequently mentioned examples for the "not suitable" category were:

- Too high efforts for NPOs
- Ethical concerns about the company
- Risk of limiting one's independence
- Risk to its own reputation

Around 20% of the NPO had already rejected collaborations for one or several of these reasons; this corresponds with findings of Allen (2003), Haski-Leventhal, (2009), Poncelet, (2003), and Quirk (1998).

4.3. High awareness of CV, low level of implementation: A heterogeneous picture

Over two-thirds of the 468 NPOs stated that they had already heard of CV. However, for 22% of the NPOs the concept of CV was unknown. Nearly 15% of NPOs already conducted CV projects. When asked how NPOs dealt with the topic CV, half of the respondents indicated that CV was previously not a topic. About one fifth had already discussed the concept, but had so far developed no plans for implementation. Less than 2% (eight organizations of the sample) were planning an implementation of CV in the next 12 months and 5% of participants decided against conducting CV projects because they lacked resources and capabilities. Of the approximately 15% (66 organizations) that had conducted CV projects, half indicated they carried out CV systematically, while the other half stated, so far they had an unsystematic approach concerning CV. In summary, for 17% of the responding NPOs CV was currently or in the foreseeable future a field of action. Those NPOs that had already implemented CV were described as follows: Independent or individual organizations (57%), umbrella organizations (33%) and sections (10%). Overall, these NPOs employed over 75,000 individual volunteers. NPOs made mostly good experiences with CV and assignments were rated overall positively. Four NPOs issued a negative rating.
Further descriptive data of the survey showed a heterogeneous picture of the internal organization of CV: About two thirds of the NPOs cooperated with up to five companies, 23% of respondents with six to ten companies, while 8% had CV projects with more than ten companies. Over a third of the respondents employed a specific person, who was in charge of CV projects. Internal allocation of responsibility for CV projects was solved in different ways. In just under a fifth of the cases, CV was a subtask under the lead of volunteers, 13% of NPOs allocated this task in the field of marketing, and 44% of NPOs in another area, e.g., NPO’s manager. A quarter of the NPOs had so far no clear allocation of CV. About one fifth of the NPOs informed about their CV projects on their website. 29% of the surveyed NPOs reported on CV activities in their annual report and almost as many in internal communications. Almost every tenth NPO communicated neither internally nor externally. It could be stated that the majority of NPOs saw no need to strategically embed CV and that its organizational and operational allocation was unclear on an operational and organizational level.

In half of the NPO CV projects were held once or on an irregular basis. The other half of the respondents reported regular assignments, whereby independent individual organizations lead more systematic operations than umbrella organizations. While NPOs often decided on location and type of assignment, companies took stronger influence on timing and resources. Required time for CV assignments was similar in all NPOs: Preparation was estimated to take on average just less than seven hours, assignment itself lasted usually one day. For a follow-up on average three hours were allocated.

4.4. Corporate volunteers, individual volunteers and the role of intermediary organizations

Most corporate volunteers came from banks and insurance companies (44%), followed by public administration, education, health (17%) and from the industrial and energy sector (16%). Although CV is considered as a field for executives (Herzig, 2006; Quirk, 1998), results of this study show a different picture. While 29% of corporate volunteers were indeed managers, 44% were other employees and 14% were trainees. Almost 10% of the NPOs could not specify which hierarchical position their corporate volunteers occupied. Intermediaries and other external consulting organizations play a central role in CV according to Schäfer (2009). However, 83% of respondents disagreed, and stated that they
had never worked with such an organization. 76% of NPOs reported that they had no need for external support. Yet, 17% of NPOs had the following expectations of external support:

- Initiation of cooperation
- Development of a strategy for corporate cooperation
- Implementation of a CV project

In summary, it can be stated that intermediaries operating in the Swiss market were so far little involved in the realization of CV projects.

5. Expected benefits: A dimension analysis

Apart from the description - similar to the brief survey of enterprises (see Gentile & Lorenz (2012) in this volume) - a multivariate analysis is presented. As there is no theoretical basis to predict the motivational structure of NPOs, an exploratory approach was chosen. To this end, the expected benefits of NPOs with CV experience were analyzed by a dimension analysis.\(^{11}\) Its goal was to condense the original nine items into factors. The following items about expected benefits were included:

- Be known to the public
- Relief other volunteers by having corporate volunteers
- Additional financial resources after CV projects (e.g., donations in kind)
- Develop professional skills (e.g., marketing, legal)
- Improve local relations
- Increase acceptance in public
- Additional volunteers after CV projects
- Increase social skills of NPO employees
- Increase motivation of NPO employees

First, correlation patterns of approvals were analyzed for individual items. It was found that the inter-item correlations are sufficiently large to compute a principal component analysis. This resulted in three interpretable factors. Together they account for 65% of total variance.

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\(^{11}\) The authors thank DP Angi Cho for her statistical analysis and Dr. Christian Lorenz for editorial assistance with this subchapter.
Based on the conventional definition that factor loadings above .5 are to consider (Backhaus, Erichson, Plinke, & Weiber, 2006), each of the nine items can exactly be allocated to one factor (see Table 7).

### Table 7: Factor analysis on expected benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPOs motivation for CV</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be known to the public</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve local relations</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase acceptance in public</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional financial resources after CV projects</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop further professional skills</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase social skills of NPOs' employees</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase motivation of NPOs' employees</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief other volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional volunteers after CV projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explained Variance</th>
<th>24%</th>
<th>24%</th>
<th>18%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern of items loading on factor 1 show that expected benefits were represented that bring an NPO location advantages on the market. These were the following items: Be known to the public, improve local relations and increase acceptance in public. These expected benefits were summarized under the term market positioning. The items loading on factor 2 pertained to resources. This was in part related to monetary support and human resource of NPO employees. The following items were loading on the second factor: Additional financial resources after CV projects, development of further professional skills, increase social skills of NPOs’ employees and increase motivation of NPOs’ employees. In summary, this factor was described as mobilization of resources. In factor 3 two items were represented, which aimed at improving volunteers’ situation. On one hand already active volunteers, who were privately engaged were to be supported by additional corporate volunteers (relief other volunteers), on the other hand projects were understood as a way to attract new, previously inactive volunteers (additional volunteers after CV projects). This third factor may be referred to as bettering of volunteers’ situation.

In the survey, organizational forms of NPOs were distinguished according to whether they were umbrella organizations, an independent organizations or individual sections. Since case
numbers were small, the following analysis of CV activities and expected benefits should be interpreted with caution. Generally, there was a pattern that umbrella organizations had most likely the goal to recruit new volunteers and to relief previously engaged volunteers. Independent from this goal, individual organizations pursued with CV projects an objective of generating additional resources. For sections, no positive stated goal was found that was connected to CV. But NPOs organized as sections reported the lowest desire to improve their market positioning.

The same reservations with respect to low case numbers applies to the following analysis. Analyzed were again characteristic of the expected benefits depending in the NPOs’ field of activity

- Market positioning: NPOs working in the health field or foundations connected their expected benefits the strongest with improving their market positioning as opposed to those NPOs that were active in culture or leisure.
- Mobilization of resources: Not surprisingly, foundations had the strongest aim to win financial or personal resources from CV projects. This group was different to NPOs active in culture.
- Improving volunteers’ situation: High demands for volunteers had those NPOs, whose core area was nature conservation. Therefore these NPOs connected with CV the target to generate new volunteers. This aspect was again of no importance to NPOs active in the field of culture.

Overall, these results allowed concluding that CV projects were considered more as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

5.1. Heterogeneity determines approach and implementation

The initiative for CV cooperation stemmed mostly (62%) from companies. Almost 20% of the NPOs were active in approaching enterprises, intermediaries or advisory organizations in order to initiate a CV cooperation. Nearly a third of the NPOs had anchored CV in their strategy or vision. This was surprising because two-thirds described their CV partnerships as long-term partnerships (i.e., as an at least two years continuous cooperation with the same company). Regression analysis on the three factors identified above, with items that could be assigned to a strategy, rather showed correlative relationships than causal relationships. As so-called strategic variables a set of items was included:
• Is CV anchored in your NPO’s strategy (e.g., in the mission statement)?
• Do you have someone who is primarily concerned with corporate volunteering?
• Where is CV organizationally assigned in your NPO?
• How do you communicate CV inserts (Annual Report, internal communications, etc.)?
• Do you use CV projects as a marketing tool for your NPO?

For factor 1 (market positioning), only one significant predictor could be found. This was the question of whether CV is used as a marketing tool. This variable explained 6% of the factor variance. In mobilization of resources (factor 2) "use of a CV officer within the NPO" explained 12% of the factor variance. All other items showed no correlation to factor 2. For the third factor (improving volunteers’ situation) no appropriate regression equation could be identified – i.e., none of the items alone or in combination explained any significant proportion of the factor variance. In summary, the results of the regression analysis were interpreted as follows:

• Those NPOs that expected an image advantage (market positioning) through CV, named CV specifically as a "marketing strategy". In terms of content this relation was not surprising, compared to companies that are more reluctant to communicate their expected benefits in the sense of marketing (see Gentile & Lorenz (2012)). However, NPOs' positioning was more transparent compared to the one of companies.
• NPO that allocated a responsible person for CV, had typically a higher expected benefit of CV. NPOs wanting to optimize the mobilization of resources, because it was the main expected benefit, named a person in charge of CV.

6. Conclusions

The survey with 468 participating NPOs in Switzerland portrayed a differentiated and rather heterogeneous picture of CV. The concept of CV was known to Swiss NPOs and also its potential was appreciated. But NPOs stood mostly at the beginning of implementing CV and therefore provide relatively little strategic and operational knowledge. This prevented them from effectively profiting from CV and from fulfilling their needs with CV. Attitudes of NPOs towards CV could be characterized as observant or even reactive: They waited on a company's first move. This survey has shown that for more than half of the participants, CV
was a new concept, which had not yet been established. A majority had no systematic concept of CV. The initiative for CV cooperation stemmed so far clearly from companies. The majority of NPOs indicated that the need for CV projects has been increasing over the last years; one had to assume that this trend would continue in the coming years. Only few NPOs actively developed CV projects and forewent any support of intermediaries or external agencies. In most NPOs, CV did not flow into their strategy, there were no strategic partnerships with companies and also on operational and organizational level there were not structures and processes that had prevailed or could be considered as particularly promising. To date, CV projects were handled as individual cases without regular and routine procedures and responsibilities by NPOs. CV assignments typically lasted one day and were characterized by an event character. They took place once in a specific form as desired by companies. This seemed to meet companies’ requirements for CV projects, but not those of NPOs, as was apparent from the preliminary qualitative study (Samuel, et al., 2013) and reviewed literature.

Intermediary organizations and other extern advisories were so far not relevant to Swiss NPOs. Existence of these organizations was known to NPOs; however, three out of four NPOs reported that they did not require their support. NPOs feared that these intermediaries act too much on behalf of companies and that they would not remain neutral.

