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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

YOUTH AND VOLUNTARY WORK: TAKING THE LEAD TO A BRIGHTER
FUTURE

RAMZA HUSSEIN SEDKY

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give” (Winston Churchill). This quote illustrates that people derive from helping others; the desire to help others who are in need appears to be an essential aspect of human nature. One particular type of helping behavior is volunteerism. The majority of positive social changes in the world are not created by people who are famous or universally known, but they are created by the people who volunteer to serve others who are in need of their support. Every year, millions of people donate their time to deliver needed services to their communities. Those volunteers work for nonprofit boards, deliver meals, visit orphans and elderly, build new homes and schools, plant trees, read to children, visit the ill in hospitals, provide services in mosques or churches, participate in neighborhood cleanups and other countless services. To recognize the role of those volunteers and highlight their significant impact on their societies, the United Nations General Assembly announced 2001 as the “International Year of Volunteers”. The global growing concern of civic service was reflected in major international events such as; the United Nations conference on environment (Brazil, 1992), the world conference on human rights (Vienna, 1993), the conference on population and development (Cairo, 1994), the world summit on social development (Copenhagen, 1995), the world conference on women (Beijing, 1995), the world forum on civil society (New York, 2000), the world conference on the climate (2009) etc. Below are two of the widely used definitions for volunteerism:

“Volunteerism is about actions that are carried out freely and without coercion according to an individual’s own free will. The financial gain is not the main motivating principle although the reimbursement of some expenses may be allowed” (UNDP, 2003)

“Volunteerism means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or organization.” (Wilson, 2000)

It would be important to understand the difference between the two words “civil society” and ‘voluntary /non governmental organizations’ so that a much deeper insight of the non profit sector could take place. Civil society is the term that refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life where the interests and values of their members or others, based on political, ethical, cultural, scientific, philanthropic or religious considerations are expressed. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore include community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous groups, political parties, labor unions charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations”. (www.worldbank.org). Voluntary organizations/ non governmental organizations are considered part of the civil society, driven by a group of people with a common interest to deliver a variety of services. They rely on occasional or regular volunteers for operations and are usually led by volunteer board; their priority is the mission and not the profit. (www.worldbank.org). Social welfare organizations are the majority of civil society organizations in Egypt and volunteering in one of them could take different forms ranging from the highly organized operations of the Red Cross which operates around the world to the individual help, also there exists community solidarity activities where neighbors of the same community support and help each other.

Volunteering has a very positive impact on the society and the volunteer. The society benefits from voluntary initiatives by receiving services which the State is usually unable to provide in a quick and efficient process. Also volunteering opens the door for more knowledge about community needs and problems and finding ways to solve them whether by the State or other entity, moreover, it helps in the mobilization of local resources whether human and/or financial to build up the society. It should also be noted that a healthy voluntary sector is critical for the survival of democratic policies. De Tocqueville illustrated that civil society organizations are intermediate bodies between the masses and the government. “If the habit of joining were allowed to die, so too would democracy” (McBride et. al. 2006).

Voluntary work existed in Egypt many years ago, before the 19th century it existed in the form of endowment system, religious institutions (mosques and churches) which played an important role in supporting social, cultural and charitable initiatives. In fact some scholars illustrate that the existence of the current formal organizations was due to the presence of these initiatives. (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005). In the 19th century there were social, religious and political factors that contributed to the establishment of voluntary organizations and which played a significant role in providing services to the Egyptian society at that time. The first organization established in Egypt was the “Hellenic Philanthropic Association” established in 1821 to serve the Greek community residing in Egypt. Forty years later, the first Egyptian voluntary organization “Gameaat Al Maaref” was established in 1868, as a publishing organization, followed the “Geographic Society” in 1875 and the Islamic and Coptic Benevolent societies in 1878 and 1891. Three factors contributed to the existence

of civil organizations in Egypt in the nineteenth century; the first was the presence of foreign minorities like the English, French, Italian, Greek and Armenian where each nationality started to form its own association in search for protection and consolidation. Second was the rise of the missionary activity by the Anglican Church in 1815 which sought to convert Copts to Protestants and the Protestant biblical mission in 1840 which targeted both Copts and Jews via founding of schools. This provoked the opposition of Copts, Muslims, and Jews, so they decided to establish numerous religious, cultural and social associations. As a result, the Islamic and Coptic Benevolent societies were established while the Jews founded charitable organizations to serve their poor and protect their community from the missionary activities, and third was the search of the Egyptian elite at the turn of the century for a national identity.

The culture of volunteering and giving others is deeply rooted in Muslim and Christian traditions as the individual should dedicate all his efforts of giving to God without showing any disrespect or superiority to the service recipient. With a population of approximately ninety percent Muslims and a sizable Coptic minority, Islam and Christianity both advocate charity, equality among human beings and the unity of human race in origin and in history, in life and in death, in privileges and in responsibilities. In Islam charity takes the form of the “Zakat” and/or “Sadaqa”, in Christianity charity takes the form of “Ushur” where both are considered the most basic and important forms of giving in the Egyptian society. The Zakat which is giving money to the needy and the poor is one of Islam’s five pillars while Ushur is also giving money to the poor which equals ten percent of the individual’s wealth, reflecting social solidarity and justice. Since the dawn of Islam, mosques were the link between the donors and recipients of

charities; they were not only places for worship but were considered cultural, social and educational institutions. History reveals that at those times of deterioration and decline of societies, religious institutions (mosques and churches) were the places for providing service to the community. In fact, there are great models of voluntary activities through 3000 mosques, where hundreds of physicians volunteer two days per week throughout the year to provide health services to the poor as this service became expensive due to the privatization that was embraced by the government. In Christianity, the Coptic Evangelic organization has very strong programs with very committed volunteers who work in the poorest areas of Cairo as well as rural areas. In 2004, thirty two percent of voluntary organizations were religious such as “The Islamic Charitable Association”, “The Orthodox Association”. (Kandil, 2004). These organizations are characterized by their efficiency in fund raising, recruitment of volunteers, and good performance of their daily tasks providing social, cultural, and moral community services such as libraries, sport facilities, language and computer classes, video and television sessions, lectures and tours. (Assaad and Barssoum, 2007). The Shari’ia Islamic organization is an example of an Islamic organization that operates with sixty two branches scattered all over Egypt to provide services to the needy and the poor.

With respect to political factors, Egypt witnessed relaxation of political control on civil sector in the past ten years. More freedoms were granted and more organizations got registered especially in the field of human rights which started by two organizations in the 1990s to currently reach 132 organizations. This political relaxation dispelled fear among youth and encouraged them to think more about taking more responsibility towards their societies through participating in development oriented activities. Hence

youth from the upper middle class in started to emerge as new actors in the voluntary sector either by forming their own organizations or volunteer with one of the organizations (Lei Sparre, 2008).

It is believed that researching youth volunteerism is of paramount importance to any society seeking progress, as volunteering helps in the creation of a stable and cohesive society by complimenting and adding value to the services offered by the government.. As volunteerism is strongly influenced by the history, politics, religion and culture of the country, research on youth and voluntary work needs to be carried out in the Egyptian social and cultural contexts to gain a more comprehensive and detailed view on this topic within an Egyptian framework. I believe that this thesis will be of practical importance to youth and other stakeholders i.e. the government, voluntary organizations, and corporate to devise strategies for utilizing youth talents and aspirations in a country with high percentage of illiteracy and poverty.

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the impact of voluntary activities on the society as well as youth volunteers. It will try to shed light on how voluntary work could become of great value to the community while at the same time enhancing and upgrading the skills of youth. Presenting two case studies of two student-run organizations housed at the American University in Cairo named “Volunteers in Action” and “Alashanek ya Balady” will help in understanding the operation of youth volunteering. These two student organizations were selected because they have a strong outreach program where students vent out their energy and get connected to their

community. This thesis will shed some light on the motives behind youth participation in voluntary activities, why do some youth believe in volunteerism, how volunteerism gets youth to network and socialize together, the impact of voluntary activities on youth human and social capital, and finally the obstacles associated with volunteerism from youth point of view.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

The thesis aims at investigating the involvement of the upper middle Egyptian youth in volunteer work and community service activities representing two student led organizations housed at the American University in Cairo.

HYPOTHESIS

Egyptian youth have started to participate in voluntary development activities believing that these activities have a more positive impact on the community and the volunteer as opposed to the traditional charitable activities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this research, the researcher will try to tackle three main points that would give more insight about youth volunteering. The researcher will try to understand the motives that usually encourage youth to volunteer, the impact of volunteering on the community and their personal development, and finally the obstacles that could be encountered while volunteering.

Below are the research questions related to the topic

- What are the reasons behind youth engagement in volunteer work?
- What is the impact of volunteer work on the community and the volunteer?
- What are the obstacles they encounter when they volunteer.

METHODOLOGY

The overall design of the research is based on in- depth interviews with youth from the upper middle class. This research adopted both the quantitative and qualitative approach. The snow ball tool was applied until the researcher got all the information needed for the research.

Quantitative Approach

The Quantitative method included a structured questionnaire as a tool to be distributed among students at the American University in Cairo who are participating in community service activities. The questionnaire was composed of nine questions that were designed to give an idea about the students' perception and views about voluntary activities, types of their involvement in voluntary activities, the age of involvement, their past activities, the reasons behind their participation, the problems encountered during volunteerism and the opinion of their family and friends about voluntary activities. This questionnaire helped in giving definite answers to questions related to the students' volunteering.

Qualitative Approach

The Qualitative approach included in-depth interviews with students involved in community service activities at AUC. Interviews with students engaged in community

service activities at AUC took place to give detailed information about their engagement in volunteer activities, its impact on communities they serve and on their personal development from their point of view. Interviewees were leaders in their organization, and gender equality was considered in all research phases.

The interview situation was designed to encourage the maintenance of rapport and establish a warm interpersonal quality. Interviews took a conversational form and the manner in which it was directed was informal. The method of interviewing was non directive. Interviews lasted from thirty to forty minutes with each interviewee to ensure that each one has given all relevant information. Interviewees were asked to talk about their experience in community service activities, and questions were asked when only further clarification was needed. An interview guide was used consisting of basic items which the researcher made sure it would be covered by each interviewee. This method allowed interviewees to indicate the foci of their attention and to express themselves about issues of significance to them rather than pre assumed to be important by the researcher. This flexibility would elicit information and enlarge the scope of understanding of issues raised. All the data were then collected to be placed in the thesis finding section.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is true that more research on youth and volunteerism takes place in wealthy industrialized countries as opposed to developing countries “The spirit of volunteerism resides in each and every one of us, it most often comes to the surface in the times of national crisis. After such crisis this spirit tends to decline and we become embarrassed to show it and our patience for charity becomes less”. (Colmen, 1965). The volunteer identity is most likely weighed as opposed to other commitments that volunteers have in their lives. Women usually weigh volunteerism in contrast to caring for their family and children or jobs that could increase the family income, while men weigh volunteerism in contrast to their paid jobs that could make them sustain the financial status of their families. For women whose children had grown up and men who cannot find personal satisfaction in the workplace, volunteering was considered to be a source for self satisfaction, central part of their self identity and a means for public respect. Hence volunteering becomes a life strategy decision within the larger social context of the individual and which is based on personal values and shaped by institutional constraints. For people who were excluded from means of public recognition in their societies, volunteerism could offer them an alternative for achieving a status and organizational affiliation. And for those who were satisfied with their contribution to the society, volunteerism was considered an addition and supplement to their already existing contributions. (Nakano, 2000). Three types of volunteers are identified: professional volunteers, second career volunteers and regular volunteers. The professional volunteers

are the ones who have committed their lives to serving their communities criticizing the value of self serving, materialism and individual success as opposed to community giving and caring. The second career volunteers are the ones who have chosen volunteerism to supplement a career or family devoting nearly the same amount of time to volunteering as the professional ones with volunteering standing as a secondary commitment as opposed to their primary commitments such as work or family. These kinds of volunteers get the satisfaction for both paid work and volunteering, and face less conflict between both roles. They manage both pursuits by adjusting community participation to the demands of work. And finally regular volunteers are the ones who consider volunteerism as one of several identities and roles they play in life. They do not see volunteerism as a duty but it is considered like a pastime or hobby such as taking flower arrangement classes or tennis lessons in ones free time. (Nakano, 2000). It is important to note that the level of education is a good predictor of volunteering. Education helps the person become aware of the surrounding problems in his community, increases empathy and builds self confidence. Therefore people who get engaged in their communities are most likely educated people, yet it must be noted that the level of education varies according to the type of volunteer work needed. (Parker & Franco, 1999).

Youth start to volunteer when they are motivated to do so. Motivation was found to be the main factor that could contribute to youth volunteering. Finkelstein 2008 identified six motives that could be the reason behind volunteering: values; to express values related to humanitarian concerns for others, understanding; to acquire new learning experiences and skills, social; to strengthen social relationships, career; to gain career related experiences, protective; to reduce negative feelings about oneself or address

personal problems, and enhancement; to grow and develop psychologically (Finkelstein 2008). Morrow-Howell 2007 stated that volunteers are often motivated by altruistic reasons as altruism is found to add value to their work when they become closely engaged with the community. This engagement gives the volunteer a sense of freedom that allows him to challenge perceived inequalities in his community. Although volunteers who are less motivated might offer less time volunteering, yet they would remain contributing to their communities. (Morrow-Howell, 2007).

One of the sociological perspectives related to volunteering is known as “Normative perspective”. This perspective focused on the role of values, norms and attitudes as an explanation of human behavior. Values and beliefs are considered of paramount importance in guiding the conduct of the volunteer which is connected to altruistic motives. This perspective stated that “caring for others” is originally fostered in the family, and then is channeled into volunteer work by secondary institutions such as voluntary organizations. For example people who appreciate helping others are more likely to act in a socially responsive way, however while many people are virtuous and caring about others, only a few number of those people make this feeling translated into action. (Janoski et al. 1998). Delli Caprini 2000 went far behind the idea of being motivated by illustrating that motivation alone does not necessarily guarantee engaged volunteers. For volunteerism to happen, the volunteer needs to find a good opportunity where he could use his skills in the best way. He manifested that the motivation drives from a sense that it is “my responsibility” to help the community, in addition to the satisfaction gained while participating with peers for a common purpose, believing that such involvement will make a difference in the society. Delli Caprini illustrated that

youth must have the opportunity to become involved in MEANINGFUL WAYS and have the ability to take advantages of the opportunities that are available in their societies. (Delli Caprini 2000). Leonore 1999 agrees that youth volunteers usually seek opportunities that are relevant and meaningful to them. They like to be actively involved in designing, structuring and determining the success of service activities. The over involvement of professionals in organizing voluntary activities is considered a major barrier in drawing youth to community service activities. (Parker & Franco 1999).

