
Corporate Volunteering Benefits and Challenges for Nonprofits

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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, collaboration, qualitative research*

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NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (NPOs) BECAME increasingly important in the late twentieth century, in the United States and Northwest European countries, because governments were gradually outsourcing various tasks to them (Salamon and Anheier 1996). At the same time, these societies increasingly expected companies not only to be profit-oriented but also to behave according to social and ecological standards and to take responsibility for their actions (Carroll 1991; Habisch and 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 accountable players in the arena of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Eells and Watson (1974, 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 1980s and ’90s. In the early twenty-first century, CSR is a widely accepted part of companies’ responsibilities (Matten, Crane, and 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” (Meijs and van der Voort 2004, 21).

Since many NPOs strongly depend on contributions of volunteers, cooperation with corporate volunteers and companies offers 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), volunteerism underwent a change from lifelong commitment to self-realization and more sporadic volunteering in the late twentieth century, which led to an overall increase of interest in volunteering (Hustinx and 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

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thirteen interviews with managers of the nonprofits. Results show that CV offers benefits and challenges for nonprofit organizations.

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 and 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).

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 and 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 and Andreasen 1996).

Austin (2000) 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.

Win-Win-Win Aspect

Several studies have suggested that CV partnerships between nonprofits and for-profit companies constitutes 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

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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, and 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, and 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 2003; Quirk 1998). 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 and 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 and Nadai 2002; Quirk 1998; Sundeen, Raskoff, and Garcia 2007). Quirk (1998) noted the importance of finding a stable balance of interests among all involved parties.

The Research Gap

To summarize, current studies have suggested that CV-related cooperation with companies results 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).

Methodology

Because the present literature on CV and nonprofits is rather scarce, the authors adopted an exploratory and qualitative research approach (Dart 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Girtler 2001; Maxwell 2009; Miles and 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 (2009), our study focused on “peoples' expressions and activities in their local contexts” (21). In addition, document analysis was employed.

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 1 presents an overview of the nonprofits that participated in this study.

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,

Table 1. Sample

	Name	Organizational Structure	Field of Activity	Area	CV Since	Employees (Full-Time)	Volunteers (p.a.) without CV	Annual Turnover 2008 ¹
NPO A	E/A.	Individual	Social	Local	2005	80	94	10m CHF
NPO B	G./J.	Umbrella	Social and ecological	National	2008	2,588	46,730	780m CHF
NPO C	H.	Section	Social	Regional	2005	59	2,100	13m CHF
NPO D	Z./S.	Umbrella	Social	National	2007	85	15	55m CHF
NPO E	S.	Individual	Ecological	Local	2007	1.3	200	0.25m CHF
NPO F	M.	Individual	Ecological	Local	2002	1	150	0.065m CHF
NPO G	N./S.	Umbrella	Social	National	1999	4	60	0.585m CHF
NPO H	D./M.	Section	Social and ecological	Regional	1999	11	40	1.5m CHF

Note: p.a. stands for per annum (per year).

¹Current exchange rate: 1US\$=1CHF.

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.

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 compare contents, specifying differences and similarities of perspectives (Brewerton and 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 enquired about the cooperation processes and organizational embedding of corporate volunteering, for example, responsibility, contact with other volunteers, strategy. The second set of questions inquired 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.

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?

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.”

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

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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.

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.

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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.

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 the 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 and Nadai 2002; Allen 2003; Austin 2000; Herman and Renz 1999; Kotler and 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 2) 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 2) 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,

Table 2. Findings Concerning Benefits and Challenges

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

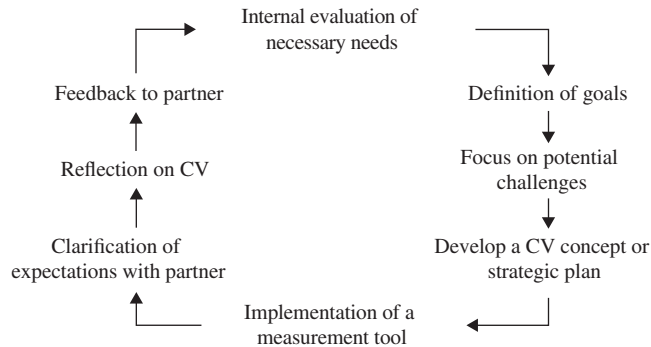
there was a high barrier to nonprofits charging fees for their participation in corporate volunteering, and such a practice was strongly disputed internally among the nonprofits. However, charging a fee would provide a way to bind companies closer to nonprofits and to enforce mutual commitment, which would benefit the nonprofits because it could present a point of entry for formal contractual agreements.

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 et al. 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

A win-win-win situation . . . appears to be an aspired state rather than an achieved reality for the nonprofits.

Figure 1. Suggestions for Improvement



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.

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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