The widely assumed overall win for all involved actors, was from the NPOs’ perspective wishful thinking. For NPOs, CV was a means to an end. Its purpose was to improve its own market position, to mobilize additional resource and to improve the situation of other volunteers. For CV to become the much cited overall win; this study concluded that at least following requirements were to be fulfilled:

- NPOs should include CV in their strategic plan and gain operational knowledge and practical experience about CV.
- There should be developed structures and processes within NPOs and for NPOs that are simple, promising and transferable.
- NPOs and companies should aim at building equitable cooperation that consider the preferences of both partners.
References


Exploring partnerships from the perspective of HSO beneficiaries: The case of corporate volunteering

Olga Samuel, Lonneke Roza, Lucas Meijs

Despite numerous studies on cross-sector collaboration, little is known about the perceptions and involvement of beneficiaries in partnerships between HSOs and companies. This explorative, qualitative study addresses this gap by providing insight into the beneficiaries’ perspectives with regard to a specific form of collaboration: corporate volunteering. Key findings suggest that beneficiaries’ perceptions are influenced by involvement in the development of the projects, the perceived quality of interaction, and the sustainability. We conclude that beneficiaries are welcoming the change in their daily routines, while acknowledging the lack of reciprocity. We argue that corporate volunteering does not necessarily produce a win-win situation.

Keywords: corporate volunteering, cross-sector partnerships, collaboration, nonprofit organizations, human service organizations, beneficiary, participation

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1. Introduction

Shifts in relationships between the market, the state, and civil society are increasing the importance of collaboration between businesses and nonprofit organizations (NPOs), including human service organizations (HSOs) (Boehm, 2005). These cross-sector partnerships have been discussed with regard to their types, stages, management, and social impact (for an overview of the partnership literature, see Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b). Nevertheless, few of these studies have actually explored the perceptions of the HSO beneficiaries involved (see Harris, 2014).

To discuss the implications of HSOs beneficiaries’ perceptions for partnerships, direct service based programs in HSOs such as corporate volunteering provide an interesting research context. Direct service based partnerships constitute some form of actual interaction between benefactor (corporate volunteers) and beneficiaries (clients and residents of HSOs), as opposed to indirect services, which are performed “for but not in direct contact with beneficiaries” (Meijs & Brudney, 2007, p. 73). Despite the many consequences of partnerships for HSOs, most actor-based research has addressed cross-sector collaborations solely from the corporate perspective (see Harris, 2012). Only recently have scholars begun to address the perspectives of other actors involved, such as corporate volunteers (Bartsch, 2012; De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Herzig, 2006) and NPOs, including HSOs (Lee, 2010; Samuel, Wolf, & Schilling, 2013; Schiller & Almog-Bar, 2013). To date, however, researchers have largely ignored the perception of HSO beneficiaries with regard to partnerships.

Given this lacuna in the assessment of partnerships, and corporate volunteering more specifically the assumption that such arrangements result in a win-win situation for all stakeholders of the collaboration might be too simplistic (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007) An important dimension is missing – the perspective of the beneficiary. We address this gap by analyzing the results of group discussions with HSO beneficiaries who had been involved in various corporate volunteering projects, with the goal of providing insight into the beneficiary perspective in cross-sector partnerships. Our primary research questions are as follows: 1) How do HSO beneficiaries perceive the benefits and challenges associated with their involvement in partnerships? 2) Which factors might affect the perceptions of HSO beneficiaries?
To develop a comprehensive answer to these questions, we begin our discussion with a literature review framing corporate volunteering as an implementation of partnerships between for-profit organizations and HSOs. Within this framework, and acknowledging the benefits to HSOs and companies, we explain the relevance of considering the beneficiary perspective, given their active involvement and supposed status as the primary recipients of the involvement of companies with HSOs. We then explain our research methods and present our findings according to four themes: 1) the benefits and challenges of a partnership based on corporate volunteering, as perceived by HSO beneficiaries; 2) the involvement of HSO beneficiaries in the development of partnerships based on corporate volunteering; 3) the perceived quality of interaction between HSO beneficiaries and corporate volunteers within the partnership; and 4) the sustainability of the partnership based on corporate volunteering (or lack thereof), as perceived by HSO beneficiaries. In addition to suggesting avenues for future research, we conclude this article with theoretical and practical implications for HSO managers involved in corporate volunteering partnerships with for-profit enterprises.

2. Partnerships, corporate volunteering and its implications: A theoretical overview

Austin (2000) describes the 21st century as “the age of alliances,” with strategic partnerships between enterprises and HSOs likely to proliferate and increase in importance. The various types of collaboration can be regarded as lying along a “collaboration continuum” (Austin, 2000) marked by three stages of development, based on the form and degree of the: (i) the philanthropic stage: a pattern involving a charitable donor and a recipient; (ii) the transactional stage: an explicit resource exchange between both partners focused on specific activities; (iii) the integrative stage: a process in which the missions, people, and activities of the partner organizations are merged to generate collective action and organizational integration (Austin, 2000, p. 71). In later work with Seitanidi (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, 2012b), Austin introduces a fourth stage of collaboration, the transformational stage, the goal of which is to co-create transformative change at the societal level rather than at the organizational level.

The involvement of corporate employees in executing the partnership, particularly in direct service based activities, is also known as corporate volunteering. It offers an opportunity to
implement and develop cross-sector partnerships at any of these stages (Austin, 2000). Meijs and Van der Voort (2004) describe corporate volunteering as involving a company offering the time and expertise of its employees to nonprofit organizations in the form of volunteering, either during or outside of working hours, directly or indirectly to beneficiaries. This particular form of implementing collaborative arrangements is regarded as one of the most intense forms of cross-sector partnerships, as both partners are expected to engage in a gradual process of sharing their social values and missions (Austin, 2000).

Partnerships can also be studied from a resource dependence or social issues’ point of view (Selsky & Parker, 2005). In terms of resource dependence, HSOs benefit from partnerships with for-profit companies, particularly those involving corporate volunteering, as they allow HSOs to build capacity and acquire resources that they need (for an overview, see Roza, Meijs, Hustinx, & Shachar, 2013). For example, involving volunteers from companies often deepens the relationship between the two organizations. As such, companies involved in corporate volunteering are often willing to provide additional resources (e.g., money or other means) to their partner organizations (Roza, et al., 2013; Samuel et al., 2013). It also has the potential to increase organizational learning within HSOs (Roza et al., 2013). By facilitating corporate volunteers within their organizations, HSOs might influence the attitudes of corporate employees and companies with regard to social issues (Allen, 2003), thereby creating legitimacy for the HSOs and the social issues that they address among corporate employees, as well as within the broader community (Roza et al., 2013).

Companies have many reasons for collaborating with HSOs, including the desire to reap benefits related to marketing (see e.g., Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000) and HRM (see e.g., Caliguiri, Mencin, & Jiang 2013). For these companies, partnerships are thus likely to benefit the financial bottom line (Porter & Kramer, 2002). In addition, for-profit businesses are increasingly facing social pressure to do more than simply generating dividends for their shareholders, instead also accepting responsibility for the broader communities in which they operate (Carroll, 1991; Windsor, 2001). At micro level, corporate employees are increasingly demanding that their employers provide opportunities to add meaning to their work (Raeder & Grote, 2005). Employee involvement in partnerships (for example by sharing their time and expertise with the broader community; e.g. corporate volunteering) is gaining importance as a means of responding to the desire of employees to combine their ordinary jobs with other meaningful experiences and can lead to higher personal satisfaction (Lee &
Higgins, 2000). As such, reviewing existing literature on partnerships and corporate volunteering as a particular form of partnerships reveals an overall win-win-assumption (see among others Bartsch, 2012; Herzig, 2006; Lee, 2010; Quirk, 1998). However, this type of partnership also yields potential disadvantages (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). Examples include dependency or imbalance of power (Allen, 2003; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010; Liu & Ko, 2011; Poncelet, 2003; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007), reputational risk, and transaction and opportunity costs (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010; Poncelet, 2003; Roza et al., 2013). Particularly those partnerships based on corporate volunteering might lead to involvement of volunteers who lack the qualifications needed for certain volunteer projects, especially if they are asked to perform tasks other than those corresponding to their professional expertise (e.g., assigning a lawyer to perform maintenance activities) (Samuel et al., 2013). Other corporate volunteers are likely to be so focused on extrinsic incentives that they have little motivation to perform the activities expected of them in partnerships (Cheung, Lo, & Liu, 2012; Meijs, 2004; Samuel et al., 2013; Sundeen, Raskoff, & Garcia, 2007). The involvement of corporate volunteers in partnerships can also raise challenges related to differences in culture, organization, vision, and particularly expectations (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Meijs & van der Voort, 2004; Reilly, 2001; Schiller & Almog-Bar, 2013; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Selsky & Parker, 2005).

Within the context of this study, at least five actors are involved in partnerships based on corporate volunteering: the company, the corporate volunteer, the HSO, the employees of the HSO, and the beneficiary. Most research about this type of cross-sector partnerships focuses on the organizational level, analyzing the perspectives of companies and HSOS, sometimes touching upon the perceptions of corporate volunteers as well. However, academic research has thus far tended to neglect the role of beneficiaries when investigating partnerships, corporate volunteering or even volunteering in general (albeit to a lesser extent) (Harris, 2012; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). A few studies on traditional volunteering and youth-development interventions have attempted to describe the effects of volunteers on the beneficiaries of HSOS. The effects identified include improved service delivery, due to improvements in the ratio of beneficiaries to caregivers (Vandell & Shumow, 1999), and the fulfillment of specific needs that would otherwise have been left unaddressed (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx, & Handy, 2011; McGonigle, 2002; Ronel, 2006). For example, resource constraints are likely to make it difficult for HSOS to organize outings
for their beneficiaries. Volunteers (including corporate volunteers) can offer a solution by supplementing either the paid staff (all volunteers) or the current volunteer pool (corporate volunteers). In addition, the relationship between volunteers and their beneficiaries can support and strengthen ties between beneficiaries and their communities by increasing their interaction with people from the community (Boehm, 2005; Ronel, Haski-Leventhal, Ben-David, & York, 2009). As indicated by detailed ethnographic studies, however, HSO beneficiaries sometimes express less appreciation for the involvement of volunteers than they do for the work of staff members (Eliasoph, 2011). Other studies have highlighted the difficulties experienced by HSOs (or more specifically, their beneficiaries) when working with volunteers (either corporate or regular) who are unqualified, unmotivated, or both (Cheung et al., 2012; Meijs, 2004; Samuel et al., 2013; Sundeen et al., 2007). In general, the role of beneficiaries in HSOs seems to pose a challenge. HSO beneficiaries are to a certain extent (either low or highly) dependent of the HSO. In this imbalanced relationship, they may be patronized in many aspects, and for many different reasons (Checkoway & Gutiérrez, 2006; Kneubühler & Estermann, 2008). For example, beneficiaries are rarely involved in decision-making processes of the HSOs that serve them (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Beresford, 2004; Castelloe, Watson, & White, 2003; Hardina, 2011). Some scholars and professionals advocate the systematic involvement of beneficiaries in these processes, as such involvement could provide HSOs with greater insight into the needs of those they serve (Adams & Nelson, 1997; Izhaky & Bustin, 2005; Oelerich & Schaarschuch, 2005). Given their dependence, beneficiaries are also at risk of being regarded as objects rather than as inquiring subjects and actors (Adams & Nelson, 1997; Hanssen, Markertl, Petersenl, & Wagenblass, 2008; McDaid, 2009). As noted by McDaid (2009), however, the involvement of beneficiaries in mental health services is often considered difficult, due to possible limitations on their skills and capacity for participation.