Uggen and Janikula 1999 found that volunteerism is a habit that is acquired throughout life. Youth would grow on volunteerism if they are taught early in their childhood about the importance of helping those who are less fortunate. They demonstrated that people usually get to acquire the habit of volunteering when they are often placed in social situations and relationships where the social skills for volunteer work are developed (Uggen & Janikula, 1999). Hinck 2000 agreed with Uggen and Janikola stating that volunteering was not a situational act but it is due to the environment which parents have raised them in (Hinck, 2000). Janoski et al. supported this argument by stating that it is important for youth to be encouraged to volunteer in their early life in order to accumulate the “social capital” which connects them to other people in their society. The early in their lives people start to volunteer, the more is the number of volunteers. (Janoski et al. 1998). The years from the early teens till the early twenties are extremely important to the formation of civic habits. (Delli Caprini, 2000). This holds true as Wilson & Musike emphasized that parents’ role modeling and their teaching to children about social obligations produce higher rates of volunteering among their children and more positive attitudes about communities. (Wilson & Musike 1999). Astin et al. 1999

illustrated that volunteering during high school keeps this habit of volunteering persisting over a relatively long period of time. (Astin et al. 1999). This gets along with the “Social Practice perspective” which states that patterns of social behavior do not reflect norms and values but rather reflect habitual ways of acting acquired through practical experiences. Thus volunteering is not necessarily the outcome of objective social structures such as values, motives or subjective interpretations but it is the idea of “Habitus” which is a system of predispositions where people become habituated to certain modes of conduct through everyday practice, and via such practices people become used to and comfortable with social routines and situations. They reproduce and learn what is called “interaction ritual chains” (Janoski et al. 1998). Tocqueville posited that “by dint of working for one’s fellow citizens, the habit for serving is at length acquired”. (Uggen & Janikula, 1999).

In one of the studies, Marrow Howell 2007 found out that middle aged adults were found to be actively engaged in volunteering despite of their work and parenting roles. This is due to their work affiliation which provides them with connections that help them overtake their volunteer pursuits. They could get to know about volunteer opportunities through these connections and pursue them for their career development and social networking. They could get engaged in volunteering through their kids schools, in contrast to older adults who get to lose these ties with educational institutions, yet those older adults are more likely to volunteer with religious organizations, as they remain connected to them. Volunteering to older adults who retired and left their workplace is considered one of the few formal roles which they could play. Instead of having them step back with less demanding roles in the society, they could be given options to give

back to their societies. Their engagement in community service is seen to be strengthening the economy as well as improving their well being. In the American population around 28.8 percent are engaged in formal voluntary work. Volunteering varies by age; 33 percent from the age 45 to 54 years, 30 percent of people age 55 to 64 and 25 percent of people age 65 and older. (Marrow Howell, 2007)

Marrow Howell also stated workplace has a critical role in maximizing the participation of volunteers in different voluntary activities. “The business sector can and should play a pivotal role in promoting civic engagement among baby boomers as they seek to define their later adult years”. Companies could provide their employees with release time, sponsoring charitable efforts, organizing fundraising campaigns etc. Such volunteer programs enhance the company’s image, improve its relations with the community and enhance the skills of its employees. Companies can take more actions to promote volunteerism such as extending volunteer opportunities to retirement years and providing programs that would appeal to the retirees. (Marrow Howell, 2007)

In a study that took place in 1996 in two high schools in Anaheim Union high school district, with 278 high school students, 86% agreed that youth should be involved in service activities as opposed to 14% who disagreed. Nearly 80% agreed youth can make a difference in their communities by overcoming social problems, 78% agreed that youth would be perceived in a more positive way if they participate in service activities and finally 28% strongly agreed that they themselves can make a difference, and about 50% agreed only. Slightly less than 50% of the surveyed youth reported that they provided service during the current year with time reaching 90 hours per month with an average of 11.15 hours per month, whereas 36% stated that their schedule was too busy to carry out

any voluntary activity, and 10% stated that they were not interested in being engaged in community service. More than 30% knew about such activities through schools and 27% through their family members, and around 27% through local organizations. According to the surveyed youth, 39% said that they would participate if they knew how it would benefit them and 36% would become engaged if a friend encouraged them to do so and 26% would become engaged if they do so in a group. (Leonare, 1999)

Volunteering has positive effects on the physical and mental health of the volunteer. As volunteerism takes the form of a social activity, it builds strong ties between the volunteer and the community due to the social integration of the volunteer in his community “the quantity of social ties or relationships a person has, yields positive mental health effects. And the sense of not having anyone who is someone to you, and not being someone to anyone is depressing”. Therefore, volunteering is self validating experience and could encourage the volunteer to anticipate that help in the future when needed. Volunteering also makes the person feels that he makes a difference and thus enhances personal efficacy, providing the volunteer with the sense of control over his life and his environment and thereby eliminating depression. All such healthy mental effects impact positively on the physical health of the volunteer. Such effects are assumed to have an important role among the elderly and the retired ones in particular, as volunteerism can protect them from the physical decline, hazards of retirement and inactivity. For the elderly it is considered a “serious leisure” as it combines the freedom of voluntary pursuit with a commitment of social obligation. Moreover, the elderly experience the role loss due to their retirement, hence volunteering gives them a socially approved role which they have missed (Wilson & Musike, 1999). Another study revealed

that volunteers who are in their fifties and sixties reported less difficulty in reading a map, driving, taking medications, shopping or using a calculator one year after volunteering. A study revealed that volunteers who are in their fifties and sixties reported less difficulty in reading a map, driving, taking medications, shopping or using a calculator one year after volunteering. (Uggen & Janikula, 1999). However the effect of volunteering on mental health is not linear, it depends on the amount of time dedicated to volunteering. It was noted that too much volunteering and overburdening the volunteer could cause a decline in benefits and reduce subjective well being of the volunteer. In a study on hospital volunteers it was illustrated that those who worked 500 hours each year scored higher in “contentment” scale than those who worked fewer than 500 hours and those who worked more than 500 hours (Wilson & Musike, 1999)

It is believed that volunteering could also bring occupational benefits. It could be the window to finding paid employment to those who are not employed as volunteers are more likely to have more social contacts than those who do not volunteer. Volunteerism could boost the self confidence of volunteers, provide access to workplace networks and enhance marketable skills to volunteers. It is found that the number of volunteer activities a person is involved in, is positively correlated with the number of social contacts he has, disregarding the hours spent on volunteering, level of education, income, employment status etc. It is believed that volunteering for those who have a job, advances their chances of moving forward ahead in their careers. Finding a job using “weak ties” meaning friends of friends or acquaintances are more successful in getting satisfying and high income jobs rather than those who use “strong ties” such as close friends or

relatives. Weak ties tend to lead to high status contacts than strong ties and the higher the contact used for getting a job, the better is the job. (Wilson & Musike, 1999)

In a cross sectional study conducted in 1988, it was found that volunteers gain plenty of skills and knowledge where 90% stated that they would continue in the voluntary work. It was found that volunteering helps in learning about oneself and the world around him leading to identity development. Youth become more involved in their communities as adults, Volunteering encourages self exploration regarding values, interests and one's role in the community. (Johnson et al. 1998).

Moreover, volunteering help students gain educational credentials as students who volunteer were more likely to have increased grade levels. Academically successful and highly motivated students were more likely to get engaged in volunteer activities to get employment opportunities, make social contacts, self development and learning. (Wilson & Musike 1999). When students in Washington University were asked why do they volunteer, they said that they feel they make a difference by helping others, develop leadership and other professional skills, gain valuable work experience, explore important community issues, meet new friends, have fun, gain life perspective, make connections between classroom learning and the real world practice, increased contact with faculty members, work with diverse group of people and investigate career opportunity. It also helps in the integration of the excluded or marginalized groups, for example people with disabilities who volunteer change the stereotypes of the disables of passive recipients of services to active citizens. Youth development programs produce short and long term benefits for youth known as six Cs: offering youth a primary or secondary support system (connections), developing a positive identity (confidence) and a sense of belonging

(caring), developing skills and resources for choosing healthy options over risky ones (competence), creating vehicles by which youth give back to the society (contribution) and instilling a sense of social responsibility for oneself and others (character). (Collins, 2004)

Volunteers tend to be more politically active than those who do not volunteer. They develop civic skills and gain the trust from the community. They express their support to the society problems and care more about the needy (Wilson, 2000). It provides the opportunity to reflect on the society political situation and moral order and the relationship of oneself to the society. It is essential for good governance and development where individuals articulate their engagement to the country as citizens and establishing trust and reciprocity among individuals and hence creating a more cohesive and stable society. Joining voluntary organizations emerges the trust among people where they could work together effectively and act collectively. Volunteers exhibit the attitudes and values that lead to active participation in politics later in life. They are more likely to become more engaged in political behaviors such as political campaigns. Volunteerism “builds the character and keeps children out of trouble”, it fosters empathy and tolerance for others in addition to respecting the common good inhibiting anti social behavior, socially unaccepted or destructive behavior. A group of high school students who participated in Teen Outreach which offer volunteer services to the community were compared with another group who did not participate in this outreach project. The participating group was found to significantly less levels of failing in a course, being suspended from school or getting pregnant for girls. (Wilson & Musike 1999)

Grossman and Furano 1999 stated that volunteerism rekindles a sense of community and bridges the gulfs that could exist within any society. Individuals usually tend to be moving within relatively small spheres stratified by age, race, class and location and hence volunteering is a significant and powerful way of connecting together people from these different spheres. Volunteering facilitates collective actions which guarantees more effective youth services, reduces corruption by allowing channels of accountability. Volunteering in communities could create long lasting social, cultural, educational and civic outcomes among youth while making a difference and change in people's lives. It was proved that volunteerism increases self acceptance, promotes pro-social and collective actions and reduces antisocial and criminal behavior. It makes volunteers feel useful and could provide physical benefits. Volunteerism promotes racial understanding, influence social values, and develops critical thinking, positive effects on academic development such as knowledge gained and grades earned, also it encourages interaction with peers as well as faculty, and it considered "investment of time and energy". (Grossman and Furano 1999)

One of the professional volunteers said:

"Before volunteering I was like a locomotive that kept on running to support myself. Looking back I found that I was not working for the company but for myself and my family. If I had not become a volunteer I probably would have spent more time working and moved my family to a better place. I might have been able to buy a house for my family, but once I started to volunteer my life had completely turned around, I became more and more involved in other people's problems . The volunteer motives must be selfless he must give up ambitions for money or status".

This man who retired from one of the largest companies said that there was a conflict between work and volunteering. He believed that all his efforts during his employment were for the sake of himself and his family which left him with a SPIRITUAL want after

retiring. He regretted that he did not devote more time contributing to the society and developing himself as a volunteer before retiring. (Nakano, 2000)

James Petras 1997 agreed on the plenty benefits of volunteerism but looked to it from another perspective. He linked volunteerism to the State's deficiency in playing its rightful role. He stated that the idea of volunteerism is all about a limited commitment with few resources, which is based on the charity of the wealthy, and the inequalities of classes and hence it could only focus on small scale projects like painting of buildings, cleaning up empty lots etc. Petras found out that the idea of volunteerism implies that the individual is the cause of social problems and not the social orientation of the State, deflecting the attention from the role of the big government for the rich. It works on that appeal to the conscience of the rich to voluntary contributions which could compensate for public policy funded by taxes and state regulation of business. Instead of working on people suffering from low pay and state disinvestment in the social infrastructure to band together to change their relations, volunteerism proposes that the poor people should pool scarce resources to correct the abuses resulting from the policies of corporate owners and the government. Petras illustrated that social problems are structural and cannot be solved by half an hour of voluntary work by untrained and unpaid individuals engaged in sporadic activities. To some governments, volunteerism is the cheapest and least effective way to compensate for the devastating social consequences of the free market in terms of workplace loss of job security, low wages, ending of health and pension plans being financed by the employer. He held a comparison by stating that while the public receive an undertrained rotating workforce delivering inadequate social services, the wealthy turn to private services employing well trained professionals. In other words the delivery of

social services for the public is by untrained volunteers while the services rendered for the wealthy are by competent professionals. He concluded that the assumption that complex social problems and deep social needs could be solved by recruiting untrained volunteers is a myth. (Petras, 1997)

From the literature, two theories could be concluded with respect to youth volunteering. The two theories are the “social learning theory” and “the social capital theory”.

I. SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

The Social learning theory by Albert Bandura 1977 is based on the idea that we acquire our behaviors from our interactions with other people in different social contexts. This theory focuses on modeling and imitation, asserting that people can acquire a new behavior or change their current one by observing the behavior of others where partial imitation occurs and not a whole behavior change. (Smith & Berge, 2009). Modeling behavior has three distinct effects on the observing individual. When people become engaged in a certain behavior, they repeat the same behavior, strengthen or weaken a previously learned behavior, or prompt a previously acquired response behavior (Grusec, 1992). The learning process starts by observing the behavior of others, and this takes place constantly in our life when we are engaged in a new activity, and secondly is that people start to assimilate and imitate the observed behavior especially if it contains positive experiences or rewards, and thirdly is behavior modeling where people assimilate the entire positive experiences of the observed an imitated behavior to begin acquiring this behavior. (Smith & Berge, 2009).

Bandura stated that imitation takes place when the model is attractive and rewarding to the individual, and when the model is being rewarded for his actions. The more the model resembles the individual's real life, the more is the likelihood that the individual will imitate his behavior as it will be easy for him to relate the behavior of the model to his own. (Brown, 1976). In their life, people get exposed to more and different behaviors which make them engaged in response behaviors, and hence developing a sense of self-efficacy which is a key concept of the social learning theory. It emphasizes that people gain confidence with respect to their ability in mastering certain activity. In addition, as people develop the sense of self-efficacy in one area of living, it often has an effect on other areas and results in a sense of efficacy expectation. Efficacy expectation is a similar key concept of social learning theory where people gain an expectation about their ability to accomplish larger more involved tasks (Bandura, 1977).

Social learning theory provides a useful framework for conceptualizing voluntary work. Family and friends are often the paths by which people get to become volunteers. By hearing stories from our parents about voluntary work, and being brought up in a family that promotes voluntary activities, it is more likely that those children will start to develop an expectation that they will volunteer. Likewise, individuals who have colleagues at college or work who volunteer and who talk about their experiences are more likely to consider voluntary activities. When individuals volunteer, their behavior is reinforced by the people they are working with, and the longer the time they continue volunteering, the more willing they become capable of undertaking other types of volunteer service and developing a sense of self-efficacy that was acquired from previous experiences. Some individuals gain confidence from their experiences to assume

leadership responsibilities as volunteers. For children and adolescents, developing self-efficacy could be associated with attending college, earning higher degrees, socializing more with people from different racial and ethnic groups, and being more likely to continue volunteering as adults (Rosenthal & Zimmerman 1978)

II. SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

For more than a decade, political scientists, sociologists, and educators wanted to explore new ways where social capital can improve the group and individual productivity in the social, economic, and political domains while impacting the democratization process of institutions. Jacobs 1961, Bourdieu 1986, Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993 and others have introduced social capital as a valuable and widely used framework to achieve that end. Putnam illustrated that the social capital is more embedded in the structure of relations among a group of people in a given setting. He defined it as:

“Social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”.