These studies on the general involvement of beneficiaries in HSOs have yet to clarify how beneficiaries respond to services provided when their HSO is involved in a partnership which includes corporate volunteers. In this study, we investigate the perceptions of HSO beneficiaries with regard to the benefits and challenges associated with the partnership in which they are directly involved, as well as factors that are likely to affect their experiences. In the following sections, we provide a brief description of the method we applied, followed
by description and discussion of our findings relative to our research questions, concluding with several recommendations for practice and avenues for future research.

3. Method

Given the lack of empirical evidence on the beneficiary perspective on partnerships, we adopt an exploratory, qualitative approach (Flick, 2009), gathering data through group discussion (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). We selected the five Swiss HSOs included in this study through a snowball sampling approach, with assistance from a foundation that matches HSOs with for-profit companies interested in collaboration. The five HSOs are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Sample overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSO</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Regular volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amica</td>
<td>Young adults</td>
<td>Regional branch of a Swiss relief organization. Supports people with different needs. Services include mentoring programs.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>≈400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>Asylum seekers</td>
<td>Private organization partially sponsored by the government. Offers temporary housing, as well as social, educational, and integration courses for immigrants.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>People with blindness and visual impairments</td>
<td>Institution for people in need of support. Offers housing, primarily to elderly people, in addition to music and reading classes and other enrichment services.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>≈60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>People with drug addictions</td>
<td>Temporary residence offering stationary therapy. Residents participate in cooking and gardening, as well as counseling.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>People with mental impairments</td>
<td>Residential facility offering sheltered employment for people with mental impairments. Residents share apartments and work for different companies.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amica is a branch of a Swiss relief organization. Their focus lies on families affected by poverty. Among other services the HSO offers a mentoring program for migrated youth in distress in partnership with different companies. Three young women of the mentoring program who took part in the same workshop with one company were included in our study.

The second organization is Transit which offers 100 temporary spots for asylum seekers. The HSO provides a corporate volunteering project in partnership with a company. The
partnership project consists of pairing one asylum seeker with one corporate volunteer. These pairs would spend half a day with local sightseeing before meeting again with the entire group for lunch. Within this organization, we discussed the project implications with five male asylum seekers. Third, Mills offers housing to people with blindness and visual impairments. Most residents are elderly that receive more specialized support compared to an average retirement home. The HSO has 110 employees and 60 volunteers that support the beneficiaries. A partnership based on corporate volunteering is described as an experiment by its HSO manager. We were able to include three women in a group discussion. Bridge is a temporary home for people with drug addictions. The HSO offers a stationary therapy. Its residents participate in cooking and gardening. The management of the HSO was approached by a company if they were interested in a partnership. Three residents were willing to share their experience with us. Woodwork provides people with mental impairments sheltered employment as well as housing. Its residents work in different departments that are responsible in tasks such as in boxing letters, preparing printing materials, textile, or landscape work. In Woodwork we were able to include eight residents in our study. We present the HSOs' individual corporate volunteering projects in Table 9:

**Table 9: Corporate volunteering projects overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSO</th>
<th>Corporate volunteering projects</th>
<th>Corporate volunteering partners</th>
<th>Project length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amica</td>
<td>Workshops for young adults aimed at enhancing self-esteem. Corporate volunteers applied facial makeup to the beneficiaries and took pictures of them. After sharing lunch, they visited a museum together. Corporate volunteers received an introduction to the HSO and the situations of its residents. Afterwards, individual corporate volunteers were assigned to individual residents, with whom they went to visit various places in the city. Afterwards, they shared lunch and told about their cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td>Cosmetics producer</td>
<td>one day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>Residents and corporate volunteers went sightseeing and shared lunch together. Corporate volunteers helped residents perform their daily tasks (e.g., cutting wood, cooking lunch). They shared lunch together, and the corporate volunteers received information about the work of the HSO. Residents showed corporate volunteers how they work. Afterwards, corporate volunteers were asked to perform the residents' work for a short period.</td>
<td>Audit and consulting company</td>
<td>half day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>Telecommunication company</td>
<td>Audit and consulting company</td>
<td>half day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Commodity enterprise</td>
<td>half day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We conducted one focus group discussion in each HSO, for a total of five focus groups, involving 22 beneficiaries whose voluntary participation was requested by the managers of the HSO. Two researchers were present at each group discussion: one to conduct the discussions, and the other to act as an observer. The discussions lasted between 20 and 80 minutes. The sessions were conducted in either German or English, depending upon the composition of the group. All of the discussions were held at the respective HSOs. Before each group discussion the two researchers were informed by each HSO about the health condition of the participants. Only participants that had an active remembrance of the passed partnership project in their HSO and were willing and able to share their view took part in the group discussions. At the beginning of each group discussion the two researchers were introduced by a HSO member or group leader as researchers who are interested in the participants’ experiences and opinions concerning that “day with the people of the enterprises” or in two cases (Mills and Bridge) with “corporate volunteers”.

The group discussions were held in an informal atmosphere, in an effort to create a comfortable setting in which beneficiaries (e.g., people with mental disabilities; see Kitzinger, 1995) would feel free to express themselves. The managers of the HSOs neither participated in nor were present during the discussions.

A guideline was developed in order to ensure consistency across all group discussions and the inclusion of all research questions (Schnell, Hill, & Esser, 1998). The guideline included an introductory section clarifying the conditions (e.g., anonymity, code of conduct), followed by key questions (e.g., “Explain your experience with corporate volunteers”) and optional questions. In all cases the time between the corporate volunteering projects and the group discussions were less than 4 months. In order to limit the influence of the elapsed time we applied a funnel approach starting with general questions to bring back recollection followed by more specific questions. Digital audio recordings were made of all group discussions. In addition to the topics addressed in the guideline, we collected demographic data (e.g., gender, age), as well as the number and duration of corporate volunteering projects in which the participants had been involved.

We subjected the data through a process of inductive content analysis involving the identification of categories and their repeated adjustment through multiple processing of the material (Kondracki et al., 2002; Mayring, 2010; Tesch, 1990). Interpretation was conducted in four rounds. In the first round, the two researchers wrote notes after each
group discussion. In the second round, the researchers independently listened to the audio recordings twice, each time noting “highlights.” In the third round, the researchers compared their notes with each other and listened to the audio recordings together, in order to condense their findings. In the final round, the researchers discussed their findings and categorized them into four thematic groups: benefits and challenges, involvement, perceived quality of interaction, and sustainability.

The discussions were lively, and the participants appeared to appreciate our interest in their experiences with the partnership in which they were involved. With the exception of the interviewees from Amica (n=3), all of the participants were permanent residents of their respective HSOs at the time of the group discussions. Women were under-represented in the discussions groups, accounting for 41% of all participants. The mean age of the participants was 43 years, ranging from 16 to 93 (see Table 10). The average duration of the partnership projects in which the beneficiaries were directly involved ranged between four and eight hours during a single day. All of the participants had participated in at least one partnership activity involving corporate volunteers. One participant from Mills had participated in two projects conducted by two different companies.

### Table 10: Overview of group discussion participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSO</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th># of beneficiaries interviewed</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amica</td>
<td>Young adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>all female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>Asylum seekers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24-40</td>
<td>all male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>People with blindness and visual impairments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87-93</td>
<td>all female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>People with drug addictions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28-48</td>
<td>2 male 1 female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>People with mental impairments</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43-61</td>
<td>6 male 2 female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The partnerships were initiated by the companies. Its employees in the direct interaction with the beneficiaries were all self-selected. All partnerships were part of corporate community programs in which employees were free to participate.

In the following section, we present our findings, illustrated by direct quotations (HSO name followed by HSO beneficiary) from the participants (quotations in German translated by the first author).
4. Findings
In the course of our inductive analysis, we identified the following principal themes emerging from the data: 1) the benefits and challenges of a partnership based on corporate volunteering, as perceived by HSO beneficiaries; 2) the involvement of HSO beneficiaries in the development of partnerships based on corporate volunteering; 3) the perceived quality of interaction between HSO beneficiaries and corporate volunteers within the partnership; and 4) the sustainability of the partnership based on corporate volunteering (or lack thereof), as perceived by HSO beneficiaries. Perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with the partnership based on corporate volunteering are to some extent conditioned by the three explanatory factors (i.e., involvement in the development of corporate volunteering projects, perceived quality of interaction, and sustainability of corporate volunteering).

4.1. Benefits and challenges
The perceptions expressed by the participants with regard to the benefits offered by partnerships in form of corporate volunteering were mixed. Benefits perceived by the participants included the general interest that corporate volunteers had demonstrated in the individual beneficiaries and their respective HSOs. As stated by one participant (Mills01), “It’s a welcome change...you know, if you can’t leave the house anymore then it’s a great variety to us.” This statement is representative of a desire expressed by many beneficiaries for corporate volunteering to contribute primarily to their own (the beneficiaries’) personal development and interests. Respondents from Transit, Mills, and Bridge were very pleased with the attentive behavior of the corporate volunteers, as the partnership projects had taken place within an open-minded atmosphere. The participants told us that they had enjoyed telling the corporate volunteers about their personal lives at the HSO, suggesting that beneficiaries enjoy interacting with people beyond their current network. The beneficiaries were apparently not bothered by the fact that the corporate volunteers did not reciprocate this trust by sharing details about their own personal lives. As noted by one participant (Bridge02), “They did it in a very good way. It did not feel as if they were up there and I was down here.” The participants from Transit also noted that the corporate volunteers with whom they had worked had shown no sign of feeling superior to the beneficiaries. According to one participant (Transit02), “Although she [the corporate
volunteer] is an educated person, she knows the problems of my country.” Another participant (Mills02) emphasized the importance of this form of exchange, because, “Sometimes, people have no idea,” going on to explain that some corporate volunteers had never considered how life with a visual impairment or blindness might feel. The participants regarded partnerships as an opportunity for people to become familiar with both the institution and its beneficiaries.