“Social capital is a resource that is available to individuals and groups as it enables them to pursue their interests and meet ends”. (Kahne et. al., 2006)

Coleman 1988 said that *“social capital is defined by its function, it is not a single entity but a variety of different entities having characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are with the structure”.* (Coleman, 1988)

Such social ties are believed to lead to both collective and individual benefit. Putnam stated that collective social capital is an effective and powerful tool for civic engagement,

promoting democracy, good governance and economic growth. Big networks with high degree of trust are vital for producing social capital. (Kahne et al. 2006). On another note, social capital is important for the well being and success of the individual, where individuals with large social capital have more resources that could help them achieve their goals. The larger is the individual social capital and the greater is the diversity of the resources, the more social networks become useful to the individual. WHO DO YOU KNOW matters as it could help the individual in finding a job, achieve academically, and enjoy better mental and physical health. (Harper, 2001)). Social capital plays an important role in the creation of the human capital which happens through the interaction among people where skills are gained and capabilities are acquired through this interaction. Social capital in the family and in the community plays an important role in the creation of human capital in the rising generation. (Coleman, 1988). Coleman stated that social capital takes three forms; the first is obligations and expectations which depend on the trustworthiness of the social network, the second is the ability of the flow of information through the social structure to provide the basis for action, and the third is the presence of norms and effective sanctions. (Putnam, 1995). Social capital varies in its nature and functions, it is divided it into what is called the “bonding social capital” and the “bridging social capital”. Bonding capital generally refers to ties among homogeneous group of people such as members of a family and friends, this kind of social capital provides people with the material and emotional support needed in the daily life to be able to survive in difficult times such as depression, and emergency situations. In contrast bridging capital is associated with a heterogeneous group of people with weaker ties but is more important for economic advancement. Bridging capital could

refer to members in various and different voluntary organizations which host people from different economic and social backgrounds where they get to bridge their differences in belief, gender, race, profession, income or other barriers. (Anderson & Zhan, 2011). As trust is one of the most important elements in social capital, it is to some extent debatable, some consider trust as an outcome of social capital whereas others view it as a component of the values that constitute social capital, and others consider them both. There are two types of trust, the first type is the trust which individuals have in people they know and which constitute an intimate social network (thick trust) and the second type is the one which people have in others they do not know, and it is a general trust among community members (thin trust). (Putnam, Robert 1995)

Putnam views social capital as a collective good in a community regardless of personal variances stating that the more people work together, the more social capital is produced, and the less people work together the more community stocks of social capital will deplete. He argued that certain strategies need to be devised so that this acquired social capital could be maintained and renewed. In his book “Bowling Alone”, Putnam illustrated that social capital is more than “warm, cuddly feelings or frissons of community pride” yet it has “forceful even quantifiable effects on many different aspects of our lives”. Such quantifiable aspects include; better health, lower crime rates, better educational achievement, less corrupt and effective government, greater levels of income equality and better economic achievement through trust with lower costs. Putnam found that communities with low social capital were ruled by unsuccessful, inefficient and corrupt governments, whereas communities with high levels of social trust were ruled by good and successful governments. He emphasized that there is a decline in the

participation of civic groups, politics, trade unions, religious organizations and informal socializing among Americans. He believed that television is the main reason behind that decline, leaving few time for people to socialize, in addition to the entrance of woman in the job market, the greater mobility which reduces local ties, the inability of people to come together because of their busy life, and finally the changes in values and behavior related to civic engagement. (Putnam, 1995)

Volunteering with voluntary organizations could be understood as one major component of social capital where it could undeniably play an important role in the development of democracy in societies. Trust, reciprocity, and solidarity that constitute social capital can only rise through frequent and regular social interaction where members are required to meet regularly and are accountable for achieving the goals and objectives of the institution, in contrast to volunteers that contribute to their communities on occasional and short term basis, joiners of traditional voluntary membership. (Crowley, 2005). Voluntary organizations most likely try to engage people with more resources and who are highly educated as they are considered valuable to the organization because they have more skills and access to more social resources than those who are less educated. (Harper, 2001).

This theory could be useful to parents, teachers, and police authorities and volunteers as they seek to maintain discipline and promote compliance among people within the same group, as working together in a community with a substantial stock of social capital is easier than working in a community with low level of social capital. (Crowley, 2005)

CONCLUSION

Three types of volunteers were identified; professional, second career and regular volunteers, where every type is considered as opposed to the volunteer commitments in life. In addition, the motives for volunteering were illustrated stressing on the importance of finding a meaningful experience. There is no doubt that volunteering has positive effects on the volunteer as well as the community, yet James Petras raised the question if voluntary work could solve the structural problems created by governments, and whether untrained and unpaid volunteers could deal with complex social problems of the community.

The two theories “social learning theory” by Albert Bandura 1977 and the “social capital theory” by Robert Putnam 1993 are found to be the most relevant theories on youth participation in voluntary activities. They provide a useful framework for conceptualizing voluntary work and give base to addressing this topic. The theories find answers related to youth volunteering by revealing that the majority of youth participate in voluntary activities through family and friends. They acquire the volunteer identity through observation, assimilation and imitation where a partial change in their behavior takes place. Social learning leads to self-efficacy by which volunteers get to master this activity and accomplish larger and more complicated tasks developing more leadership roles.

Interaction with peers allows youth to build their social capital and work collectively in a large group to achieve their objectives. This collective action contributes to the well being of the volunteer as well as society, and the more people work together, the more social capital is produced to support civic engagement, democracy, good governance and economic growth.

The research findings will crystallize the link between the two theories and youth volunteering giving more knowledge and understanding of the dynamics on this topic.

CHAPTER THREE

YOUTH AND VOLUNTARY WORK

This chapter will shed light on youth volunteering in the Arab world and Egypt. It will explore the emergence of voluntary organizations in the Arab world during foreign occupation and after the independence, presenting the status of Arab youth with respect to voluntary activities. Then the literature on voluntary work in Egypt will follow, presenting the sociopolitical aspect of the Egyptian society since 1952 till 2011 and the emergence of youth led organizations presenting the different types of youth generations that existed during that period of time. This will be important for the research as voluntary organizations are usually shaped by the political environment in which they function, this environment sets the norms and patterns of operations, while the socio economic conditions set the priorities of such organizations and their target group.

Voluntary work in the Arab world

Voluntary organizations in the Arab region are not spatially evenly distributed, they tend to concentrate in the capital and urban centers with limited existence in villages where the need for their services is mostly needed. This could be due to the fact the voluntary organizations were predominantly established by middle class professionals who are part of the urban sector of the society and who represent a well educated segment of the society. (Kandil, 2005). In the beginning of the 19 century, voluntary organizations started to emerge in the Arab region providing services which the State did not provide under the colonial occupation. These voluntary organizations focused on services such as

education, literacy, health services etc. By the time as most of the Arab countries got their independence in the 20th century, voluntary activities got weakened due to tight social and political control exercised by the Arab governments. (Kandil, 2004). These governments became mostly concerned with enhancing the State and promoting the regime, rather than providing individual rights and freedoms. Voluntary organizations existing at that time were mostly charitable ones providing direct material assistance to those who are less fortunate, while other organizations were related to the State and could not even be considered semi official institutions (Karajah, 2007). In the past two decades some Arab countries witnessed an increase in the number of voluntary organizations whose activities became diversified. The concept of philanthropy and social welfare started to rise gradually in most of the meetings related to development and community participation. (Kandil, 1995). In November 1989 the first conference for Arab NGOs took place in Cairo under the sponsorship of the Arab Gulf Fund for UN developmental organizations (AGFUND) and other Arab and international foundations where the need to develop research concerned with voluntary organizations was given priority. The nineties marked a revival in the civil society in the Arab World. In 1993, the first Arab nongovernmental institution was launched calling for the promotion of Arab civil society by building its capacity to enable it achieves its objectives. Efforts in the direction of developing research, training and networking among Arab organizations were on the agenda. Four years later, in 1997 the Arab Network for non governmental organizations was established to play a vital role in developing research within the Arab nations. (Kandil, 2010). Arab youth were found to be reluctant in joining voluntary activities due to social and economic reasons such as family upbringing which does not instill the

spirit of volunteerism in their kids as parents are mostly concerned with the academic performance and the grades of their kids, schools and universities curricula do not encourage students to volunteer, and also sometimes economic pressures force youth to work to earn a living not allowing any sufficient time for volunteering. On another level, voluntary organizations in the Arab world do not possess the skills needed for dealing with youth, nor organize specialized programs that would cater to their interest. Some youth volunteers had bad experiences while volunteering with some associations, the lack of planning, carelessness in handling volunteers and giving them worthless jobs were the main draw backs reported by volunteers in many situations. (Shahine, 2011)

Voluntary work in Egypt

Literature Review

In the early decades of the 20th century, voluntary organizations were led by the middle and upper class people offering services to those less privileged. Although such organizations were not a grass root initiated organization, they were able to mobilize the masses, yet they were attributed by “cyclicity” as they start very active at the beginning of their establishment, but gradually their enthusiasm starts to decline. (Ibrahim, 1996). In the 1980s, the voluntary sector in Egypt, started to become the third pillar with respect to the development in Egypt working under The Federation of Associations. Voluntary organizations in Egypt has four dimensions; structure, values, environment and impact. With respect to structure, it is characterized by limited citizen participation and few resources, it functions in an environment full of political restrictions leading to insignificant impact on the society and government, and hence limited promotion of

positive values. Although there are thousands of organizations registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, yet many organizations exist only on paper and are considered inactive. In 2007 a total of 21,500 organizations were registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, and according to Egypt Human Development Report, seventy percent of these organizations are located in urban governorates while Upper Egypt has a less share of organizations. Many organizations tend to see themselves as providing the immediate needs of citizens rather than seeking to influence the public policy or hold the government or private sector accountable for their actions. (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005). In 2009, the information center of ministers' cabinet revealed that 15.8 million families spent around L.E 4.5 billion annually on charitable activities constituting around 86.7 percent of Egyptian families. The study stated that 567.000 youth in the age bracket 10-29 carried out voluntary activities (2.2% of this age group), and that 97% of charities are spent for "Zakat or Oshour" reaching approximately 1.8 billion every year. It was illustrated that 45.5% of the Egyptian families prefer to spend their money on "Sadaka" while 21.6% of the families spend their money on donations and both reach L.E. 2.5 billion annually. Donations that target the needy and the poor directly rank first among Egyptians, followed by donations given to mosques and churches (El Masry el Yom, 2010).

Barbara Ibrahim conducted a study on three NGOs (Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable Development, Nahdet El Mahrousa and Resala) to explore the motives behind youth volunteering. It was found out that the majority of youth volunteer to fulfill religious obligation and gain "Thawab", in addition to the feeling of national obligation and patriotism. It was emphasized that the translation of the name of the organization

“Alashanek Ya Balady” into English means (for you my country) which again stresses on the national duty. (Ibrahim, 2007). In a research conducted by Dr. Moussa Shetewy in his study on voluntary work in Egypt, the same motives were concluded which are mainly having a role in the development of Egypt, and also religious motives to gain “Thawab”. (Shetewy, 2000) These were the two main motives behind civic participation in both researches, yet there were other motives emphasized such as gaining skills and experiences, finding better job opportunities through personal contacts and networking. It was also found that civic participation is considered a leeway from the norms and traditions of the society especially for girls from lower socio economic classes as girls volunteering is an activity that is allowed by the family and where socialization with peers from the opposite sex takes place. (Ibrahim, 2007). With a sample of 2, 400 Egyptian youth, Assaad and Barssoom found out that the percentage of youth who never participated in any school activities was 67 percent while only 13 percent did some kind of volunteer work. Assaad and Barssoom 2007 reported in a study by United Nations Development Program UNDP that participants preferred watching television in their leisure time followed by listening to music and spending time with family and friends. On the contrary Barbara Ibrahim found participants preferred volunteering rather than spending time in front of television, or club or “ahwa” and having fun with friends and beneficiaries in their leisure time.

In his study, Shetewy found that more people are educated the more they participate in voluntary activities. He pin pointed that people with low educational background were found the least to participate in voluntary activities. People with bachelor degrees 51% followed by secondary school certificate 28.4%, followed by higher education 11% and

finally those who are beyond secondary education 9.5%. The study showed that the majority of volunteers are from the middle class with medium and high income. People with medium income were 34% followed with high medium income 16%, low income 20%. With respect to gender, Shetewy found that 45% volunteer in the age bracket 40 – 59 and the number of male volunteers was higher than the female volunteers with 72.5% versus 27.5%. Moreover 35% volunteer in the age bracket 20 – 39, meaning that more than 80% of the volunteers fall in the age bracket of 20 – 59 years. As for volunteers at age 60 and over, they constitute 19% and youth below age 20 were 0.5%.

With respect to the marital status of volunteers, the study revealed that married people participate more in voluntary activities 71% while single people 19.4%, divorced or widowed participate with 9.5%. They reported that their first experience with volunteering started at the age of 20 – 29 followed by others who were less than twenty. Parents and peers were considered very important to the volunteer; they are the reference to volunteers where 92% of the participants agreed that the opinion of their families and friends is vital regarding volunteering.

With regard to the organizations they volunteered with, it was found that volunteers received awards and certificates, where they were given a reasonable work load. However it was demonstrated that such organizations lacked a clear vision. Illiteracy of beneficiaries was a real challenge to volunteers, also searching for glory and showing off was one of the drawbacks of some volunteers. On the other side of the coin, Assaad and Barsoum found that one of the main obstacles of volunteering was the low level of tolerance and acceptance of the “other” particularly those who are from a low socioeconomic background and different belief systems or dogmas

With respect to increasing youth civic engagement was a clear agenda, good work division 12%, monetary or in kind awards 20%, collaboration between the voluntary sector and other different sectors in the society 18% and finally the existence of the benefits of voluntary work in school curriculums, and finally raising awareness about the importance of such voluntary activities in building the society. (Shetewy, 2000). Shetewy stated that most of the volunteers in Egypt were involved in charitable activities 24% while community development projects scored 22%.

Youth led organizations

Youth in the age bracket of 18-29 years represent around 23.5% of the total population 19.8 million people (Human Development Report, 2010). The Egyptian government established entities such as the “Ministry of Youth” currently known as the “Supreme Youth Council” to give priority to youth issues. This attention to youth needs created a window for youth to establish their own organizations creating a turning point with respect to the concept of youth organizations and its growing number. Based on the field study conducted by Hisham El Rouby and his team in 2007, there are 122 organizations in Egypt that are classified as youth organizations, taking into consideration the different types among these organizations. The number of these organizations that fulfill the main two criteria (managed by youth and serving youth as main target group) qualifying them as youth organizations reaches thirty eight, while sixty three organizations only fulfill the criteria number one (at least 60% youth in the board). Twenty one organizations only fulfilled the criteria of providing services to youth and children. It is worth mentioning that the percentage of youth organizations is small in comparison to the number of

voluntary organizations in Egypt (less than 0.5%). Moreover, the percentage of youth organizations is small in comparison to other ones concerned with serving specific target groups, such as women. (El Rouby, 2007). The largest number of youth organizations is located in the Greater Cairo Region (25%), as many conferences (national and international in many fields), trainings and cultural exchange opportunities take place in Cairo where new ideas and approaches in the development field are usually presented and discussed. In addition, the population in big cities, such as Cairo, Alexandria, Assuit, Menia and Qena usually has access to information through the media and other information technology facilities. Although most of youth organizations are located in the Greater Cairo, they do not make sufficient effort coordinating their work to create active alliances. Only eleven youth organizations are members of a union of youth organizations. (El Rouby, 2007). The Youth Association for Population and Development (YAPD) which was founded in 1995 was the first organization that was led by youth in Egypt and which set a model for youth groups in Egypt. Since that time, YAPD started with other emerging youth groups and organizations to plan, implement and publicize different activities related to youth development issues which afterwards led to the spread of the term “youth organizations” in different sectors. YAPD and its partners focused on advocating that youth could be real assets and partners in the development process and not only a target group that receives services. Its main message was “If youth are given the opportunity they can be an important vehicle for development in their communities”. (El Rouby, 2009). Moreover, the Egyptian Volunteer Center (EVC) was established in 2001 to employ youth in development projects where they would acquire important skills needed in the job market. The EVC witnessed an incredible growth, it started with 1,200

volunteers and 150 organizations, and now it currently possesses 18,000 volunteers and 900 organizations in different parts of Egypt. It was reported that 40% of the volunteers were able to get jobs. Volunteers are judged on a grading system for their commitment and performance during their volunteer experience. The EVC has been able to sustain its activities by accepting funds from international donors. (El Rouby, 2009)

Youth in Egypt

This section gives an overview of youth economic and social status in Egypt tackling the problems which most of them suffer from. It deems necessary to put our hands on the challenges which they face, so that appropriate actions are taken in that regard. In Egypt, the official government body in charge of youth issues is the Supreme Council for Youth. It defines youth as the age bracket from 18- 35. This long period of time is due to the fact that young people between 18 and 35 usually face the same problems and sufferings, such as unemployment, poor education, low health awareness and limited access to training, education, and job opportunities. The current situation of youth is about four dimensions that are closely related; it starts with education and learning; work opportunities; potentials forming families and channels for exercising citizenship. (El Rouby et al. 2007). As youth exit from schooling, most of them wait several years to find full time jobs, it was found that it is three times difficult for youth to find a job for the first time than for the adult population. The age of marriage is rising as in males it reached 30 years and 22 years for females (Ibrahim, 2007). Citizenship participation in the society mostly takes place in the form of charitable activities either monetary or in-kind contribution, while participation in voluntary activities is less popular as outlets for such activities are very scarce (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of

Egypt, 2005). Social disparities, wide gaps between rich and poor, high unemployment rates among graduates, difficulty in forming families, and all those problems make youth feel that the system is corrupt and caters only to the privileged elite creating a sense of limited future prospects. Besides, for many youths the main contact with the State is through the police who are considered hostile and needlessly violent.