As identified by the participants in our study, another benefit of corporate volunteering has to do with the possibility of involving new types of volunteers. One participant (Mills03) noted that he had been aware that the HSO had been having difficulty finding regular volunteers and that it had therefore welcomed the participation of corporate volunteers. The interaction with other people was appreciated, regardless of whether they came on their own initiative or whether they had been sent by a company. For this reason, the participants assumed that corporate volunteering was also beneficial to their HSOs.

The beneficiaries from some of the HSOs participating in our study were pleased with the change in their daily routines provided by corporate volunteering programs, with many expressing particular appreciation for the contact with the “outside world” and the variation in their normal routines. The respondents from Transit were particularly glad to have any distraction from their “boring life.” They appreciated the contact with people other than the staff of the HSO or the authorities associated with it. The partnership project allowed the beneficiaries (in the case of Transit, asylum seekers) to become acquainted with their new (albeit temporary) surroundings, while providing them with additional insight into the local way of life. It also allowed them to undertake projects outside the confines of the center in which they lived. Several participants expressed explicit appreciation for the contact that they had experienced with the corporate volunteers: “I find it very nice when they come” (Mills03); “I’m always happy to see new people” (Bridge02).

The beneficiaries expressed hardly any concerns about the ability of the corporate volunteers. One beneficiary at Mills did note initially fearing that the employee from the telecommunications company would try to sell her a new phone contract. With the exception of participants from Transit, none of the participants had been afraid to travel with people that they did not know: “We expect that our house [the HSO] will make sure that we’re not going with just anybody” (Mills02).
In addition to the benefits that they perceived for themselves and for their HSOs, the beneficiaries perceived benefits for the corporate volunteers. According to our interviewees, the cross-sector partnership provides enrichment to corporate volunteers, as illustrated by the comment of one participant (Bridge01): “I noticed that they had great fun doing something different than usual.” Respondents from Woodwork, who shared their tasks with corporate volunteers for one day, also reported that, before the project, the corporate volunteers had not been aware of the high degree of concentration required to complete even a simple activity.

When we asked participants about reasons that companies might have for participating in corporate volunteering, they provided a broad range of feedback. Some beneficiaries were convinced that the companies were receiving something in return (although it remained unclear what): “They certainly do not do that for nothing” (Mills03); “It is quite clear, it ran under the slogan ‘Make a Difference Day.’ This is actually less for us ... it was actually a ‘Difference Day’ for people in for-profit business. For once, they had the chance to work hand-in-hand with people who do not have such normal life careers” (Bridge01). In addition to their positive perceptions with regard to value creation, participants also referred to negative aspects of partnership initiatives. For example, participants from Bridge and Woodwork noted that the projects had disrupted their daily schedules and that, on the day of the project, the beneficiaries had to exert considerable effort (e.g., they had to cook for more people). Most likely, this can be explained by contextual factors relating to the background of these beneficiaries, who were accustomed to regulated daily schedules. Although they perceived the corporate volunteers as “nice people,” they complained that there had been no time for private discussions, and that the experience had simply been too limited for the corporate volunteers to understand life in a home for people with mental impairments.

The duration of the partnership projects also raised critical comments. Our participants told us that they would have preferred projects lasting for a week or an entire month instead of only a few hours. One participant (Woodwork03) evaluated projects of such duration as merely “a drop in the ocean.” Respondents argued that, if the companies had truly been interested in their lives, they would have taken more time and that only then would any true exchange have taken place. Furthermore, the participants from Woodwork felt that reciprocity (e.g., the opportunity for beneficiaries to experience the work of the corporate
volunteers on the company’s premises) would be needed in order for a project to be meaningful. One participant (Woodwork05) was of the opinion that corporate volunteering projects were “ridiculous” and “voyeuristic,” as they were not based on reciprocity. Because the beneficiaries had no opportunity to visit the company involved, they felt as if they were “in a zoo” (Woodwork05). In the following Table 11 we present an overview of exemplary quotes of the theme benefits and challenges:

Table 11: Data supporting the theme benefits and challenges

**Benefits**

- ‘For me it was an interesting variety. I have to say, it was good for me. […] people can form their own opinions of how it works in here’ (Bridge03)
- ‘They expected something else. That is…if you don’t reflect on that […] I had a good day. I like to answer questions’ (Bridge01)
- ‘We talked to some. The people were very open and interested doing something else. That was notable. I talked with a woman for a long time […] everyone worked. […] They were really easy going. They did it in a very good way. It did not feel as if they were up there and I was down here’ (Bridge02)
- ‘I guess it also supports our HSO. Maybe with donations?’ (Bridge02)
- ‘One person went with another person to the city to see some historical places. In my opinion it was very interesting. It was the first time here. I liked to get that chance …It was a unforgettable day’ (Transit01)
- ‘It was a good program. We thanked the people who organized it. It was a good day. …we are asylum seekers here. It helped our morality’ (Transit01)
- ‘Usually I’m only among my countries people. I don’t mix with others. But that day I had the chance to meet Swiss people. That was very interesting’ (Transit03)
- ‘Every day is normal. It’s a boring life. That day felt very different …we should do that again’ (Transit05)
- ‘They experienced the discrepancy between the social and economic reality’ (Woodwork04)
- ‘Many have a wrong impression. That’s why I agree, if people are coming in. They see that we do things differently than they thought. Maybe a little bit slower, but still, we could use them too’ (Woodwork02)
- ‘I experienced that their focus also faded…that was interesting’ (Woodwork04)
- ‘If somebody comes and afterwards brings in additional jobs, then it’s good […] if it has such a background then it’s good. If the people have an interest’ (Woodwork03)
- ‘That’s what I mean. Outside, they have a perception, those who don’t know this […] they think it is crazy. That’s why I think it’s good. If more people come they see that it is differently from what they had imagined. Not everyone is crazy’ (Woodwork06)
Challenges

- ‘If this generates more jobs it would be positive [...] It’s certainly good that they come to see...maybe then they know to where they give their assignments’ (Woodwork08)
- ‘We talked with each other...I remember that they were Americans...they told me they previously never thought about blind people...they never talked about it. They were very interested’ (Mills02)
- ‘I thought it was nice...for once different people’ (Mills03)
- ‘It’s a welcome change...you know, if you can’t leave the house anymore then it’s a great variety to us’ (Mills01)
- ‘They get to know people. Our HSO...these persons have sometimes no clue that people like us exist. They are not in contact with blind or visually impaired persons...with that they get that contact. They get to know people of whose existence they had no clue’ (Mills02)

- ‘It was boring for me. We also had to go to a museum. That was boring. But it was also part of the project’ (Amica03)
- ‘Basically I liked it, but our entire work is disturbed with such events. We had to organize additional things...that was an additional workload. There were shortfalls’ (Bridge01)
- ‘It’s also difficult. Sometimes we have problems in our house. And then we have a scheduled event. If there are fights, it’s difficult’ (Bridge02)
- ‘Why? It is quite clear; it ran under the slogan ‘Make a Difference Day.’ This is actually less for us ... it was actually a ‘Difference Day’ for people in for-profit business. For once, they had the chance to work hand-in-hand with people who do not have such normal life careers’ (Bridge01)
- ‘First, the situation is different. We are afraid. We think something is maybe...the first new person you don’t know and you go one place. You maybe feel...you make a mistake. She asks question and you think how to answer that. That is difficult’ (Transit02)
- ‘Let me say, we are cheap labour forces and our HSO is a non-profit...maybe if they like the product or maybe they don’t want it [...] If it interrupts the operation it’s difficult’ (Woodwork03)
- ‘I think before they get in external persons in order to see what we do here, we should make an internal change first...I want to see what you do...or you...before it goes externally’ (Woodwork07)
- ‘I believe it should be a must. They come here and we go there...then that voyeuristic moment would be equalized [...] These three hours are ridiculous...we are not in a zoo...coming here for three hours, one-sided, that is a zoo...with the monkeys [...] It’s an alibi exercise’ (Woodwork05)
- ‘What is the background of the company? Why are they even coming? [...] Then it would make sense, but if it’s only curiosity...’ (Woodwork02)
- ‘One has to ask why they do it. Do they hope for publicity? Marketing? ...that something happens from it? They certainly do not do that for nothing, I’m sorry to say that’ (Mills03)
4.2. Involvement in developing corporate volunteering projects

Respondents had not given much thought to their expectations regarding partnerships in form of corporate volunteering. In general, they looked forward to meeting corporate volunteers, whom they expected to bring a change to their routine lives in their HSOs. One participant (Transit02) emphasized the importance of such variation: “We [HSO beneficiaries] are now in there [HSO], always among us [HSO beneficiaries].” None of the HSOs had asked the beneficiaries about the extent to which they wished to participate in the projects, regarding the activities instead as supplementary activities. They had also not asked beneficiaries about their perceptions regarding the concept of corporate volunteering, nor had they been involved in the preparations for the projects, which had been presented as a fait accompli.

Three of the five participating HSOs do not usually have volunteers working with their beneficiaries. For these organizations, corporate volunteering partnerships were a new experience for both the beneficiaries and the organization. Participants from Transit criticized the organization for failing to ask for their opinions regarding the planned program and for not asking whether they wished to spend the day with the corporate volunteers. According to the participants in the group discussion, beneficiaries had experienced social anxiety because they had been poorly informed about the activity with corporate volunteers: “I had to follow a person I didn’t know. And I had to take the bus, although I would have preferred to walk” (Transit01). This social anxiety was heightened by the low level of beneficiary involvement in the organization of the activity with corporate volunteers. One participant (Woodwork01) reported that his team leader had not informed him until the morning of the activity that he be responsible for representing the HSO and explaining his daily duties to corporate volunteers later in the day. This lack of involvement in the preparations for the activity had led him to have a more negative attitude toward the involvement of corporate volunteers. In summary, the willingness of beneficiaries to
participate was never a topic of discussion, but an implicit assumption of the HSOs. In Table 12 we present further exemplary quotes:

**Table 12: Data supporting the theme involvement in developing corporate volunteering projects**

- ‘The HSO called and asked us to participate in workshop. [...] We didn’t have any demands. We just let things happen’ (Amica01)
- ‘We were semi-informed about what we would do’ (Amica02)
- ‘Everything was organized. Who is working where and so on. They just informed us. If somebody wouldn’t have been willing to participate...no, we had to participate. I didn’t know what I had to do’ (Bridge01)
- ‘I just let things happen...see what happens’ (Bridge02)
- ‘They said some people will come here and visit you. They like to interview you in your situation and how you are. ... I don’t see anything wrong there’ (Transit02)
- ‘I would change many...I would first ask what he likes. That is a far place by foot...we take the bus. I would ask would you like to go by foot, by bus...that was...She asked — I had to follow a person I didn’t know. And I had to take the bus, although I would have preferred to walk’ (Transit01)
- ‘The group instructor came to me and told me they want to see the factory and to work for a short while with us. They came and looked at it...[...] I had no opportunity to talk with those people’ (Woodwork03)
- ‘Are we asked at all if we want that and if we agree?...could we even join this conversation? ...for me it would be important if we had a real exchange’ (Woodwork05)
- ‘I was told that some people would come...maybe they just forgot to inform us?’ (Woodwork02)
- ‘I’m sure there is an idea behind it...in order to appear normal to outsiders...although we’re not. I’m pretty sure that they really want this’ (Woodwork06)
- ‘They told me it would include a nice restaurant...and that we would have a carriage ride. I like that. ...We could enrol. ‘ (Mills02)
- ‘We knew that each one of us would have somebody on her side that would take care of us’ (Mills01)
- ‘In Switzerland...we knew of the company... We expect that our house [the HSO] will make sure that we’re not going with just anybody’ (Mills02)
- ‘The HSO management has to say if we should accept that’ (Mills02)
- ‘No, no. They invite us and ask if we want to participate. It’s individual. You can say yes or no’ (Mills01)
4.3. Perceived quality of interaction between HSO beneficiaries and corporate volunteers

Many of the participants in this study regarded the collaboration with corporate volunteers as a “welcome change” (Mills01), in addition to offering an opportunity to ease stereotypes. As observed by one participant (Bridge01), “They [corporate volunteers] imagine it [the HSO and its beneficiaries] differently.” In addition, half of the participants from Woodwork told us that they were glad when outsiders come to their HSO and form their own impressions of people with mental impairments. Another participant (Woodwork02) observed that corporate volunteers see “that we do things differently than they thought. Maybe a little bit slower, but still, we could use them too.” Other respondents expressed that they had hoped that the corporate volunteering projects would allow them to work for the partner companies in the near future. It was commonly believed that companies wanted to support the HSOs and that corporate volunteering would eventually be followed by donations. Taken together, the beneficiaries had limited expectations of partnerships in form of corporate volunteering. Most participants further noted that they had enjoyed the additional attention that volunteers can provide, regardless of whether they were regular or corporate volunteers. Further exemplary quotes are listed in Table 13:

Table 13: Data supporting the theme perceived quality of interaction between HSO beneficiaries and corporate volunteers

- ‘They helped us and explained everything [how to apply make-up]’ (Amica02)
- ‘I liked it very much. They were friendly. And they took care of us [...] They felt comfortable. They were very friendly. They liked what they did. I felt comfortable. One could feel that’ (Amica01)
- ‘They were nice. They always talked to us’ (Amica03)
- ‘They made an effort. They talked to us and about our plans for the future [...] They asked questions. We had fun’ (Bridge01)
- ‘She was very kind. I’m not feeling that she is new. ...she was a simple person. She asked many questions, about my nationality, about my situation. ...we exchanged opinions she asked me all these questions...I don’t see that there is something wrong’ (Transit02)
- ‘It was the first time that I ate with other people and I ate new food. I liked that. I was only two months here ...they were joking...These people came here to relax. They want to learn something from different countries’ (Transit03)
- ‘I don’t know how much interest those people have. They come. Watch...I don’t know’ (Transit04)
- ‘She said one had to focus on it...she was impressed. That was my opinion’ (Woodwork03)
- ‘Those were nice person...[...]sure it was good, but just not enough’ (Woodwork07)
• ‘It was sad…we didn’t know their motivation’ (Woodwork05)
• ‘There was music. We could talk to each other. I liked it. They tried very hard. Each one of us had a caregiver’ (Mills01)
• ‘I had a great experience with four men of company X…it was great…everything was decorated and it was nice…I showed them the entire house’ (Mills02)
• ‘I liked it…we have so much time in here. I think it’s nice when these people come…just…you know, having someone here’ (Mills03)
• ‘If someone like that comes here…I’m sure they think they will make us happy…and not for showing off…thus, they are expected and welcome’ (Mills01)

4.4. Sustainability
To the regret of the interviewees, none of the corporate volunteers returned to the HSO a second time. The respondents would have welcomed a regular exchange with corporate volunteers beyond the limits of the partnership project. Although the participants from Mills had been promised that the corporate volunteers would return, “they were never seen again” (Mills02). While the respondents indicated that they understood the limited time budgets of the corporate volunteers, they pointed out that the corporate volunteers could have returned to volunteer on their own initiative. The participants from Transit would have also liked to have regular visits, as they brought variety into their daily lives. One participant (Transit03) mentioned that he has trouble with administrative matters and that he would have liked for “his” volunteer to have supported him. Beyond the day that they spent with corporate volunteers, the participants from Bridge had no further contact with any of these volunteers. As noted by one interviewee (Bridge01), “It was not a day for finding friends.”

The participants from Woodwork were particularly critical with regard to the lack of sustainability. According to one (Woodwork03), corporate volunteering projects were “simply not enough.” Only one of the 22 respondents had stayed in touch with a corporate volunteer, and that was only for a brief period. The beneficiaries were unhappy with the fact that the partnership projects they had experienced did not encourage recurring assignments or interpersonal relationships between corporate volunteers and their beneficiaries. In the subsequent Table 14 we present exemplary quotes for the theme sustainability:
Table 14: Data supporting the theme sustainability of corporate volunteering

- ‘Until now communication is not really working. We spoke once by e-mail. But it doesn’t work. She doesn’t want me to call her during the day. I hope it will work eventually’ (Amica02)
- ‘I would like to repeat that’ (Amica01)
- ‘They came here. It lasted one day. It was not a day for finding friends. [...] Many ask themselves how it will continue...maybe one gets a phone call?’ (Bridge01)
- ‘If they could gain more insights, if would be different’ (Bridge02)
- ‘We would like to go to a company. To see how it is there. But I don’t mind that they are coming to us’ (Bridge02)
- ‘Conclusion of the meeting of that day. We have taken contact numbers. Sometimes. Even then, the place she works...I cannot go to that place. We have taken different numbers. It’s a big problem. Although we have no chance. In the morning we have language courses. In the afternoon we have to do homework. But we have telephone number. We would like to see...to visit one day’ (Transit02)
- ‘I think that was a drop in the ocean. They came in for two to three hours and afterwards they disappeared. I thought that was a strange situation. If they are interested in our situation, they would have to spend more time’ (Woodwork03)
- ‘I also don’t know what happened afterwards. They were a few hours...what happens afterward? We don’t know that [...] we don’t know how it continues...we have to be able to related to that...we can’t classify that’ (Woodwork06)
- ‘The wife of one of the men came twice to see me. That was nice...but they have family...it’s understandable...I would have liked it very much if she would have come again’ (Mills01)
- ‘No. They promised...but somehow it wasn’t possible [...] They also promised to come again from company X...but they were never seen again’ (Mills02)

5. Putting it in perspective: the win-win-win of partnerships

Our analysis suggests that the perspectives of HSO beneficiaries with regard to the benefits and challenges associated with partnerships in form of corporate volunteering can be explained by three conditions: the involvement of beneficiaries in the development of partnership projects, the perceived quality of interactions between beneficiaries and corporate volunteers, and the sustainability of partnerships. Table 15 illustrates the relationship between these conditions and, more importantly, demonstrates how these conditions influence the perceived benefits and challenges associated with corporate volunteering for HSO beneficiaries. The matrix contains propositions explaining the
relationship between conditions, benefits, and challenges, thereby suggesting reasons why HSO beneficiaries might perceive partnerships as offering either benefits or challenges.

Table 15: Factors influencing perceived benefits and challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involving HSO beneficiaries in the planning of partnership projects has a positive effect on their attitudes toward the partnership.</td>
<td>When they are not involved, HSO beneficiaries tend to experience social anxiety or skeptical perceptions of partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beneficiaries of HSOs respond positively to genuine interest on the part of corporate volunteers, thereby increasing the perceived benefits of partnerships.</td>
<td>Less reciprocity in the relationship between corporate volunteers and HSO beneficiaries leads beneficiaries to be more critical of and resistant to partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSO beneficiaries prefer long-term partnership projects, which they are likely to be perceived as structural additions to daily routines.</td>
<td>HSO beneficiaries tend to have a negative perception of short-term partnership projects, which they are likely to perceive as one-time encounters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Conclusions, discussion, and practical implications

In the current literature, collaborations between HSOs and for-profit companies have been investigated primarily from the perspective of for-profit companies (Harris, 2012; Kolk, van Dolen, & Vock, 2010; Schiller & Almog-Bar, 2013), with some exceptions on the HSO (or nonprofit) perspective (see for example, Roza, et al., 2013; Samuel et al., 2013; Schiller & Almog-Bar, 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, collaboration between HSOs and companies is oftentimes assumed to offer benefits to all parties involved. Indeed, research has identified multiple benefits for companies and HSOs. Nevertheless, recent studies have taken a more critical view of these partnerships, offering a more balanced perspective by addressing the challenges associated with such initiatives as well (Liu & Ko, 2011; Selsky & Parker, 2005). This article contributes to this balanced view of corporate involvement in HSOs. The contribution is particularly important, as it focuses on the under-investigated but crucial perspective of the beneficiary; HSO beneficiaries play a crucial role in partnerships as they are one of the most important stakeholders of the HSO (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005).

Our analysis yields several key findings in answer to our two main research questions: 1) How do HSO beneficiaries perceive the benefits and challenges associated with their
involvement in partnerships? 2) Which factors might affect the perceptions of HSO beneficiaries?

Perceptions of benefits and challenges. Our data clearly suggest partnership initiatives including corporate volunteers do not necessarily constitute a win-win situation, particularly not for the beneficiaries in our study. For example, during the activities, there was no time for private discussions and long-lasting relationships between corporate volunteers and beneficiaries were not molded, although this apparently was of importance to the beneficiaries. Despite the criticisms, the beneficiaries participating in this study did appreciate corporate volunteering in general. For example, most were very positive about the opportunity to have contact with people outside their own networks. Contrary to findings reported in a previous studies which showed that HSO managers were careful or even hesitant of allowing interaction between corporate volunteers and beneficiary due to their lack of ability to work with people with specific needs (see Roza et al., 2013), in this study the beneficiaries themselves expressed hardly any concerns about the ability of the corporate volunteers in this partnership. Indeed, beneficiaries were pleased by the interest that corporate volunteers demonstrated in their lives and situations, and some welcomed the projects as a change to their daily routines. Such perceptions are obviously influenced by contextual background factors, as illustrated by the comments of participants who were disturbed by the “disruption” of their accustomed routines. In addition, beneficiaries expressed the impression that these types of partnerships help corporate employees to understand the lives of HSO beneficiaries and that it can help to reduce prejudice.

Factors affecting beneficiaries’ perceptions. We identified several conditions that can influence the perceptions of HSO beneficiaries with regard to the partnership. For example, despite the theoretical desirability of having beneficiaries participate in the entire process (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Oelerich & Schaarschuch, 2005), none of the HSOs addressed in our study had asked its beneficiaries to participate in any of the preparations for their partnership activities, and none of the interviewees had been asked to contribute ideas to these projects. On the contrary, the respondents had received only scarce information about the projects. Moreover, none of the beneficiaries was asked to provide feedback after the conclusion of the projects. Many of the beneficiaries told us that they would have been
willing to participate in the preparation of and decision-making processes concerning the organization of activities with corporate volunteers.