Egypt is experiencing two main characteristics with respect to youth: “Youth Bulge” and “Youth Exclusion”. Egypt is at a stage in its demographic transition where the percentage of youth in the population is significantly rising when compared to other age groups, this phenomenon is named “Youth Bulge”. In the coming decade, those youths will mark the biggest group in Egypt’s long history that made its way to adulthood. With respect to youth exclusion, poverty constitutes the root of this exclusion where youth are prevented from participating in the normal activities of their society and are considered situated at a social disadvantage (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi, 2005). Youth are offered limited opportunities with respect to community decision-making and managerial positions which make them face various challenges that affect their personal and career development. Although there was an economic revival in 2004 with a notable improvement in labor market conditions, youth continue to be the group which suffers the most from higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings, limited job security and stability. The dimensions of youth exclusion is closely related; poor learning leads to poor jobs, and poor jobs lessen the ability of forming families and achieving personal independence which result in youth risking their lives migrating to other countries in search for job opportunities (Assaad 2007), While the majority of youth suffer from high unemployment rates, low earnings, limited job security and stability, devaluation of their

education credentials, a few privileged ones successfully find jobs, are financially stable, and are able to form families (Assaad and Barsoum , 2007).

Socio-political overview

In this section, the socio political aspect of the Egyptian society since 1952 till 2011 will take place. The socio political aspect in Egypt in the 20 centaury is divided into three phases:

Pre 1952: is the liberal phase that witnessed the formation of voluntary organizations and movements. Many of these organizations had strong national sentiments as they aimed to fighting colonial occupation. The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the collaboration of the palace dominated government led to the mobilization of the Egyptian society to act as countervailing forces against the existing State institutions. Voluntary organizations were active on several fronts such as providing services to unprivileged groups as well as seeking national independence. The 1919 revolution that mobilized the masses led to drafting Egypt's first constitution in 1923 which gave Egyptians the right to establish their voluntary organizations and institutionalized that right which resulted in the increase in the number of voluntary organizations. (Ibrahim, 1996). Voluntary organizations grew in number to cover several areas such as education, culture, health and social welfare. Islamic and Coptic associations extended their activities to building schools and hospitals in addition to their religious and philanthropic activities. Due to the increase in number of such organizations, the Egyptian government introduced legislation in 1930 to bring all charitable activities and political oriented organizations under its control. In 1939, the Ministry of Social Affairs was founded to supervise and keep track

of all voluntary activities and to provide them with State subsidy if needed (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005)

Following the July 1952 revolution, when President Nasser took power, the voluntary sector witnessed dramatic changes by becoming burdened by an increased governmental control, inhibiting the creation of new organizations. A new law was created to impose restrictive measures on voluntary organizations and the sequestration of their property. The nationalization of the Waqf (endowment) system aborted many philanthropic activities that were taking place via this channel. The government advocated for establishing community development organizations that could work closely with the government in implementing a national development agenda. (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005). The State abolished all the existing political parties at that time, neutralizing organizations that tend to have political agendas by getting them under tight government control. During Nasser's regime, law 32 was passed in 1964 to limit and constrain the formation of voluntary organizations and their activities. This law deprived Egyptians from their right of establishing and running voluntary organizations, although this right was explicitly granted by the Egyptian constitution. This law gave the State a vast power with respect to the creation, dissolution and control of every aspect of any voluntary organization.. President Nasser's nationalization of voluntary entities such as hospitals and organizations in an attempt to realize his dream "Arab Socialism" left little room for growth in the voluntary sector (Ibrahim, 1996). As president Sadat came to power, he embraced the open market economic system (Infitah), standing in contrast of Nasser socialism by being oriented more towards the West. During Sadat presidency, there was an increase in the number of

Islamic banks and investment companies that applied the concept of profit sharing rather than paying interests which contradicts Islam. There existed around 300 Islamic institutions managing the capital of US \$ 8-12 billion, equaling the State's entire annual budget at that time. Sadat promoted the investment of foreign and Egyptian capital where many factories were established by foreign investors and which offered better employment opportunities than local industries. A limited number of the "fat cats" that made immediate profits often through illegal transactions and corruption started to appear on the scene and the gap between the rich and the poor started to grow. (Ibrahim, F., Ibrahim B., 2003). At the end of the 1970s, the liberalization policies initiated by President Sadat led to the revival of voluntary organizations at the local and national level. Under pressure for political liberalization, more reforms were granted such as allowing the existence of political parties, granting freedom to some political prisoners and groups that were repressed under the Nasser regime. Sadat's interest in revitalizing the Egyptian voluntary sector was mainly for two reasons, the first was the need to strengthen collective action to address the unmet social needs which the State could not undertake, and secondly was his desire for a stronger civil society by creating more pluralistic institutions. (Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2005). With President Mubarak coming to power in 1982, he maintained good relations with the West as his predecessor Sadat, dealing cautiously with the Islamists in the beginning of his rule, but afterwards he started cracking down on them after they tried to assassinate him. Mubarak applied the Structural Adjustment policy to reduce the government share with respect to social services offered to people. (Ibrahim, F., Ibrahim B., 2003). The 1980s and 1990s witnessed new policies of economic liberalization and

privatization in Egypt in order to meet the challenges of globalization. As a result, government expenditures in the field of education, health care and social welfare were significantly decreased leading to the marginalization of vulnerable groups including children, women, youth and the poor, and paving the way to the emergence of programs sponsored by the voluntary sector to fill this gap left by the State.(Kandil, 2004). In the 1980s, the rate of economic growth dropped from 7.4 percent to 5 percent annually and Egypt was disregarded from the World Bank's group of lower middle income country to lower income countries. The statistics also indicated the rise in inflation rate and a drop of 10 percent in the real income of industrial workers. The economic reform with the International Monetary Fund in 1991 caused recession, reducing the growth rate to 2.5 percent in 1992 which made the government use harsher methods dealing with political parties, associations and opposition groups seeking democratization and economic reform (Mustapha Al Sayyid, 1993)

In the nineties, civil society organizations held a new position as they had to: contribute to the democratic reform in Egypt and have a positive impact in the field of human rights and political participation, secondly meet the challenges of human development by facing the negative impact of privatization, poverty and unemployment, thirdly widen the scope of popular participation as the top to bottom approach have failed and finally empower women by lifting their economic, social and political power. (Kandil, 2010). Western pressure for democratization in Egypt which took place after the events of September 2001 in the United States of America, in addition to internal pressures on Mubarak's government, created some signs of political relaxation and human rights respect. (Kandil, 2010). The United State and Europe believed that the authoritarian rule and the lack of

democracy in the region were the reason behind terrorism, and therefore civil society organizations were heavily funded and supported by the West to achieve this transition to democracy, by building a new culture based on tolerance and dialogue. New types of organizations such as human rights increased in number from one or two in the early 1990s to 132 currently operating in Egypt, in addition to organizations fighting for the right of education, health, citizenship, Copts etc. (Abdallah, 2008). The growing number of organizations and the fear from their success became threatening to the government, and hence law 84 in 2002 was passed to place registration limitations, funding restrictions, and regular monitoring, control on media outlets, and suppression of key leaders (McGann, 2008). Mubarak used legal and extra legal means to ensure that democratic relaxation is taking place at a reasonable rate that could be absorbed by the regime. Despite the official discourse of Mubarak regime about the partnership and good relationship between his regime and civil society, the regime was significantly suspicious of the agendas and motives of civil society organizations. The regime assumed the role of the patron on those organizations placing a more supervisory role which ended in mutual distrust and unhealthy dialogue. It should be noted that more restrictions are practiced against organizations the cross “red lines” and that are pushing for political and social reform as opposed to organizations that work on issues of the environment, education etc. does not usually face hardships in executing their programs (Sherif Abdel Azzim 2011).

Youth generations in Egypt

There are three generations of youth transitions since the 1950s till 2011th:

The post revolutionary transition is roughly from the mid 1950s till the 1960s. At that period of time, school and university education were good, public sector jobs were secured, getting married and forming families were within the reach of most youth, the age of marriage was fairly young, and women were pushed to the workforce in large numbers due to the expansion of the public sector. The Nasser generation had a sense of identity and belonging to the project of building the Arab nation. (Ibrahim, 1997)

The “infetah” generation of the late 1970s and 1980s searched for the private sector after losing faith in the state institutions. The ages of marriage started to rise and finding a job took became more difficult. Some youth had to migrate in search for new opportunities as migration was considered the safety valve and the solution for those who could not find a job at home. The Sadat youth generation was trying to find a place in a newly globalizing economy with its enticements of technology. (Ibrahim, 1997)

The current youth generation neither has the Arab nationalist dream of Nasser era nor the professional or consumerist project that enticed their parents in the Sadat era, they do not have State provided nor market generated job prospects and migration is an option to move forward and have a decent living. Political participation is restricted, political activism is punished and a few civic or community groups are welcomed. Ibrahim, 1997). Inspired by the Tunisian revolution and fed up with the thirty years of Mubarak’s authoritarian rule, many youth from all walks of life demonstrated on the 25th of January 2011 in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and other cities to overthrow Hosni Mubarak regime. Millions of protests went down to the streets to demonstrate against legal and political

issues such as police brutality, lack of free elections, lack of freedom of speech, continuation of emergency law, corruption, high unemployment, food price inflation, and low minimum wages etc. On the 11th of February, Mubarak resigned and the Army Council became in charge until the parliament and a new president are elected. This could mark a new era where youth would be involved in the political life and exercise citizenship with complete freedom. (Lindsey, 2011)

CHAPTER FOUR

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

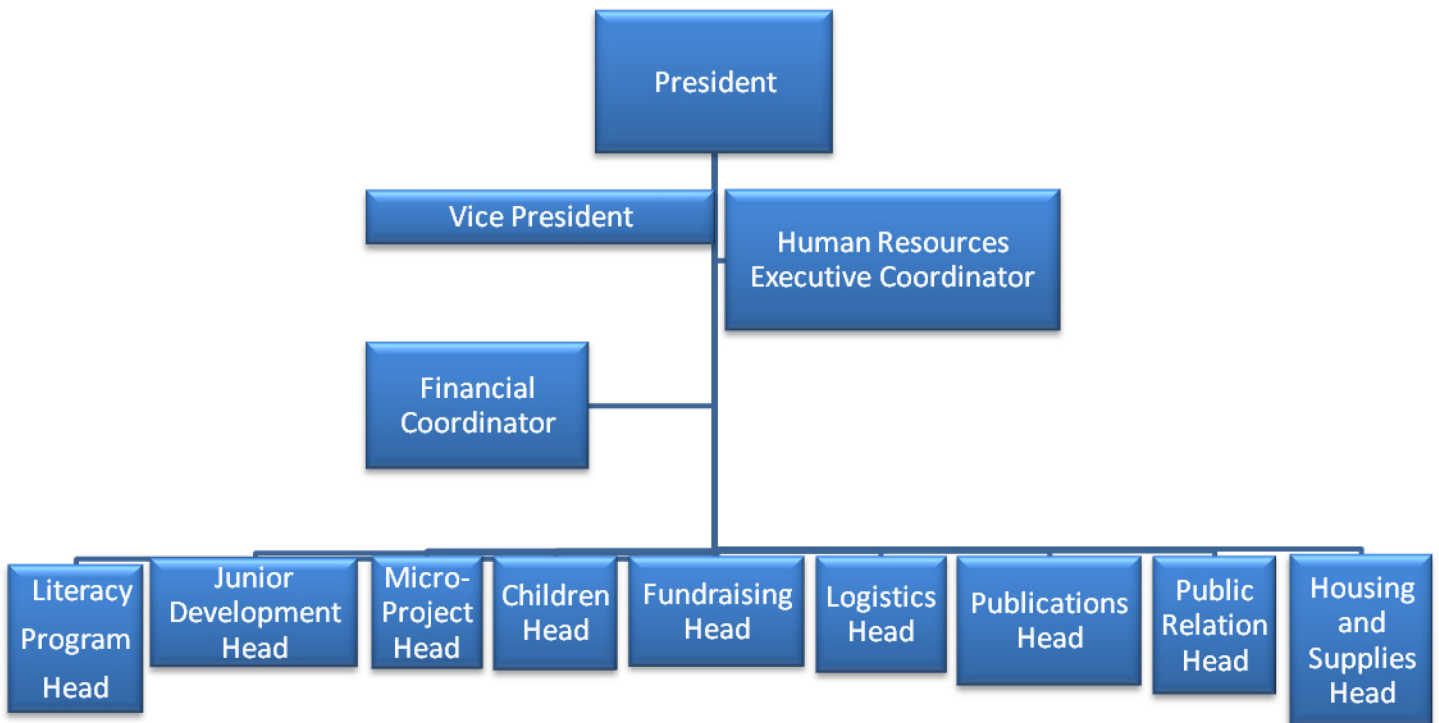
Case Study 1

In this chapter the researcher will shed light on one of the American University in Cairo student run organizations Volunteers in Action “VIA”. The chapter will explore the different committees that enables the students achieve the objective of the organization, its outreach and on campus activities, organizational structure and sources of funding.

Volunteers in Action VIA are a student run organization that was founded in 1997 at the American University in Cairo. Its scope of work is mainly providing financial and psychological support to orphans through organizing educational and recreational events for those orphans. Volunteers in Action (VIA) mainly works in the district of “ Meet Okba”, providing literacy classes, starting up micro-projects, distributing new clothes at orphanages, food packages to poor families, Moreover, VIA helps orphan brides furnish their new homes. VIA has around eighty members and Dr. Dina Rateb IT professor in the Business School at AUC is the faculty advisor and its motto is “Paint a smile on the orphan’s face”.

The below diagram gives a brief summary of the different committees in VIA. The following lines will include a description of each and every committee with respect to the activities carried out by the organization. There are committees for the outreach programs that take place in Meet Okba and also committees for on campus activities that directly support those outreach programs.

VIA organizational structure



A. Outreach Committees

I. Housing and Supplies Committee:

This committee includes more than twenty members. It is responsible for collecting donations and work on different types of projects such as:

- “Tamween Packs” in Ramadan (providing food for the poor in the Holy month of Ramadan)
- Clothing “Keswat Eid” (providing clothes to the poor in the feast)

- Furnishing Brides (getting the equipment needed for marriage)
- Group Wedding (arranging a group wedding for orphan brides)

These four projects are very essential for the committee to survive and require a lot of work and research.

Food packs

Donations are usually collected by VIA members before the Holy month of Ramadan by two months. As the money is collected, goods are purchased and the packs are distributed to different places in Egypt after their distribution in Meet Okba such as Cairo, Menya, Damietta and other underdeveloped places. In the year 2008/2009, VIA delivered almost 3500 packages around Egypt. Each pack contained food such as sugar, oil, rice etc. that would enable a family consisting of five persons to have sufficient food during the holy month. Each package costs LE 65 which totaled 225,000 EGP.

Iftar to-go

In the year 2008-2009, Iftar-To-Go team delivered 3,479 hot meals to fasting families in Ramadan. Those meals contained healthy and essential elements of food such as carbohydrates and proteins. Students who worked on this program were required to deliver the meals on a daily basis to different families.

Clothes exhibition

This project focused mainly on different on campus campaigns to collect used clothes from AUC students, faculty and staff. The collected clothes are cleaned up and sold with

symbolic prices to beneficiaries. Money is collected to buy new clothes for orphans. Buying new clothes to different orphanages in the feast reached 20,000 EGP. VIA target as many orphanages in different districts to paint a smile on the orphan face.

Furnishing orphan brides

This project entails furnishing brides by purchasing necessary equipment for establishing their homes. Students buy kitchens, washing machines, ovens and refrigerators for brides. Sponsors are often sought by students to provide such types of electronics and house supplies. In 2008 -2009, VIA provided equipment to more than 25 orphan brides. Each bride got between L.E. 3000 to 3500 with the total of the L.E 82,000.

Group wedding

This is an annual event “wedding party” which the students organize and financially support. Brides are selected according to a certain criteria based on their need and family economic status. The students conduct an investigation about the brides by visiting their families and neighbors to ensure they couple deserve their support. In 2008 – 2009 VIA members organized a four couples a wedding in Sherouk Club in Maadi with the cost of 10,000 EGP. The four girls were from the following districts; Ezbet El Nakhil, Matar Embaba, Helwan and Bashteel.

II. Micro-projects committee

Micro-projects

This committee is entitled to financially support the poor families and help them sustain their daily living by providing them with loans to enable them start new projects. This committee analyzes and investigates the cases before giving out the money for the project. In 2008 -2009, VIA supported ten cases. Seven cases are from Meet Okba district and the other three were from scattered areas among Cairo. Mostly, eight of the cases were supported by supporting them in building up kiosks, and the others were given sewing machines to work on making clothes. Each project was in the range of L.E 300 to L.E 730. All the loans were repaid by the beneficiaries on monthly installments to Volunteers in Action micro-projects committee and the profit is kept for the beneficiaries to secure an income.

III. Junior development committee

Dealing with kids in the age of three years till fifteen years is not a simple task. Junior development is a committee that helps Meet Okba district kids develop cultural, moral, and ethical skills. Weekly visits and some educational trips are organized by VIA to instill good behavior and ethics in those kids. VIA pays the school fees for forty kids in Meet Okba to enable them continue their education. The payment for the government schools is ninety one Egyptian pounds for one kid with a total of L.E 3640.

IV. Literacy committee:

The illiteracy eradication program could really change many people's life. This committee mainly targets women in Meet Okba district. In 2008 there were twelve ladies

enrolled in the literacy program, two of them got the literacy eradication certificate which is equivalent to the six primary certificates in the Ministry of Education.

VI. Children committee

Children Committee is the backbone of “Volunteers in Action”. Without orphans the club would not exist, so it is a brief description of the cause for this club. This committee supports orphans by organizing weekly visits to orphanages and inviting orphans to AUC campus. This committee hosted two children days last year, one in fall and the other one in spring. Five hundred orphans from different orphanages were entertained with games, sweets and food at AUC. The budget for each children day is L.E 10,000, which sums up to almost L.E 20,000 for both of them. VIA members also pay weekly visits every Friday to different orphanages in Cairo, in 2008-2009, around thirty orphanages were visited by VIA students to provide psychological and financial support. Moreover, VIA organizes the Orphan’s fair to help NGOs working with orphans sell their products and generate an income.

B. On campus committees

Logistics committee

This committee is basically responsible for all the logistics needed for carrying out the activities of the organization need. It sets the plan for organizing potential events and/or programs including all logistics required such as reservation of the hall, booth, banner, security passes for guests etc.

Fundraising committee

This is the money machine committee. It works continuously for the whole year to cover expenses that cannot be taken from the donations account. Not only this committee is responsible for raising money throughout the year for the different projects, but is also responsible for in-kind sponsorship. In 2007-2008 VIA was nominated as the best fundraising organization on campus. VIA was able to fundraise the amount of L.E 207,000 from different sponsors such as Radio Shack, KIA, Edita, Henkel, Itkan, El Elezabi, Balbaa Group etc. They also received in kind sponsorship such as printing material and decorations.

Public relations committee

Public relations committee is responsible for promoting VIA activities and projects to attract more members and/or to collect donations. Its role is simply developing a plan to inform the AUC community about “Volunteers in Action”, its programs and its projects through promotional materials that spread on campus, in addition to contacting media to inform the Egyptian community at large of those programs.

Publications committee

This committee is responsible for the designs of all the banners, flyers, invitations, tickets, documentaries etc. of VIA activities. This committee hosts talented students who efficiently work on adobe photo shop program to carry out these tasks. Each event has different printing materials i.e. flyers, invitations, posters, roll-ups and banners. The

budgeted amount for this committee is 25,000 EGP, nevertheless, VIA usually succeeds in finding a printing sponsor for its designs.

Source of funding

VIA as all other community service organizations at AUC have four main sources of funding; the first is the money allocated by AUC administration to all organizations. This is considered a little amount in comparison to the projects implemented, yet it is the seed that the students build on throughout the year either by targeting sponsors or collecting donations. The second source of funding is sponsorship where students seek sponsors that could support their activities. A contract is signed by each party to explain the responsibilities of each party. The third source of fundraising is the organization of fundraising events where VIA organize events to generate an income that would support its activities. VIA is very famous by its fundraising concert featuring renowned pianist Mr. Omar Khyrat. Another source of funding is donations and students make sure that this money has to be spent on the cause which they collected it for.

ASSESSMENT OF VIA PROGRAMS

Mission and objectives

An organization's mission is its *raison d'être*, the reason behind its existence and what it hopes to accomplish. The mission should serve as the foundation and frame of reference for all the activities of the organization utilizing all its resources in an efficient and effective manner to accomplish its stated purpose.

VIA is unique in the sense that it is the only student organization at AUC that targets orphans. Orphans are at the heart of VIA's activities and all the members have such clear picture in their minds. The strategic values, and mission are known to all members of the organization which is supporting orphans through different development and charitable activities. The projects that VIA implement throughout the whole year reflect this mission and values. Examples of such activities are:

- VIA orphan's day which is entertaining orphans all day long with games, magicians and celebrities, this activity is carried out once every semester.
- Trips for orphans such as trips to fun fair and farms like "fagnoon" where orphans play in the mud, paint their faces and get out their energy
- Weekly visits to orphans in different orphanages offering presents and spending some time playing and networking.
- Junior development sessions which is developing orphans socially through narrating ethical stories.
- Orphans wedding which celebrating the marriage of orphan brides and financially supporting furnishing their homes.

Impact

According to the documents at AUC, VIA was able to carry out the following activities in the year 2008-2009:

- Three thousand and five hundred 3500 food packs for the poor in the holy month of Ramadan with the amount of L.E 225.000
- New clothes for orphans with the amount of L.E 20.000
- Furnished twenty five brides with the amount of L.E 82.000
- Arranged a group wedding for four orphans with the amount of L.E 10.000
- Gave loans to ten people to start their own projects and generate an income
- Provided literacy classes to ten women
- Developed ethical and moral standards to forty kids
- Paid several visits to different orphanages
- Fundraised the amount of L.E 344.000 for is projects
- Collected the amount of L.E. 130.000 as donations

VIA provides charitable and development services to the residents of Meet Okba. Community stakeholders are a key partner with VIA as they are the ones who know all people of the neighborhood and could decide who deserves support the most by assessing the needs of the community. The director of the youth center in Meet Okba is the liaison between the beneficiaries and VIA.

VIA embraces both **charitable and development activities in its programs**. The students understand the importance of development projects on the welfare of the community, yet they believe that charity is needed to fulfill the basic needs of the beneficiaries who will be more encouraged to join development activities unless those

basic needs are fulfilled. In addition, charity builds bridges with the community and creates a bond with beneficiaries to gain support and legitimacy which afterwards enable them to have more participants in development activities. At the time VIA provides food packs, clothes, it also provides literacy classes and micro projects. The people who attend such classes are more eligible to receive charity.

Also VIA works on two fronts and **balance between on campus activities and outreach activities**. Members are aware that the two activities complement each other. On campus activities are normally carried out to serve outreach ones. For example the donation campaigns that VIA organize throughout the year are designed to help implementing outreach activities such as: food distribution in Ramadan, clothes distribution in the feast, furnishing orphans getting married, arranging trips for orphans. This method helped in making the projects of VIA sustainable for thirteen years. VIA activities are determined by its members not aligning by any political or religious organizations.

Governance

An effective governance structure, and a strong active and committed governing body are crucial for any organization to achieve its mission and objectives. The plan of governance should reflect the core values, mission and cultural standards of the organization. VIA has its constitution that describes the purpose and aim for its establishment, organizational structure and governance. VIA is registered as a student organization in the American University in Cairo abiding to AUC rules and regulations. VIA is supervised by the Office of Student Development/ Community Service Program which facilitates the work of VIA by providing the students with the needed services ensuring

that work is implemented in a legal manner. Members of VIA have to be students at the American University in Cairo, however few outsiders could be members in VIA and participate in its activities as “Friends of VIA” on the basis that they are interested in working with orphans and they are students in other universities. Before being accepted, they are interviewed by VIA high board to ensure that they would benefit the organization. All members have to abide by all AUC rules and regulations which are stipulated in the Permanent Constitution of the General Assembly of the Student Body. VIA has a structure that is known to all its members. The high-board consists of the president, vice president, human resources coordinator finance coordinator and heads of programs and heads of committees. The president of the club is the president of the high-board. Candidates running for presidents must be full time, undergraduate students, at least second semester sophomores who have completed two consecutive semesters as full time students by the time of nomination and must not graduate before the end of the presidency term. The president is selected by the previous high-board (except those who are interested in the position) and the board of advisors attends the selection process. The president is appointed for a non-renewable one year term. The president has the right to appoint the vice president, heads of committees and programs after consultation with previous heads where the president and previous head must both agree on the candidate. If they do not agree, the issue will be voted upon by a committee comprising of the president, the previous head, the vice president, the previous president and the previous vice president. The president is responsible for all the actions and decisions taken by the high board. In case the president wants to resign, he/she must give a one month notice until a new president is elected. For decisions to be taken on any issue, the president and

vice president must be present when decisions are made. A 50% and 1 of the present members of the high-board is needed for decisions to pass. At least 50% of the high-board members need to attend the meeting for decision making and each member of the high board has one vote.

This constitution is for reference in case any conflict arises. The constitution is considered the bible by which the club has to abide to, however it could be amended after the approval of the high-board and faculty advisor, and AUC administration. In VIA all members are treated with equity and fairness

Operations

At the beginning of each year, VIA submits a one year plan to AUC administration expressing the ideas that students have in mind with respect to supporting orphans. This plan is created by VIA high board and reflects the activities that VIA is serious about accomplishing during the year. The administration reviews the plan and decides on the approved activities that VIA would be allowed to start executing.

The high-board sets the priorities of the organization and directs the committee heads and members to the target. The high-board assesses the performance of the committee heads and provides feedback for the improvement of the service.

The structure of the organization allocates the duties and responsibilities of each person. Information is shared among VIA members through regular meetings. There are three types of meetings where VIA shares information; the general meeting where all the club members, committee heads and high-board all get in touch together, committee meetings where only each committee meets with its members to follow up on tasks and update

members on any changes, and finally the high-board meeting where only the high-board meet whenever decisions need to be taken.

Human resources

Committed and dedicated members are vital for the success of any organization. VIA has clear procedures for the recruitment of members like other organizations at AUC. The recruitment week that takes place in the second week of every semester is a good chance for students interested in VIA activities to sign up and become VIA members. VIA does not exclude the participation of students on account of their sex or religious affiliation. As VIA is one of the best organizations at AUC in terms of credibility and reputation, it is able to attract a lot of students to its activities. There is low turn over rate in VIA in comparison to other organization. This reveals the good leadership of VIA and the seriousness of the members in handling assigned tasks.

Sustainability

To ensure the sustainability of its projects, VIA invests in its members by organizing trainings sessions that would sharpen the skills of the members such as leadership, teamwork, negotiation, communication and analytical trainings. This working environment enables VIA members to become motivated to continue in their activities. VIA gives a very good learning experience to its members. Most of the members are motivated to work with orphans and have the qualifications and experience necessary to achieve objectives. Each member in VIA is aware of the responsibilities and tasks that need to be achieved. Each committee has its own scope of work that is different than

other committees yet complements it. To keep its programs and projects sustained, VIA raise funds from different entities whether corporate, individual donors or government agencies. Those funds are utilized in the implementation of the programs that serve orphans.

Finances

The survival of any organization depends on its capacity of handling its finances with a realistic perception of what it can do within the framework of resources it has. Also any organization should assure donors and members that investments were properly utilized. VIA plans its activities in relation to its finances, it receives some seed money from AUC administration. Throughout the year its fundraising committee seeks sponsors and donors to fund its projects. VIA approaches as many sponsors and donors as it can to secure funds necessary for the sustainability of its projects. Donations have to go to the specific cause of the donor while sponsorship money could go for logistics and operations needed for the implementation phase. All financial transactions are recorded with relevant receipts and supporting documentation at the Office of Student Development. The financial coordinator is the person in charge of handling VIA accounts in terms of depositing or withdrawing the money from/in the account. The organization plans its activities in relation to its finances. To ensure proper accounting, three signatures are requested to issue a cheque; one of the finance coordinator, another two of AUC administration. Auditing is conducted once every year to review the accounting process and provide recommendations. VIA reconciles its budget every year through comparing expenditure against income, and has a good bookkeeping where the expenditure and

revenue are recorded regularly. Any surplus generated through its activities is utilized by the organization in fulfilling its mission and objective.