Another highly problematic aspect mentioned by our interviewees had to do with the lack of reciprocity. Some participants were critical of the one-sided exchange involved in the corporate volunteer projects that they had experienced. Despite the fact that they enjoyed the contact with corporate volunteers, none of the encounters had led to any sustainable exchange between beneficiaries and corporate volunteers, much to the regret of beneficiaries. This is in line with research on the challenges that nonprofit HSOs face when involving corporate volunteers (see Samuel et al., 2013; Roza et al., 2013), including the lack of sustainable interaction between corporate volunteers and beneficiaries. The short-term, episodic character of the services provided by corporate volunteers leads to a more critical view on the involvement of corporate volunteers (for a conceptualization of episodic volunteering, see Macduff, 1990).

Our analysis has also generated new insights. First, beneficiaries appear to have few specific expectations with regard to partnerships with companies. They highly trust their HSOs, expecting them to act in their best interest. As suggested by our data, beneficiaries assume that the HSOs will select adequate partners and corporate volunteers alike and that these volunteers will receive appropriate instructions. This is quite interesting in light of the observation reported in other studies that corporate volunteers are rarely chosen by the HSOs: they are more likely to apply personally to participate in specific corporate volunteering projects (Pajo & Lee, 2011). Second, our results indicate that the manner in which HSOs manage corporate volunteering can differ from their regular volunteer management practices. The prospect of collaboration with companies can apparently affect the decisions that HSOs make with regard to the ways in which they will open their premises to the public and individuals.

Three of the HSOs in this study offered corporate volunteering projects to companies, even though they had no previous experience working with volunteers, and even though their beneficiaries had not had any previous contact with any type of volunteers. A very skeptical interpretation of this finding is that these organizations were using their beneficiaries in order to gain expected organizational benefits (Samuel et al., 2013), without considering the direct effects of such projects on their beneficiaries. Another explanation could be that these organizations had opted for short-term corporate volunteering activities as an experiment
aimed at testing how their beneficiaries would react to the involvement of volunteers. If this is the case, our findings could indicate that HSOs use corporate volunteering as a way of introducing volunteers into organizations that have traditionally depended entirely on the efforts of paid staff members. It might also be a way of introducing paid staff members to volunteers, as research indicates that the introduction of volunteers in employee-run organizations can be quite complicated and that it can raise resistance (Netting, Nelson Jr, Borders, & Huber, 2004).

The findings reported in this study are subject to several limitations, most of which relate to our research strategy. First, despite numerous efforts to include more organizations and their respective beneficiaries in this study, only 5 organizations and 22 beneficiaries were interested in participating in our research, and we were able to conduct only one group discussion in each organization. We were not able to arrange any follow-up sessions, probe for further details, or conduct follow-up interviews with beneficiaries. Second, the beneficiaries from two of the organizations (Woodwork and Bridge) were under the influence of medications, due to health conditions. However, this aspect reflects the reality within which beneficiaries encounter corporate volunteers and in which they experience corporate volunteering partnerships. A third limitation concerns the tendency of group discussions to under-represent the voices of timid or less articulate participants. Group discussions may also inhibit participants from sharing personal information (Gibbs, 1997). It could be that the views of less-active participants differed considerably from those expressed by their more vocal counterparts. Additionally, the research contexts of the five HSOs are only to a certain degree comparable. Despite the fact that partnerships with companies and particularly including corporate volunteers was considered as new to all five HSOs and none of them had any previous experience with corporate volunteering, the results of this study need to be understood as an explorative insight.

Indeed, the results of this explorative study suggest several interesting avenues for future research on partnerships, particularly with regard to corporate volunteering. One line of questioning could address the influence of different types of HSOs (e.g., sectors), as well as personal (e.g., disposition; mental or physical state) and contextual (e.g., field of service; type of setting). Yet another line could focus on different sorts of partnership projects based on corporate volunteering. For example, research could examine whether corporate volunteering projects are more effective for HSOs and their beneficiaries when they are
integrated into the daily activities of HSO beneficiaries or when they are newly invented and supplementary to their usual routines. In other words, researchers could investigate the types of activities or engagement in corporate volunteering partnerships that are most likely to yield the greatest benefits in particular settings. Finally, future studies could involve closer examination of the partnership process taking into account the different cultural, social and economic realities of all participants.

**Practical implications**

The findings of this study have several practical implications. First, HSO managers responsible for the overall partnerships with companies should consider their beneficiaries as important players when involving corporate volunteers in direct service delivery (see also Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). Although the beneficiaries in many HSOs are less able to express their needs and interests, those in our sample were quite capable of expressing such feelings. Our results suggest that HSOs lack processes for including beneficiaries in the planning and organization of partnerships in which they are actively involved. The involvement of beneficiaries (to the extent that they are capable of such involvement) is desirable for at least two reasons. For one, it could help beneficiaries to feel included and to understand the motives that their institutions have for cross-sector partnerships in form of corporate volunteering. Another reason for involving beneficiaries in the preparations for corporate volunteer projects is that such involvement is likely to encourage additional reflection concerning the idea of corporate volunteering, thereby improving subsequent projects. One major point of criticism mentioned by our participants was the absence of reciprocity. The beneficiaries would have appreciated the opportunity to visit the corporate volunteers in the companies in which they worked. Some corporate volunteering projects thus resemble one-way partnerships, in which HSOs open themselves and their beneficiaries to corporate volunteers, but in which the companies do not open themselves to HSOs, let alone to their beneficiaries. We are also convinced that it is essential to consider the interests and needs of beneficiaries who are less capable of expressing their opinions. In many cases, partnership managers within HSOs are not actively involved with beneficiaries. It is therefore crucial to involve representatives or beneficiaries when planning such partnerships. In addition to maximizing benefits for all parties involved, this could
increase the effectiveness of such activities for the beneficiaries, thus better serving the mission of the HSO. The lack of sustainability appears to contradict the generally accepted perception of corporate volunteering as a win-win situation for cross-sector partnerships. As suggested by our results, the ability of beneficiaries to realize long-term benefits from corporate volunteering depends upon contact between beneficiaries and corporate volunteers beyond the limited framework and objectives of corporate volunteering projects (which, in this case, were of very short duration). This might have far-reaching implications for both research and practice, as the creation of value creation is fundamentally oriented toward the long term (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). Our results offer no evidence of such sustainability. We advise HSO managers to reconsider the current corporate volunteer activities within their partnership strategies and to ensure that their partnerships with companies actually serve the missions of their organizations in the longer term.

References


Scientific Paper 4

Formative evaluation study on corporate volunteering

Olga Samuel, Gian-Claudio Gentile, Christian Lorenz, Jan Christopher Pries

CV partnerships are accompanied by uncertainties about expectations. Goal of this study was to determine how to evaluate cooperation in order to find solutions to conduct satisfactory CV projects. Instead of evaluating final results, as it is common, this tool was developed with a formative character in mind. The development of this formative assessment tool included an actual cooperation and is based on a case study. Finally, this tool included four main criteria (such as values and visions or achievement of objectives) and twenty-seven sub-criteria which were weighted according to participant’s importance and rated according to their degree of implementation. The NPO as well as the company contributed on managerial, employee and resident’s level. Results show that the NPO criticizes their achievement of goals on the strategic-functional dimension, e.g., monetary benefits, while the company did not well on an ideological-integrative level, e.g., non-monetary values such as acknowledgement for their work of the NPO.

Keywords: evaluation, intra-sectorial partnerships, corporate volunteering, formative instrument


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1. Corporate Volunteering in the context of profit and non-profit organizations

Cooperation between profit and non-profit organizations (NPOs) can take place at different levels: For example, at the level of monetary and material donations, event sponsorship or corporate volunteering (CV). CV is to be regarded as one of the most intense partnerships. There is not only a unilateral giving and receiving role through donating, but it also creates a mutual exchange on levels of management, employees and residents (Austin, 2000).

CV partnerships are partially characterized by ignorance and uncertainty about expectations, priorities and prejudices against the foreign sector partner. This existing uncertainty and mistrust can lead to disappointment or prevent them from collaborating. However, various solutions are possible in order to successfully implement CV: For example, individual expectation analysis or (continuous) evaluation of existing collaborations. In connection with the latter option, the subsequent case-study has the following objectives: Firstly, to answer important questions posed by project partners (see below). Secondly, to illustrate a suitable methodology for the evaluation of an inter-sectoral partnership that fulfills the stringent requirements of CV partnerships.

As part of the project CorVo.ch an evaluation of cooperation between the finance department of a global construction company and a home for the handicapped (residential home) in the city of Zurich, this aimed to contribute to a positively shaping of their CV partnership. Following this goal the central question was to focus on how future commitment could successfully adapt to different and changing motives, requirements and expectations of all parties; and also how to evaluate the expected benefits for everyone involved.

Following Deitmer et al. (2003), the evaluation tool FAT (formative assessment tool) was further developed. This instrument focuses on the procedural aspects of cooperation, instead of evaluating final conclusions against the implementation of pre-defined beneficial aspects. Contrary to summative evaluation approaches, the involvement of partners and their interpretation of results as well as their reflection in light of their experiences played a substantial part of the formative evaluation process and are intended to help stakeholders in their decisions.

The following paragraph briefly discusses existing evaluation studies in the field of CV partnerships and develops a psychology-based organization model of cooperation. Subsequently the "Gardening" case-study of the project CorVo.ch will be presented,
followed by a description about the applied methodology, the results of this study and recommendations by the managers of the organizations involved.

2. Current state of knowledge on CV

To date, research on CV activities was mainly intra-organizational, i.e. employees of a company were asked what they think of a specific CV-program of their company and what impact it has, for example, on their motivation or commitment to the company (De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Lorenz, Gentile, & Wehner, 2011; Peterson, 2004). Exceptions are studies briefly presented below, which consider several parties involved in CV activities: Quirk (1998) examined CV in New Zealand and evaluated benefits for businesses, NPOs, corporate volunteers, and to society. He based his findings on several international surveys and case studies. The author considered CV as an opportunity for all stakeholders. Further beneficial aspects such as the improvement of the reputations of the companies involved, access to expertise for NPOs, development of social skills for corporate volunteers and an increased understanding of society are emphasized. In several ethnographic case studies, Poncelet (2003) examined why, in the context of cross-sectoral cooperation, partnerships between companies and NPOs can fail and came to the conclusion that companies and NPOs distrust each other and that the distribution of power is considered unequal in favor of the companies. The author assumes that CV offers certain potential for mutual benefit. However, this is only gained where the parties involved communicated openly and approached cooperation as impartially as possible (Poncelet, 2003). Ackermann and Nadai (2002) evaluated a pilot project of Caritas Switzerland, in which NPOs, several companies, corporate volunteers and project managers were involved. The authors analyzed areas of commitment, duration, and target groups, concept of tailored interventions, objectives and project organization. To do so, various instruments were utilized (questionnaires, interviews, document analysis) both before and after CV assignments. Their study shows that the benefits of CV projects are mainly beneficial on an individual level, i.e., the personal level of volunteers, but that benefits for the organizations were low or non-existent. Differing expectations and priorities among the participants were an important factor; however, their consideration serves as a prerequisite for satisfactory CV assignments. Therefore, the
authors of this study suggest realistic expectations and a stronger focus on the transfer of knowledge.

Finally, in a study applying Kelly's repertory grid method, Pries (2011) examined personal constructs of people in charge of CV and employees in the context of existing partnerships (one NPO and five companies) (Kelly, 1991). From this analysis of constructed systems an overall picture arose, which puts the often quoted win-win aspect of CV in a more relative perspective. The people questioned pursued less mutual benefits, rather than a compromise. This differs fundamentally from the idea of an overall win, which would neglect own goals and allow only minor consideration of the partners' goals. This applies not only to relationship between NPOs and companies, but also to that of employees and enterprises. This leads to the conclusion that one should speak more precisely of a win-win rhetoric.

Contrary to the focus on overall beneficial aspects of CV partnerships – and the repeated affirmation of this as the main objective – the outlined studies show that it can rarely be spoken of as an absolute fulfillment of the interests of all parties involved. The potential of CV can only be realized if cooperation is based on trust, differentiated knowledge about partners' needs, and if power is distributed equally. A formative evaluation offers the opportunity to identify early needs for intervention.

In accordance with the present state of knowledge, the case-study presented is focused not only on the expected beneficial aspects, but it is also explicitly devoted to the process of forming partnerships and its implementation. Prior to presenting this case study in details, an organizational psychology model of collaboration is outlined, which introduces four more action fields in addition to the win-win aspect. This model represents the background for the classification of the evaluation study's empirical findings, which are presented later.

3. Styles of cooperation management

In numerous publications, potential win-win aspects between NPO, business and corporate volunteers are attributed to CV (Habisch, 2006; Habisch, Wildner, & Wenzel, 2008; Schöffmann, 2001; Schubert, Littmann-Wernli, & Tingler, 2002). However, the apparently concise win-win concept remains vague and is not explained beyond its potential as a mostly argumentatively point of view on common good and self-interest. Referring to the above-described empirical results, access to CV is promoted which, besides the cited win-win
aspects, includes alternative benefits. In the following section, a model is introduced which allows for including potentially conflicting interests such as structure and process quality of CV partnerships.

In organizational psychology the term ‘win-win’ is defined as the orientation of an action in cooperation and (conflict) situations (Thomas, 1991). In addition to the win-win aspect, Thomas (1991) further elaborates four ideal types of action fields. For this, he describes actions of cooperating partners on two independent dimensions: The first dimension measures the will to enforce own interests. This describes, for example, the importance attributed by persons involved to the intended benefits of CV cooperation. A high score on this dimension implies that the benefits intended are enforced in the event of conflicts even against partner's interest. The second dimension represents cooperativeness of project partners; this refers, for example, to the willingness of CV partners to work towards the realization of cooperating partners' project goals. A high score on this dimension presumes that the interests and values of project partners are understood and taken into account.

The model focuses ultimately one the degree to which the project's objectives are pursued and the extent of support and cooperation on the partners' pursuits of objectives. A one-dimensional description ‘cooperative or uncooperative’ is not sufficient for the description of CV projects. Depending on the scores on the two dimensions, the model presents five resulting styles of cooperation management: Avoidance, accommodation, compromise, competition and collaboration in the sense of a win-win (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Styles of cooperation management**

![Figure 2: Styles of cooperation management](source: Thomas (1991:671))
Is this model, specified for the case of CV, one has to speak of avoidance if the benefits of potential CV projects do not elicit attraction or if willingness to cooperate is insufficient. In this case, a CV project would not materialize or it would be discontinued. CV cooperation in the sense of accommodation encompasses companies, which support charitable partners’ goals with a high effort, but which cannot or do not want to open up to gaining potential benefits from CV themselves. This field of action is commonly referred to as philanthropy (see Austin (2000)). In a compromise, parties must give up some of their originally intended beneficial aspects and make concessions to their partners. Own interests are pursued without effort and the objectives of cooperation partners are also only supported with limited commitment. In the context of volunteering projects, one speaks of competition if cooperating partners’ interests are pursued that are inconsistent with the others’ objectives. For example, this is the case when companies use CV projects to achieve their own objectives, without supporting project partners in the realization of their interests. A win-win situation comes in as a unique feature, because it allows all CV stakeholders full satisfaction of their interests. Thomas (1991) referred this also as collaborative or integrative action orientation. It undoubtedly represents the highest standards of cooperation between NPOs, businesses and corporate volunteers. Cooperating partners focus on developing a satisfactory solution for all parties. Although all parties appreciate their beneficial aspects as relevant and desirable, they also show a willingness to cooperate with their project partners. For this purpose, knowledge and understanding of these goals is, next to the willingness to support project partners’ objectives, a key requirement.

4. The case “Gardening”

In line with the CorVo.ch research project, questions around the motives and implementation of CV measures and CV cooperation were investigated. The NPO in question is a residential home for visually impaired people, which has about ninety volunteers per year and which had entered several CV partnerships since 2005. At the beginning of the collaboration agreements, individual corporate volunteers were integrated into the daily routine of the residential home for a short time, later the director of the residential home was asked for specific CV projects, for example, residents were accompanied by corporate volunteers to concerts. The management of the residential home
has set up rules for CV and declared negotiations with companies for CV partnerships as a management topic.

In this case-study, the construction company involved maintains a financial department on-site. The company is a subsidiary of an American corporation, which enshrines charitable commitment to the local environment in their mission statement. The finance department cooperated with the residential home according to the framework of their charitable commitment.

Overall, the NPO and the company had cooperated four times in daily assignments since 2005. Assignments changed every time to some extent – from supporting a party for residents to carry out gardening work on the grounds of the residence. While at the beginning of cooperation a minimal exchange between corporate volunteers and residents was held, in the course of cooperation this disappeared completely. Managers on both sides agreed to a realignment of existing cooperation, i.e., a new joint vision was needed. Here, the question about the benefits of cooperation came into focus. On the one hand, both managers responsible searched for forms of cooperation that corresponded more with the professional skills of companies’ employees (e.g., fundraising). On the other hand, assignments were discussed, which would provide companies’ employees with a new insight and experience in relation to different social spheres (e.g., escorting visually impaired persons). Accordingly, the following guidelines were made for the formative evaluation of existing cooperation:

- **Aim:** A meaningful commitment, i.e., a specific form of cooperation is to be found for all stakeholders (institutions and their members).

- **Question:** How can future commitment do justice to different and changing motives, needs and expectations of the partners? And how is this to be monitored against expected benefits for all involved?

Regarding the continuation of cooperation, partners were open-minded, i.e., cooperation could be adjusted according to findings and future perspectives or it could be terminated.
5. Method: formative assessment tool

The choice of method was based on the issues raised above as well as on a research-derived need for a more process-oriented evaluation of CV partnerships. As a further development of the formative assessment tools (FAT) (see Deitmer et al., 2003), an appropriate research design was developed, which met the requirements by combining qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (questionnaire) survey steps.

In order to take into account the novelty of the method in the field of CV research, it is shown below in its individual steps. In addition to the approach, content dimensions, applied scales and sample composition are discussed.

Because of the few empirical evaluation findings, questions for the FAT questionnaire were developed in the first step and adapted to the case investigated here. For this purpose, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers of the two organizations. Interview questions focused on the following topics: Stakeholders’ needs, (beneficial) expectations of cooperation, limits of cooperation and strategic orientation of cooperation and an open dimension. In each dimension, more questions were asked, which were developed through literature analysis and from CorVo.ch project results (see among others Lorenz & Wehner, 2010). Statements of the interviewees were merged to generate new criteria (e.g., did an assignment have any effect on employee’s loyalty to the company?). From the interviews, a draft questionnaire was created, which differentiated between main and sub-criteria. This was tested for completeness and appropriateness in three focus groups with employees of the construction company and residents of the residential home. Based on the results of the focus groups, the criteria were modified slightly and illustrated with explanations and examples. Figure 3 visualizes the individual process steps to the development of the questionnaire.
Based on the interviews and the focus groups, the following four main criteria emerged, according to which success of cooperation should be assessed: (a) values and vision, (b) organization, (c) achievement of objectives, and (d) positive effects. These main criteria form a higher-level summary of the sub-criteria (see Table 16). Thus the questionnaire consisted of the above-mentioned four main criteria with a total of 27 sub-criteria. In the questionnaire study, all criteria were assessed according to the following two evaluation steps:

- **Weighting**: In a first step, participants had to rate the four main criteria of the questionnaire according to their importance. They were able to distribute 100 percentage points across the four main criteria. In the next step, the main criteria were provided with sub-criteria. They were also to evaluate according to their importance, hereby again 100 percent points could be distributed for each main criterion. For the fourth main criterion, two levels of sub-criteria were inserted.

- **Implementation**: After this first round of weighting, participants were asked to rate the degree of implementation of all the criteria. This was a plus (+) for surpassed expectations, a check mark (\(\checkmark\)) for achieved and a minus (-) for unmet expectations. In the quantitative analysis, a plus was rated with five, a check mark with three and a minus with one.
Table 16: Main and sub-criteria of cooperation between the company and the NPO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main criteria</th>
<th>Sub-criteria</th>
<th>Sub-criteria 2nd level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values and vision</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Social encounters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>Broadening horizons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corresponding organizational culture</td>
<td>Change to everyday life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authentic assignments</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Good organization</td>
<td>Save costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification of objectives</td>
<td>Promotion of NPO’s concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Additional services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication of barriers</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate tasks</td>
<td>Involvement of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement of objectives</td>
<td>Sense for community</td>
<td>Increase of reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximal beneficial effect</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change of daily routine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attainment of aim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive effects</td>
<td>Individual benefit</td>
<td>Equalization in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement of life quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relief of state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following example (Table 17) illustrates how one part of the questionnaire was completed by a participant of the finance department and a participant of the NPO.

Table 17: Rating and weighting of two participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-criteria</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>NPO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding organizational culture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic assignments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the evaluation, a complete analysis of data was performed and, in addition, analyzed according to each organization’s perspective. Likewise, intra-organizational differences were examined. Results of this questionnaire study were presented to the leaders of the NPO and the finance department in a recommendation workshop. On the one hand, this had the aim
of presenting results and on the other hand it had a formative character due to the participants’ critical discussions of results. Finally the goal was to develop guidelines for future CV projects as well as a portfolio of values.