In conclusion, VIA students are able to handle different activities to serve their target group which is orphans. The students are divided among different committees that handle different projects whether charity or development, on campus or off campus. The American University administration allows the students to work freely on community service activities to increase their civic engagement in the community and enhance their skills. The idea of forming associations gives room for students to act as role models for their other fellow colleagues in a certain field (Social learning theory). Students could influence each other and once they experience a meaningful experience with regard to volunteering they would continue doing so. Students coming from different backgrounds network together and constitute a social capital based on bondage and trust where each one could make use of the social resources of the group to achieve certain objectives. With activities going on throughout the year, students get to enhance their individual/human capital where they are able to acquire new skills needed in life. Such skills will enable them to find better job opportunities after graduation to become future leaders. The social network that was created in VIA will help students to have more contacts which they could benefit from in the future. Despite the hardship that VIA members face to implement their projects in terms of time, money limitations as well as bureaucracy when dealing with public entities, VIA was able to achieve good results making a difference with many orphans. They have an impact on the orphans whether financial or psychological. There could be room for expansion if more sponsorship is

secured to fund more programs. Hence more fundraising approaches should be identified and more members should be recruited to work on a larger scale.

ALASHANEK YA BALADY

Case study 2

Alashanek Ya Balady in Arabic means “For you my country” is the main community service project of the Student Union at the American University in Cairo, it was established in 2002. The program involves AUC students in the Egyptian community by promoting the idea of sustainable development. The project activities take place in one of Cairo’s poorest areas, Ain El Seera so that a measurable difference and development in the whole area could be noted. Students plan and implement various developmental activities that help improve the social and economic conditions of the Ain El Sira community. Also AYB aims to enhance the sense of civic responsibility within the AUC student body, and make them believe in the future of a better country. Its slogan is “The Path to a better Country”. AYB programs address the various problems related to poverty such as eradicating illiteracy, empowering the beneficiaries economically, developing youth socially and educationally. These issues are significant to the community because it represents a complete cycle of development that includes prevention and intervention programs for different issues that poor communities in Egypt face like unemployment, violence, illiteracy and inefficient educational system. The primary activities of AYB are eradicating illiteracy, micro-credit, youth development, national educational program, English development and computer learning.

As AUC is known to be the school of the elite class in Egypt, it is most likely that a large number of students have never dealt with the unprivileged groups, which constitute a large number in the Egyptian society. Hence, AYB enables the students to get in touch with the Egyptian community and helping them become civically engaged.

AYB is a student run project where the students are fully in control of all projects. AYB president and a board of three people who are also students supervise the work of the different programs. AYB has different branches in other universities like Ain Shams, German University in Cairo, French university and Cairo University. Each AYB organization is independent from the other, but occasionally they have joint charity projects such as school painting.

In summer 2009, AYB has won The Mac Jannet Prize for Global Citizenship which recognizes exceptional student civic engagement initiatives. AYB was selected from sixty-seven programs in forty universities in nineteen countries around the world. The prize was \$ 1000 to support all AYB activities.

Challenges

AYB faces three main challenges; the first is the lack of commitment of beneficiaries registered in its programs as beneficiaries are used to periodic charity rather than consistent development. However AYB students aim to change this concept through giving incentives to committed participants. The second challenge is the lack of funding for the projects, as AYB mainly depends on some money from AUC administration in addition to donations collected from the AUC community as well as sponsorship deals with some corporate. AUC administration facilitates funding the projects by allowing some sponsors deals where companies could sponsor some activities in return for some benefits. Hence students have to arrange meetings with these sponsors to finalize the agreement. Finally the third challenge is governmental restrictions and bureaucracy that impedes students from carrying out projects in an effective and smooth way and which

leads the students to partner with Non Governmental Organizations to provide them with the legal framework.

A. Outreach programs

In 2008-2009, sixty beneficiaries were enrolled in different programs ranging from young children (9-12 years old) to old women and men.

- Computer Learning Center
- National Education Program
- Youth Development Program
- Language Development Program
- Research and Development Program
- Micro Projects Program
- Literacy Program
- Charity Program

Computer learning center

Alashanek Ya Balady (AYB) students teach participants from Ain Al Seera the seven modules of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL), a certificate offered by the UNESCO. The courses include: Windows, Word, Excel, Access, Power Point, IT (Information Technology) and Internet. Computer sessions are given in Ain Al Sira Youth Center to interested youth, normally in cohorts of eighteen students. AYB funds the entrance to the ICDL exam to qualified participants and students who pass this exam receive a certificate from the UNESCO. This program aims to help them find better job

opportunities. In 2008-2009, there were seventeen participants in the session, twelve of them succeeded and ten passed the ICDL exam and got the Certificate from the UNESCO after being lectured for a whole eight months by AYB members. The program head is responsible for the recruitment of kids and adults into the program, conducting regular sessions, preparing the last year students to be teachers following semester, finding out ways to make the computer learning fun for kids, support and coordinate with other community service clubs on campus to open CLCs, continuing in ICDL courses, knowledgeable in computers and ICDL (International Certificate Driving License)

Literacy program

AYB students conduct regular literacy sessions not only to teach people how to read and write but also teach them some real life concepts through the unified theme idea. In 2008 – 2009 there were thirteen women in class, eight women in the eradicating illiteracy program passed the ministry exam and got a primary school certificate after persistent work and organizing four sessions per week for whole seven months. The head of the program must be very fluent in Arabic, he is responsible for the recruitment of the men and women into the program, find out ways to sustain the level of education of past year's beneficiaries, have regular teaching sessions and help the students to enter the exam by the end of the year, support and coordinate with other community service clubs on campus that have the same program or to open a new section.

National education program

AYB gives students in the preparatory stage free private lessons to help them overcome academic difficulties. They teach Math and Arabic for students in first, second and third preparatory. They teach eight students in each grade once a week for every subject. The head of the program is responsible for the recruitment of kids from different schools, teaching the students and helping them with their studies, conduct weekly regular sessions, search for a motivational way to motivate the kids to attend the sessions such as providing them with external books, have a good relation with the parents and finally he must be a Thanaweyya Amma Certificate holder

Youth development program

The aim of this program is to develop kids socially by giving them regular sessions about ethics. Twenty five children were developed through weekly sessions that focused on certain values like responsibility, honesty, team work and positivity to the children. The head is responsible for the recruitment of the kids who are in need of social development. Students have a database from schools. He is also responsible for creating interesting games from which kids could learn ethics in an indirect way, conduct regular sessions every week, keep in touch with kids families to see the improvement and finally to develop a monitoring system for the kids outside the session and develop a follow up system with the kids of the years before.

Charity program

The charity program of AYB aims at fulfilling the basic needs of the people living in Ain Al Seera. They also use such charitable programs for as an incentive for the beneficiaries of the different programs in order to maintain their participation. Charitable activities of AYB include: a-Food Packs, AYB distributed five hundred packs in Ain El Seera each pack is worth eighty pounds, b- Keswa Project where students collect used clothes from their family and friends, they clean it and sell it with symbolic prices to the poor in Ain El Seera, c- distributing meat in the feast “Eid Al Adha”, a hundred and forty kilograms of meat was distributed among Ain El Seera residents.

Micro-projects program

This program aims to develop the people of Ain Al Seera economically through giving them micro loans to help them to start their own projects . The head is responsible for the recruitment of cases that have good and realistic project ideas, then comes the marketing of the products, follow up with already existing cases that received loans. In 2008-2009, AYB supported four cases and helped them start their own projects. They gave a micro loan of L.E 3000 to a man who bought a horse and a cart to sell “Anabeeb”. AYB also supported other two cases that used to buy clothes from Port Said and resell with a profit margin. They gave L.E 1000 to each lady. The fourth case was for a man who wanted to rent a shop where he could fix computers. He was given L.E 2000 to start his project.

Before giving the loan seven students were committed to do the social assessment and facilitated the start-up for the two cases. They prefer cases that have previous experience in the field because that will help ensure its success. Beneficiaries are committed to pay

ten percent of the loan on monthly bases for a period of ten months. The cases that succeed and that give back the loan are entitled to be given another loan.

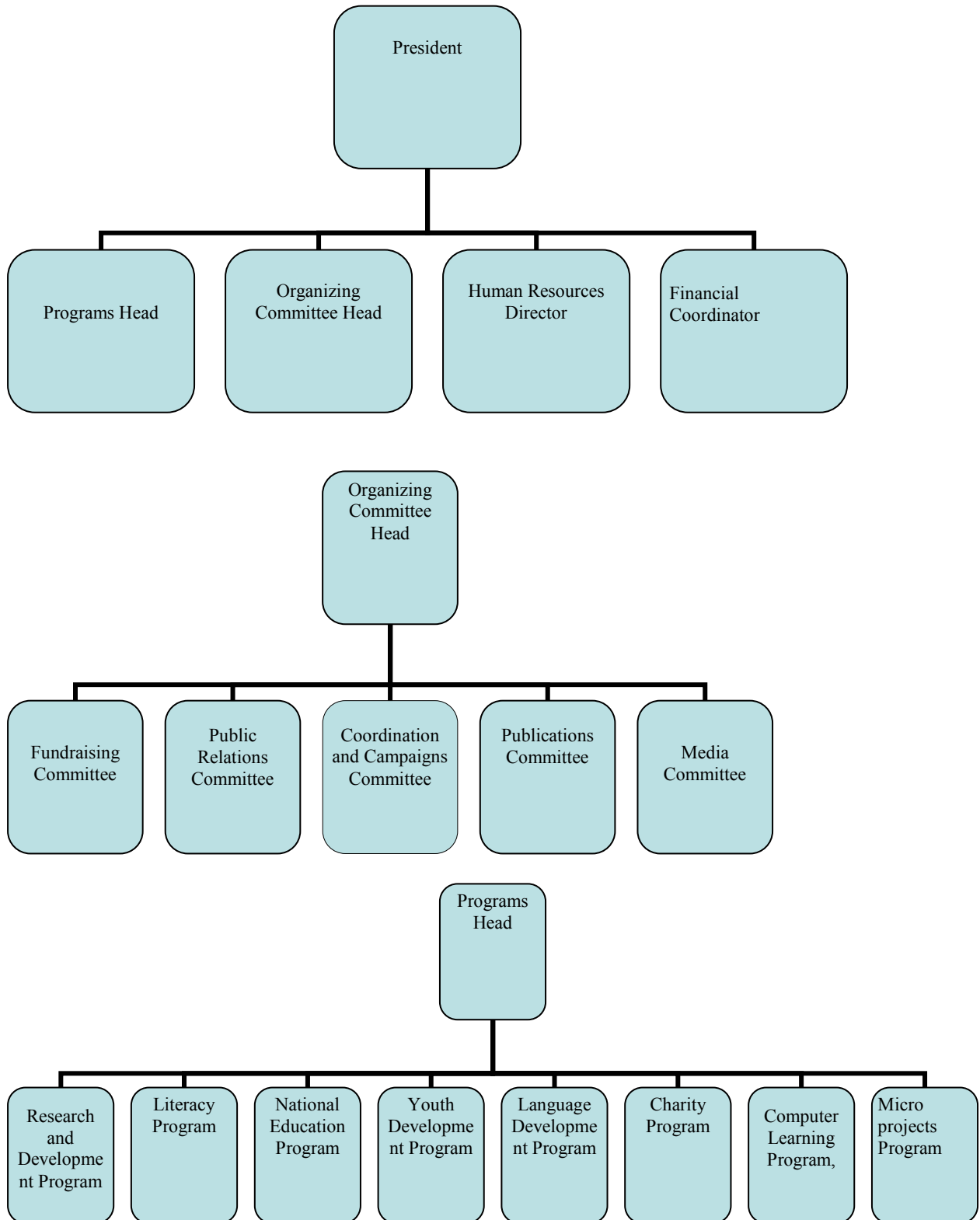
Language development program

AYB students teach English to students enrolled in schools in order to improve their second language. They teach three levels, each level is once a week for eight students. The head is responsible for the recruitment for the kids, conduct regular sessions, do the language assessment and place applicants in the right level. Introduce a way of measurement to the success of the English level, support and coordinate with other community service clubs who have the same program or to open a new section. In 2008-2009 AYB had its own teaching manual for the first year, taught three English levels for adults as well as teaching English to three stages of preparatory school students

Research and development program

This program is the backbone of all the programs taking place in Ain Al Seera. It researches the existing problems that people face and try to come up with recommended projects that would help in solving these problems. The head is responsible for the recruitment for the members, select the right trainings to be given to members conduct the social assessment and complete the database, recruiting families that AYB will be working with in the different programs, report the existing problems after hearing from beneficiaries.

AYB organization structure



B. On campus committees

- Media Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Coordination and Campaigns Committee
- Publications Committee

Public relations committee

Public Relations committee is responsible for publicizing for AYB activities. It is responsible of keeping and creating good relationship with other student organizations. It reflects the efforts exerted by AYB to achieve its goal: *The Path to a better Country*. Public relations committee's responsibility is of coming up with new ideas to publicize for AYB, developing and building on last year's effective public relation tools, contacting media sponsors to cover AYB events, maintaining and raise AYB image, conducting researches before and after AYB campaigns and events, creating a list of potential guests for any events .

Fundraising and sales

Fundraising and sales committee is responsible for supporting AYB financially, as well as creating sponsors' database that could be targeted. The responsibility of this committee is creating new ideas to attract more sponsors for AYB projects, developing and building on the sponsors' database that was created before, find out new ways to receive grants, to be updated with AUC rules and regulations, be aware of the marketing and advertising

campaigns of different potential sponsors, and ensuring that the sponsor has a fine reputation.

Coordination and campaigns

Coordination and campaigns committee is responsible for the logistics and campaigns. Logistics task is responsible for the “detailed” issues such as reserving rooms, ushering, reserving halls, reserving booths, and getting decorations sponsors. As for campaigns this committee is responsible for coordinating and integrating all the ideas of the campaigns to be carried out. Coordination and campaigns committee is responsible for: to be always prepared with the materials needed, put a system to be done before, during and after AYB Campaigns (Decorations, logistics, responsibilities etc, have the reservations ready prior to execution, put several potential plans for the ceremony, and add ideas for AYB Campaigns and Ceremony.

Publications committee

Publications committee is responsible for designing all AYB printings and publications such as posters, flyers, tickets, invitations and teasers...etc. Publications committee is responsible for: creating a set of suggestion for AYB new logo, be creative and do simple designs, ensure that the quality of publications is a good one, deal with a good print shop (quality wise and financial wise), get the publications from the print shop to campus.

Media and art committee

Media and art committee is responsible for documenting all AYB work whether on campus or in Ain Al Seera. In addition to this, the committee is responsible of making AYB song, documentaries for meetings and campaigns. Media and art committee is expected to: organize a time plan for the members to visit Ain Al Seera to take photos and shootings of AYB programs, put a time plan system for the documentary and movie phases, brainstorm on the movie's idea and objectives, choose the lyrics and the melody for AYB song, Make sure that all the software, songs, and music are legal.