6. Results of the evaluation study
The FAT questionnaire for cooperation design was completed by eight participants of the company and by three participants of the NPO. Results were presented in a recommendation workshop to the head of the NPO, a staff member and head of the financial department of the company. It should be noted that some values of company's participants had a high variance. Evaluation on an organizational level led to a leveling of results. Widely scattered results were marked as such with a star (*). These points were highlighted at the recommendation workshop and were discussed extensively.
Due to the small number of participants and the formative orientation of the method, the focus of analysis is not on details but on the formative character of results. After a summary of empirical findings, the interpretations of this study are presented in the context of the recommendation workshop.

7. From "business" to "social case"
One of the goals of the project evaluation was to find a form of commitment that does justice to all needs. The following can be concluded from the results: NPO representatives valued values and visions (3.8)\textsuperscript{12} and organization (3.4) of CV assignments as satisfactory.
Regarding the achievement of objectives (2.2), a need for action in matters of utility maximization was determined (see below cost management and integration idea).
Associated with this was the need for appropriate tasks, e.g., its organization in order to facilitate the implementation of aspired goals and expected benefits.
Regarding the company representatives’ results, it stood out that the main criteria of values and visions (2.6), achievement of objectives (2.9) and organization (2.8) – in the sense of importance of their work, planning of deployment and tribute paid – were still considered

\textsuperscript{12} Grade of implementation: Scale from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest)
insufficient. It lacked authenticity and perceived fulfillment of purpose, and as a result the appropriateness of the task has been criticized. That the partnership still rested on a solid basis was thanks to an overall positive assessment of the organization (communication of barriers, sustainability or clarification of objectives), a broad consensus of values and visions as well as the basic fulfillment of key objectives such as community relations or a change of daily routine.

Finally, looking at the fourth main category of the positive effects, respectively at the benefit dimensions of commitment (companies = 2.8, NPO = 2.4), the following can be emphasized: The NPO was clearly seen as the main beneficiary of activities. However, by evaluating effective generating of benefits, the lowest benefit of assignments was allocated to the NPO. Despite their high importance, both cost management (0.7/52%) and performance of integration (2.3/36%) were not achieved by the NPO. Finally, the lack of integration effects is also manifested at the individual level from the NPO’s perspective, as a lack of broadening horizons on behalf of the volunteers was determined (1.7/40%).

To achieve the goal of a mutually satisfactory form of commitment the social case had to be realized, in addition to the business case, which was considered as a more or less given by all participants. Especially the NPO as a beneficiary of the commitment described central concerns such as cost reduction or a desired social integration in the context of previous CV assignments (such as gardening) as not fulfilled. Furthermore, a lack of sustained effects on participating actors and on their environment (e.g., equalization in society or broadening horizon) was detected. Finally, authenticity was missing, i.e., a sense of assignments, which was amplified by unreasonable task planning and low recognition of volunteers’ work as perceived by corporate volunteers. In the following chapter perceptions and discussions of those in charge are presented.

8. Recommendation by cooperation partners

Following the evaluation phase, a recommendation workshop was held with management levels of both organizations participating. First, results of the questionnaire survey were presented and subsequently discussed by the partners.

In summary Figure 4 shows an overview of the recommendation workshop’s priorities. The focus is on activities in which different expected benefits are feasible. From the perspective
of both managers, the organization of these activities is strongly dependent on participants’ impression of the importance of CV projects, their planning and the benefits associated with assignments.

**Figure 4: Focus of recommendation**

The question of the form of commitment and of expected benefits is central to CV projects and also to the present CV cooperation. This is particularly relevant for CV, because in contrast to conventional donations or matched-giving activities, CV activities are gaining weight in the sense of importance and because CV promises to open up new beneficial aspects. In the context of this recommendation, two strategic orientations could be distinguished in terms of the form of commitment:

- **ideological-integrative orientation**: On the one hand (see Figure 4), rather idealistic and integrative aspects were addressed, which take into account the integration of non-monetary values, interests or beliefs such as motivation, broadening horizons, identification, sense-making, know-how transfer and social integration.

- **strategic-functional orientation**: On the other hand (see Figure 4), more economically oriented beneficial aspects were named, which are crucial for the survival of the NPO and
which are not to be neglected by the company either way. These aspects follow money-oriented benefits.

Thus activities stand in tension between ideological-integrative and strategic-functional forms of commitment. Specifically, this is expressed as follows: For the NPO it would have been desirable from the standpoint of efficiency, that a CV assignment would have resulted in the highest economic return as possible and if cost could have been minimized. It would have been interesting for the NPO’s manager if the expertise of corporate volunteers in financial matters could have been used for example for fundraising. However, this stood opposed to corporate volunteers’ needs, who preferred tasks outside of the spectrum of their professional activity. Some would have preferred physical work, while others would have preferred interpersonal encounters with the residents. On the other hand, this pure consideration of economic benefits stands opposed to the NPO’s own claim, which consists of commitment to the institution and its own residents to promote social integration, meaning the encouragement of exchanges between residents and other actors in society by conducting CV.

Depending on the weighting of the focus of benefits, frameworks of cooperation are to be designed differently as is seen in Figure 4.

- **Sense of CV:** The above-mentioned field of tension was primarily noticed by both actors with regards to individual benefits of CV. There was relatively quickly an unspoken consensus that as an effective form of commitment, fundraising would serve as a most sensible (economic) option in the sense of a strategic-functional solution. Irritation was triggered because of the evaluation’s results from previous assignments, which were attributed with a lack of authenticity and through that, a lack of a meaningful purpose. Here, purpose means, on the one hand, a meaningful task in the field of active participation in the residency’s home life (no “alibi exercises”) and, on the other hand, taking into account individual preferences in CV assignments. In addition to individual fulfillment of purpose through a differentiated CV assignment (physical or social volunteering), the idea of social integration by CV measures was also mentioned. Meaningful CV, in the sense of stronger ideologically distinct forms of commitment, became a separate and explicit beneficial
dimension in the process, which received its own right in addition to purely monetary considerations.

- **Benefits**: As was shown in the recommendation workshop, partners had very different understandings of what "benefits" means and what "benefits" are pursued. While the company’s representative strongly connected a monetary benefit with the term, the NPO’s representative added an ideological dimension (broadening horizons; include society into their home). The visualizing or measuring aspects of corresponding benefits was recognized as a difficulty. This was especially important to the company in order to be able to benchmark and legitimize its commitment. However, as already mentioned, the NPO also raised the issue of economic benefits. This was especially true when it comes to avoiding losses or in the words of NPO’s director: "There should be a black zero." Finally, the question of sustainability, i.e., the duration of commitment, was discussed. Due to individual days of assignments, only little (time) went towards sustaining interpersonal relationships. This in turn would have been desirable in terms of the NPO’s social emphasis.

- **Planning**: Whether a CV project is placed on the strategically-functional or the ideological-integrative dimension also has implications for the planning of assignments. An active involvement and consideration of individual fulfillment and integration of specific ideational beneficial dimensions adds extra effort in terms of planning and communication. That this is not always clear was shown by the reaction of the company’s representatives in the present evaluation. In light of lacking realization of benefits for the NPO, it was pointed out that additional resources for planning are needed to overcome specific challenges of CV cooperation. Besides a detailed financial plan (which forms of commitment cost how much; which activities are to be made possible, e.g., integrated or stand-alone services; who pays which part and why?), it is also important to assess an enhanced sense of commitment and its effect. This includes, besides pure communication, a detailed plan that takes into account different needs and concerns up to the level of concrete CV assignments on-site.

9. Conclusion

The present study was initiated with an evaluation aim of contributing to shaping a CV form of commitment, which takes into account the interests of all parties. During the recommendation workshop of this evaluation’s findings, it became clear that there are still
blind spots in terms of perspectives or even perspective hindrances. In light of the orientations of actions introduced above (see Figure 4), one may conclude that the investigated CV cooperation is presently a compromise between the NPO, the company and corporate volunteers. In contrast with the win-win position, a compromise is reached due the fact that interests can only be partially realized and that partners’ objectives are not always fully supported. In a compromise, the parties involved must renounce aspects of their intended benefits and make concessions to their partners. Here, this is briefly described: The company admitted primacy of the NPO’s objectives and the common good, by following its own interests moderately. At a first glance, this action-orientation corresponds with philanthropy, by which primarily the objectives of cooperating partners are supported. However, this situation is more complex: From the perspective of corporate members, the desire of the NPO to use them for fundraising conflicted with their interest of working physically and to benefit from human encounters. In this regard, cooperativeness of corporate volunteers was limited. From the NPO’s perspective, their partners failed to fully realize the interests of their residential home. From the corporate volunteers’ perspectives, the NPO’s cooperation in planning and organizing an authentic assignment was limited. Against this background, in terms of a stabilization of initial interest in CV, it is advisable not to burden CV cooperation by using a win-win promise with unrealistic expectations. Avoidance of potential conflicts and phasing out of CV cooperation was easier than an intense discussion and balancing out of different interests in the sense of a win-win.

In conclusion, the results presented make it clear that benefits cannot be achieved easily on both sides. CV can already fail because stakeholders have different ideas about what a benefit actually is. A good, hereby meaning an open, communication when planning a partnership is a necessary prerequisite to formulate common goals and their importance. Only if actors know what they expect from collaboration and how to shape this process, different and changing motives and expectations are recognized and met.

Methodological support for self-reflection and the preparation of decisions was offered by the developed evaluation instrument, which has hereby served its purpose. For both organizations it has identified blind spots and strengthened their ability of taking and
accepting the perspective of their partner’s objectives. Also the cooperation management model is, beyond an objective-summative analysis, applicable to present different perspectives on cooperation. Based on the two dimensions and the five action orientations, differences in self-perception and perception of CV partners can be uncovered, discussed and used for the future design of cooperation. For example, only due to the recommendation workshop, the NPO’s director became aware that their efforts to express their gratitude to the corporate volunteers were not noticed. And the head of finance of the company learnt that their CV assignments had not brought the expected benefits for the NPO. This analysis showed instead that costs that arose for the NPO that were not equalized by their assignment. Finally, new processes were designed and negotiated in the recommendation workshop, which should be considered as having achieved certain beneficial aspects.

The strength of the FAT approach is at the same time its weakness: Its flexibility makes it possible to adapt the evaluation with a high level of detail on content and the realities of cooperation under observation. Thus, the case-study is necessarily always the focus and comparisons between different collaborations will only be possible on an abstract level. The FAT instrument has the potential to influence CV collaborations in a formative way. In further developing it, recurrent and thereby generally applicable criteria can be identified and differentiated with individual, case-dependent parameters of the respective partnerships.

Based on the evaluation of their CV cooperation, the organizations of the present case-study have decided to stop further CV assignments for the moment in order to further reflect on their roles and their internal (and quite diverse) requirements. Thus, the FAT has fulfilled its formative aim: The instrument has clearly contributed to a formative process.

References


"I can’t change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."

Jimmy Dean