In conclusion AYB is a student organization which aims at developing the community of Ain El Seera. The students are work in different committees to undertake a wide array of different projects whether charity or development, on campus or off campus. The American University in Cairo gives the students a free hand to work with the community so that they would sharpen their skills and pay back to the community. AYB student organization works closely with Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable development Ngo as well as other student groups in different universities that hold the same name AYB. This makes it a more of a heterogeneous group that network together to achieve their goals. Also this gives a bigger chance to AYB AUC group to have more of a social network with students from other universities where trust and bondage are established and more resources are available for the entire group to use for achieving their objectives. Also the networking among a bigger number of people make them act as role models to a larger number of youth, influencing their behavior and getting them volunteer. This idea of networking among different groups in different places with different backgrounds

and social profiles enhances more the human capital of students where they get to acquire more skills and have more personal contacts with community leaders. The more the number of volunteers gets bigger where mutual trust and bondage exists, the impact would be greater to the community and to the volunteer. It is believed that AYB impact in developing the community could be great if more funds are secured and less bureaucracy from government institutions is exercised.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN VIA AND AYB

The Community Service Program at AUC connects student led organizations with NGOs and other service-based agencies to provide a far-reaching and long-term range of services and activities that target those who are in need. As it was illustrated in the previous chapters, VIA and AYB both are student led organizations at the American University in Cairo under the supervision of the Office of Student Development/Community Service Program. VIA was established in 1997 and AYB in 2004, VIA works in Meet Okba district focusing mainly on the development of orphans through financial and psychological support, while AYB works in Ain El Seera district and focuses mainly on the development of individuals in general by implementing “unified theme” where all the family is engaged in different activities in order to develop the family as a whole which in turn will lead to the development of the society. The two organizations have commonalities and differences that will be thoroughly discussed in the lines below.

Organizational structure

Each organization has its own structure that enables it to smoothly and efficiently run all its programs and projects. In both community service associations, there is a respected hierarchy where the president of the organization is the highest rank, followed by the vice president, who assists the president in the decision making process. Moreover, a financial coordinator is assigned to be in charge of financial transactions, followed by other committee heads. Each head is responsible for a number of members. Work is divided

among several committees; each committee is specialized in carrying out certain activities such as fundraising, logistics, public relations and media. Each organization has members that carryout on campus activities and other members for the outreach. The hierarchy of the organization is very much respected by all members. The high board is in charge of decision making of issues pertaining to the organization. There is an open channel of communication between the upper board and members. The high board believes in the human power of the organization, hence trainings in leadership, communication, negotiation, public relations are given to members on weekends or holidays. In VIA, the president is the highest rank followed by Vice President, Financial coordinator and Human Resources Executive coordinator. Below the four above mentioned ranks comes the head of every committee such as the Fundraising head, literacy program head, junior development head, publications head, media head, public relations head, micro project head, children's head and logistics head.

As for AYB, the president is also the highest rank followed by four positions; the programs' head, the organizing committee head, Human resources director, and financial coordinator. The programs' head supervises eight programs such as the micro projects, computer learning, charity program, language development, youth development, national education, literacy program, and research and development program. The organizing committee head supervises five committees which are; fundraising committee, public relations committee, coordination and campaigns committee, publications committee, and media committee. It is concluded that the two organizations have a respected organizational structure to ensure right delegation in efficiency in performance. Also

there is democracy in decision making where the high-board meets frequently to take decisions to be discussed with heads and members on another stage.

Output and impact

Each organization has its own activities in a different district, but both organizations combine both charitable and development activities. Some similarities and differences could be detected when examining the projects carried out by the two organizations. For example there are similar charitable activities such as food distribution in the holy month of Ramadan, selling clothing with symbolic prices before the feast, and the distribution of meat in the feast. With respect to development activities, both organizations provide literacy classes, micro projects and junior development program. The differences that appear between both organizations are mainly the places where the projects are implemented and the number of beneficiaries in each project. As for Volunteers in Action, it is working in Meet Okba district while AYB is also taking an edge in Ain el Seera district. VIA is having a very unique activity that no other organization does which is the preparation of Orphan brides and the orphans' group wedding. For AYB, the activities are more oriented to development and it applies what is called "unified theme" where the whole family is engaged in different activities in order to develop all the family leading to the development of the community.

It is clear that the two organizations are very active in terms of output; they provide services to the community which equals and often exceeds what is offered by nongovernmental organizations. Adding to this, both organizations are aiming at the development of Egyptian people in a certain area. They have good, fresh and creative

ideas and their commitment with respect to the programs is very high. For example they do not give good manners classes in a traditional, direct way, but they rather teach ethics in a way that is more fun to the kids. As mentioned in the previous case studies the output is outstanding bearing in mind that it is carried out by unpaid student volunteers.

VIA has the following activities:

- Housing and supplies committee
- Micro projects committee
- Junior development committee
- Literacy committee
- Children committee.

While AYB has the following activities:

- Computer Learning Center
- Literacy Program
- National Education Program
- Youth Development Program
- Charity Program
- Micro Projects Program

It is clear that housing and supplies committee in VIA is equal to the charity program in AYB although they bear different names. Both organizations distribute food in the holy month of Ramadan and the feast. Also both organizations provide micro projects to help people generate an income, also they provide literacy classes, junior development to

children to instill in them good citizens habits. AYB holds computer sessions which is not offered by VIA where they teach youth and children computer skills.

Membership and relationship with other universities

An organization without members is not considered an organization. At the beginning of each semester, members register with a certain organization based on its cause and the activities carried out. Each organization uses its creativity to make an attractive registration booth that would encourage volunteers to visit. Once registered, friendship among members is developed and all the members get to know each other.

VIA has around eighty members that work in its projects, while AYB has around ninety members. The high board of each organization should to keep the members engaged in the projects running or else they would lose interest and abandon the organization and search for a more active one.

AYB and VIA both have members from outside the AUC community, however AYB is different in the sense that it has branches in other universities like the German University in Cairo, the French University in Cairo and Cairo university in Egypt. Also AYB is affiliated to an NGO which is named “Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable Development” which was established by the same person who established the student organization in the American University in Cairo, Ms. Raghda El Ebrashi. As for Volunteers in Action, it is a community service organization in the American University in Cairo, not affiliated with an NGO but hosts volunteers from other students in different universities known as “friends of VIA”. Those non AUC members visit the AUC campus

to attend meeting and help in the preparation and execution of different activities carried out by the club.

Sustainability

It is obvious that sustainability takes place within the two organizations. There is a system in each organization, although the president is changed every academic year. The new president is selected by the high board based on a submitted plan and an interview. Each new president continues and builds on what his/her predecessor had achieved. The new president has the right to do some changes, solve the problems that were encountered before, add things that would reflect his views. For example the orphans wedding is considered a newly added activity that did not exist when VIA started and it is running to date. Also AYB has lately introduced the ICDL “international computer driving license” which is the world's largest vendor-neutral end-user computer skills certification and is internationally recognized as the global benchmark in this area. So each year the programs become more developed as students become more skillful and more familiar with the existing problems.

Finances

As mentioned earlier, student organizations seek funds to continue with their projects via sponsorship or donations. Sponsors are mainly companies whether multinational or national ones, while donations are collected from individuals, funding agencies and sometimes companies. In 2008- 2009 VIA has collected L.E. 344.000 as sponsorship and L.E 130. 500 as donations. Also AYB has collected L.E. 108.823 as sponsorship and L.E.

1.250 as donations. Donations could not be paid in operations or logistics but should be paid as per the request of the donor. On the other hand sponsorship gives more freedom to students to use the money in other aspects of payment whether logistics or operations.

Challenges

Both organizations face the same challenges, and almost all student organizations, which are lack of funds to carry out projects, and that is the reason behind seeking sponsors and donors. Also the commitment of beneficiaries in outreach activities is another challenge, as some of them show up once and never come again, therefore the students resort to using incentives and recognition to encourage them get committed. Finally the governmental bureaucracy is another challenge such as the humongous amount of paper work needed to do the job in the right legal framework. With respect to students, they face a lot of challenges in terms balancing between extracurricular activities and their academic performance. Another challenge is the drop of members from the club; sometimes members show up few times and then disappear, that is because they either become disinterested in the activity or they are loaded with academic tasks. Since members are the running machine of the organization, the recruitment week organized by the Office of Student Development is very crucial to attract more members to register in the organization. In this week each organization displays its activities in a booth and they get in a face to face contact with future members. It is either the student gets interested in the organization's activity and register or move to another booth searching for a more interesting opportunity.

SUMMARY

The two organizations are student led at the American University in Cairo. Each one serves in a geographically different district but both districts are poor areas in Egypt. Each has its own mission and objectives; VIA is to “paint a smile on an orphan’s face” and AYB is “the path to a better country”. Each organization execute certain activities to ensure that it serves its mission and achieves its objectives.

Each organization has its on campus and outreach campus activities. They also have a combination of charitable and development activities. While VIA undertakes some development activities to empower orphans and support them financially and psychologically, AYB is more community development oriented by executing projects that would empower the family as a whole through the “unified theme”. Both organizations have a significant impact on their beneficiaries.

VIA and AYB, both recruit members from the AUC student body in addition to a small percentage from the Egyptian community at large. By being members in one of those two organizations, students get to make friendship while having fun. AYB has other branches in other universities such as the German University in Cairo, French university, Ain Shams University and Cairo University. This makes it a good experience as networking among students from different universities take place.

With respect to governance, both organizations have an organizational structure that specifies the duties and responsibilities of members and the delegation of tasks. Each organization has a different structure than the other which should guarantee the efficiency in taking over assigned tasks. The president is highest rank with the high board that is in

charge of decision making where decisions are democratically taken. Also each organization has its own constitution that describes the governance procedures in case problems arise. Although presidents of both organizations are changed every academic year, the system that exists ensures that the projects are well sustained. This sustainability is secured by the existence of a system and by empowering members through training sessions that are held at different times of the year.

To have their projects maintained, both organizations are given the opportunity to fundraise for their activities either through donations or sponsorship in addition to the seed money received from AUC. There is good book keeping of the different transactions that take place and are recorded with relevant receipts and documentation. Both organizations face the same challenges which are mainly the lack of funding for the planned projects, bureaucracy when dealing with governmental entities and sometimes the in commitment of beneficiaries. Moreover, as students they need to manage their time effectively between their academic and extracurricular endeavors.

In conclusion both organizations have lots of similarities and few differences. But the most common thing is that they are youth committed and dedicated to the development of their country, work from their heart without being paid.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

In depth interviews with AUC volunteers revealed many interesting aspects with respect to youth volunteering. The researcher attempted to shed light on the main questions related to youth volunteering; the start of volunteering, the motives behind volunteering, the impact of volunteering on their personal development, their plans after graduation, sustainability of volunteerism and finally the obstacles they face in carrying out voluntary work. The researcher tried to present the views of the different participants with the utmost objectivity and to have their different opinions stated in the research. The sample included thirty students; fifteen girls and fifteen boys, all enrolled in one or more community service organization at AUC. All interviewed students were Egyptians, twenty students are from private and international schools while the other ten are from public schools and joined AUC on scholarship basis.

The research revealed that almost all volunteers did not experience volunteerism before joining AUC, only very few ones practiced voluntary work during high school. This voluntary school experience was either in the form of charity by providing food to the school administration to be delivered to the poor or in the form an initiative that happened by some students and teachers on personal basis and does not belong to the school administration. This initiative was about visiting orphans and giving them some presents.

“I did not have the chance to do any voluntary work before joining AUC”

“The school did not offer any community service activity where I could become engaged”

AUC Students joined activities in two ways. They either visited booths that were exhibiting the voluntary work of different organizations, and hence they got to select the field that most suited their interest, or they were influenced by their friends in joining the same organization which they joined. Friends were found to encourage each other in doing voluntary work as many interviewees stated that they participated in voluntary organizations through a friend who was registered such organization, and who convinced them to get enrolled. Students illustrated that after being engaged in such activities they were able to make a lot of friends.

“My friends encouraged me to join Volunteers in Action because they have very good activities with orphans, so I said why not to try”.

“I did not know anybody in the organization but I was attracted to the activities displayed in the booth so I decided to join, afterwards I got so many friends”.

The majority of interviewees stated that they participated in voluntary activities because they believe they must have a role in the development of their country, they do not like to be passive citizens yet they must start by themselves. Another important reason for joining voluntary work was a strong religious obligation. They said that their religion urges them to help who are less fortunate and give them a hand. This help will put them in a better position with “God”.

“Why not gain Thawab while gaining skills and benefiting my country”.

Some of them added that they would like to gain some experience and skills needed in life, while others said that they want to make use of their free time. In addition to all the above mentioned reasons, some mentioned that they like to be with friends while making something useful instead of going to a café. All the interviews confirmed that they

volunteer more than twelve hours a week and they all believe in volunteering as a way to develop their country.

Volunteers stated that the “First Time” in volunteering is of paramount importance in the continuation of volunteerism. If the volunteer finds it meaningful and self satisfactory, he will continue and the habit of volunteerism will grow, if he finds it unorganized and worthless he will quit and most likely will never come back.

All the interviewees stated that voluntary work has become part of their lives. They said that they would stay involved in such activities after graduation. They all admitted that their priorities will differ in the future, yet they will still continue with volunteerism. Some interviewees confirmed that after graduation they will keep up the amount of voluntary activities while others stated they might have fewer activities if they will need to dedicate more time to work or marriage. Participants also noted that the students who graduate maintain their relationship with their fellow colleagues by staying in touch with the students and are taking the role of graduate advisors who transform their experiences to others.

Volunteers agreed that volunteerism could be sustained when volunteers find a meaningful experience that inspires them, when they find they were able to make a difference in other people’s lives by establishing an emotional bond between the volunteer and the recipient of the service. Some participants stated that more youth could become engaged in voluntary activities if they are reminded of their role as citizens with respect to their country and the impact of such activities on their well being. It was illustrated that there are many youth who are willing to volunteer but do not know how and where.

The impact of volunteerism, was viewed by all interviewees as extremely positive. They stated that they have developed many skills during their engagement in voluntary activities. Participants believed that the skills they acquired from voluntary activities are far more than what they learned in the classroom. They mentioned many skills which they acquired during volunteerism such as; becoming proactive and take initiatives, developing leadership, negotiation, analytical and communication skills, time and crisis management, patience, dealing with different types of people in Egypt, and the ability to know the needs and problems of different communities in the country.

“I had to do some time management to balance between my studies and activities”

“I learned to be more patient cause development work as opposed to charity takes time, if you teach literacy classes to one of the women, you have to wait several months to see the result”.

On a personal level, they illustrated that volunteerism has shaped their personalities, gave them inner satisfaction because they felt they were able to make a difference in the lives of other people who need their support. They also got to appreciate what god has given them such as family, money, car, health etc. The following are some of their words:

“I developed leadership skills by supervising other members in the organization to overtake assigned responsibilities”

“I became a multi functioning person; I could work on many things at the same time”

“Without volunteerism, I would have been a different person with fewer skills”

“When I see how poor people are living, I get to appreciate what I have”

“I feel I am very inspired when I make a difference in other people’s lives”

“I had shocking experiences in the beginning but my personality has changed completely, I used to be an introvert person with few skills but now I am more outgoing, and a more positive person, I could pass through a situation, analyze it and learn from it.

“The impact of work on people is what inspires me and keeps me going”

“What I learned from community service activities in four years are more than what I have learned in the past eighteen years”.

“When I get out of the circle of my family and friends, I will be able to deal with other people from different backgrounds”

All volunteers agreed that they developed skills that would benefit them in their career. They were aware that the skills which they acquired from voluntary activities have become essential in the job market. As job candidates, they see themselves to be more committed, dedicated, humble, good team players, have a certain vision and objective than other students who did not get engaged in voluntary experience. Many students reported that voluntary work is nowadays appreciated in the job market with the establishment “Corporate Social Responsibility” department in different corporate. This department is mainly established to engage corporate employees in voluntary work to get them connected to the community. Such departments hire employees with good voluntary background, creating a field that widens the voluntary dimension in the job market.

“one of my friends who graduated who was going to an interview in one of the companies told me that he was asked more about the activities he participated in during university years rather than what he learned in his major”

“My friend who has graduated last year is now working for one of the banks in the corporate social responsibility department. His activities at AUC qualified him to take the job”

On another note, some of the students illustrated that development and voluntary work has become a career in itself. Many students are currently working in NGOs or establish their own NGOs after they graduate. They indicated to the case of Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable Development NGO, which was established by AUC alumni who founded Alashanek Ya Balady organization when she was an undergraduate student at AUC.

“Raghda El Ebrashi loved development work since she was a student and now she established an NGO where she is continuing what she loved and started when she was a student.”

“Thab Abdou who established an organization named “Fathet Kheir” when he was a student has traveled to earn his masters degree in development from USA and now he is a board member in one of the biggest youth NGOs in Egypt named Nahdet El Mahrousa.”

As for parents, most of the interviewees said that their parents are not engaged in voluntary activities but they do a lot of charity. Some parents were found to be supportive of their children being active members in the society, while other interviewees said that their parents are indifferent about these activities. Some students illustrated that their parents are concerned about their academic performance when they see them putting a lot of time in such activities.

“Parents are never satisfied, if I do nothing they complain, if I am busy they also complain, but they are very much concerned about my GPA because the tuition fees are very high”.

Some interviews stated that in the beginning of their voluntary engagement their parents were worried about their safety because of going to undeveloped areas and dealing with people of a lower social and educational background. Yet, students reported that such worries disappeared after a while bearing into consideration that AUC is a trusted and credible institution that will never risk the safety of its students nor its reputation. Also students reported that their parents feel more comfortable when they find their kids going for voluntary work in groups. With respect to girls, some stated that their parents have liberal thinking and do not mind staying out of home for long time to get over with some voluntary tasks and socializing with males, however there were other parents who were more conservative about their daughters being out of the house for long time.

“They trust me because I was brought up on distinguishing the difference between what is right and what is wrong”.

“I know my parents trust me a lot, but I am still young in their eyes, before I go they ask me questions like “ who from your friends will go today, where exactly are you going, by whose car etc.

Volunteers stated that they face many obstacles when they decide to volunteer. They are loaded with academic assignments, papers, research etc. and sometimes they do not have enough time to manage both academics and voluntary work together especially during mid terms and final exams. They stated that they try to manage their time as much as they can in order to equally maintain both. Also many of them stated that when they get low grades, they get blamed from their parents and are advised to drop off voluntary work. Interviewees said that the most important thing are the grades, parents would discourage anything that would negatively affect such grades. Also interviewees illustrated that

major obstacles are when they get to deal with governmental institutions. They are faced with a lot of bureaucracy and complications that absorb a lot of their energy and time.

“Activities should be done in your free time, you have to make sure that you are done first with all your assignments”

“We pay a lot of money to have you in this university, we cannot afford scoring low grades”

“What I will do in the future might differ that what I am doing now pending on my life and how it will look like in the future”

“In the “Help” club we stay in touch with all the past presidents, we invite them to give trainings to members, assess our performance, give us new ideas and they keep a tradition of attending all our major events”

“Volunteerism has become part of my life”

“I know I will marry and have children but still I will keep doing voluntary work, we have millions of good parents but less people who are willing to do something to their countries”.

“If I find an opportunity that has an objective, well organized, absorbs my energy and within a group then I will definitely become engaged”.

“I cannot stop going to people whom I know they are waiting for me”

“I was sick and stayed at home for one week, I found one of the beneficiaries calling and asking about me, and here I realized that I was making a difference

“There could be some people interested in visiting an orphanage on a Friday and not necessarily get involved many days in the week.

One of the participants suggested that there should be different loads of voluntary work for different types of people. The idea of “heavy and light load of voluntary work” was suggested as a solution that could cater to different types of people. People who could afford volunteering for a lot of time could be offered heavy load while people who have limited time could be offered “light load”. By this people with limited time would not shy away from being connected to the activity.

CONCLUSION

This thesis addressed the participation of the upper middle class Egyptian youth in voluntary activities. It examined two student led organizations housed at the American University in Cairo named “Volunteers in Action” and Alashanek Ya Balady” in order to answer three main question pertaining to this topic; the motives behind having a role in voluntary activities, the impact of those activities on the society and the volunteer, and finally the obstacles encountered while volunteering. The two theories “social learning theory” and “the social capital theory” provided a useful framework for conceptualizing voluntary work among youth.

The two organizations examined in the research included a diverse body of volunteers i.e. students coming from public, private and international schools. It was concluded that a large percentage of volunteers participate in voluntary activities mainly because they want to have a role in the development of their country, emphasizing that it is their responsibility to pay back to their society. In fact, these youth seemed to be concerned about the future of their country, they looked at themselves as leaders that could have a positive impact on the society by making a difference. Perhaps this kind of optimism, self confidence and determination could distinguish between those leaders and others who are not engaged. Other important motives were networking and socializing with a larger group of youth, while satisfying “GOD” and gaining “Thawab”. This emphasized that socializing and networking with peers for volunteering purposes could serve as fulfilling a religious obligation, illustrating that gaining “thawab” could happen in other settings, not only in a mosque or a church.

Female participation in voluntary activities was higher than males with approximate ratio 1:3, Perhaps the social traditions play a role in that part as in poor and conservative areas, people prefer female volunteers to interact with their daughters rather than male volunteers. On another note, males could be more inclined towards activities that directly enhance their career path such as internships or conferences, which provide them with direct connections with corporate and international agencies that are considered an added value on their resumes and that could hire them after they graduate.

It is true that giving charity is more common than volunteering among Egyptians, as volunteering needs commitment and time dedication as opposed to charity. Yet, more attention was given by youth to development and human empowerment activities through providing literacy classes, computer sessions, microcredit and others. Youth believed that development activities empower the society by enabling people make decisions that would positively impact their life. They believed in the Chinese proverb “do not give me a fish but teach me how to fish”.

Youth were more encouraged to participate in voluntary activities when they found their friends doing so, “peer pressure”. Youth observed and assimilated the behavior of their peers when finding it rewarding and valuable to themselves and the society where acquiring the volunteer identity happened. By being a member in an organization, youth were able to expand their social network and started to build their social capital to collectively take action towards achieving certain objectives. Through this social interaction with peers or with recipients of service, youth acquired new skills which they did not possess before joining these activities such as leadership, analytical and

communication skills, knowing more about the problems of the society, self satisfaction and appreciation of their own status when compared to others who are in need and others. In a country where youth suffer from high unemployment rates, voluntary work could be a venue for youth to sharpen their skills and get better job opportunities.

Factors affecting the level of youth volunteering were represented in other commitments which volunteers had. As students, volunteering working hours became less during extra academic load; mid terms, finals and/or submitting projects were examples that sometimes lessened volunteering hours, however students compensated these hours when their schedule came back to normal. As obstacles, the bureaucracy in most of the governmental institutions, and the large number of paper work needed most likely refrained volunteers from doing certain activities. Moreover, the fear of some voluntary organizations to collaborate with student volunteers led to the delay of projects that could have positively contributed to the welfare of the community at that time.

People are becoming busy with their life and careers, television is consuming a lot of people's time, the number of working women is on the rise, families are becoming more concerned about their kids academic achievements rather than their civic engagement activities, and the deterioration of the education system in schools and universities lacking the "Service Learning" component which enables students in the classroom get connected with the community, all this lead to the fact that most of voluntary activities are taking place through sporadic and short term commitments. It is true as James Petras (Petras, 1997) illustrated in the literature that volunteering could not solve the structural problems that governments are responsible for, yet voluntary efforts if organized, could

have a significant impact on the society and could change the wrong policies embraced by governments.

If television is found to help in reducing the hours of youth volunteering, on the other side, it could serve as a medium for promoting voluntary work by offering community development programs and success stories. This also holds true with regard to other technologies like the Internet, which allowed Egyptian youth get exposed to Western values of democratization and human rights and used the face book and twitter in promoting those values. This technology assisted in creating a collective social action that led to the 25th of January revolution aiming for freedom, justice and democracy. This technology could cross borders, reach out to more youth, get disinterested youth motivated and engaged in local and international opportunities, It is obvious that today's youth are different than youth of previous generations, they live in the “global village” of Marshall McLuhan where they are easily connected through satellites and Internet.

Based on the findings, the voluntary sector in Egypt could be strengthened through the cooperation among different institutions. The government, nongovernmental organizations, corporate sector, schools, and universities should all contribute to promoting and sustaining voluntary activities among youth. The government should devise strategies to create an enabling environment that allows more youth become civically engaged, voluntary organizations should design programs that would cater to youth interests, the corporate sector should sponsor voluntary initiatives and promote “corporate social responsibility” by allowing employees to volunteer during working hours. Schools and universities should integrate “service learning” into their education system to link students in the classroom with the community. Media should promote and

advocate civic engagement activities, raise the awareness of people about its importance, religious institutions should promote voluntary initiatives in its discourse, and finally parents should encourage their kids participate in community service activities to help them grow up on volunteering.

The limitation of this research is that it focused on a certain social class of youth which is the upper middle and upper class represented in the American University in Cairo. It will be a good idea to research youth volunteering in the middle or lower middle class by examining students in public universities such as Cairo University or Ain Shams University. Commonalities and differences could be drawn between the two social classes to give more depth to this topic and perhaps different findings. A final concluding remark to emphasize is that while the challenges for youth volunteering in Egypt are great, the opportunities are greater for building a brighter future for youth and for Egypt especially after the 25th of January revolution.

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ANNEX

A WORD BY YOSRA HELMY (VIA PRESIDENT 2008-2009)

During my University life and parallel to my academics I have been a volunteer in the community service sector in the American University in Cairo. I started my journey as a logistics member in Anti-Cancer Team, a community service organization under the Office of Student Development that helps children with cancer patients live their life easily like any other person. What makes me at first hand go and volunteer is my commitment to my grandmother, who died because of cancer in 2005. Losing someone dear to you makes you aware of how people feel when they are sick with cancer. We did a lot of activities at that time. The most attached event to my heart was the children's day. We invited over 60 children from the National Cancer Institute at AUC in the Greek Campus, It was a lovely day, however, a hard feeling. A lot of kids couldn't play around like other normal kids their age because of their health situation. For me, the journey was still at the beginning. I hoped to help more and to have the time to devote for the children and for the community service work in general. I was engaged in other activities such as conferences but returned back to the community service activities. This is where I enjoyed it the most. After being a member for two years in Anti-Cancer Team I was elected as the logistics head in April 2007. Here, in this position, I gained the most out of it. This was my core experience. Events were on calendars and this I had to achieve. Event organization, theme, reservation and all the responsibilities that concerned events were my job. Therefore, I was kind of leading all the campaigns that related to the organization and the cancer patients. I was working and focused on one goal, which is how to make the cancer patients live their life freely without any worries in terms of physical and financial problems. Being a logistics head I gained a lot of skills such as

negotiation and communication skills. Moreover, I learned how to have a time management and how to overcome some challenges by always having a back-up plan. Along by being a logistics head, I was also the Vice President of Anti-Cancer Team in 2008. This was the workload. We did very successful events in a short time. End of 2008, I applied as a president of Volunteers in Action. Here, I will elaborate more on the structure and the nature of this organization as this was one of my plans when applying as the president of VIA. I wrote a big presidential plan for Volunteers in Action (VIA) to request that I want to apply for the “president” position for year Fall 2008/Spring 2009. I was aware of all my responsibilities within this club. I entered the full-time program for undergraduates at the American University in Cairo in Fall 2005 and expect to complete the degree requirements and graduate in Spring 2009. That’s why I was eligible at that time to apply. My school education was at the German School in Cairo (DSB), which was completed in 2005 with the "Abitur" degree. This type of education offered me a good chance to learn how to work under stress. I’m mentioning my school education as it plays a very vital role in constructing my character and way of thinking. What my school education added to me is far more than that of what I learned in another place. I was Business Administration major with a concentration of Finance as a major. Parallel to this, I was taking Economics and Sociology as a minor, which I see a very healthy combination and related to my major along with its courses. The question maybe popped in your mind why am I applying as a president of Volunteers in Action, which I was never a member in it! Volunteering with such an organization was for many students a difficult thing because of the workload there. Let me answer first why I applied. Nevertheless, this will take us to another path, which is why entering this organization

from the first place. As I said before, I was a business major. I was required to fulfill certain collaterals to complete my Bachelor of Art Degree. Between these collaterals, there is a course called “Management of Information Systems”, where we had to handle different cases related to what was taught in class. One of these cases was on “Volunteers in Action” in AUC. It was my first recognition of the name but not the abbreviation. There was a brief history written on the activities done by VIA in this specific case. I was curious to find out what these people are doing especially that I heard more than once from a Professor in the Business Department that they are the “best community service organization on campus” and working hard all year. So why not to give a try? I told one of the board members that I want to join VIA but lost some hope when I heard that the members’ recruitment only happens once in the beginning of the Fall semester and it was already spring. Though, after couple of days I was already a member of the children committee. Still, being a new member in “Volunteers in Action” raises the question of why I apply as a “president”. Being an outside observer and a new blood in the organization is an added value for the decision-making process and plans that were going to be taken serious in the future. “Sometimes when people are in the boat, they don’t really realize the fishes that are swimming outside in the ocean wide.” Therefore, many things that an insider oversees, an outsider can see.

On one hand, all former presidents had more or less the same vision and mission on what is going to happen in this year. They’ve been working in very similar circumstances and atmosphere so they need to have this “old” experience. On the other hand, these circumstances and atmosphere are totally changing with the move to the new campus. There is no this tiny Main, Greek and Falaky campus anymore. There is a huge closed by

itself community called the American University in New Cairo. Though, this “old” experience is still needed but within limits and in very “typical” situations. A new experience must be approached as the “Volunteers in Action” must be recognized on this huge place in Kattameya. Therefore, this can be seen as a major challenge for the VIA next year and did not confront any of the former presidents before. Moreover, I previously worked in a charity organization, so I have a prior background on how things are handled in a specific fashion. The most vital cause and the push for me for applying as a president is the mission of VIA. These orphans that we help lack everything that we enjoy and cherish: warm home, caring family, material comforts, freedom of choice, opportunities to grow and develop. You can give hope to an orphaned child halfway by visiting him. However, over thousands of children are living without adequate medical care, nutrition and shelter. Most of these children can never be adopted. They are destined to live in orphanages or on the street. We cannot afford to leave them in this situation if we could change something. They deserve the best we can give them; together we can relief their misery and bring hope and joy in their lives. Part of my responsibilities as a president is to put my high-board on the right track, expression of leadership skills. However, all of them have a finger print in the decision-making process and the planning within the club. They have the full space to share their creativity and opinions freely without any oppression. The structure of the positions within the club is to an extent hierarchal. I had the upper hand in taking actions like supervising, leading and controlling. However, I had to comply with and serve the interest of the organization besides giving space to heads by taking decisions through general voting. Some positions must be clarified such as the “Vice President”. He/ she is an executive officer ranking

immediately below the president of the organization and may serve in the president's place under certain circumstances. He/she has a more voting power in decisions than that of the heads. Moreover, the new position of the “HR and the Executive Coordinator” that I created last year is simply serving all heads and committees through accumulated experiences. He/she functions as so-to say a “joker” and a crucial component of the high-board. Mainly, his position is helping out when there is a shortage within some committees and an advisor in case of problems. Hence he/she is required to have a plenty of information and experience in “Volunteers in Action”. An important position in this layout is the financial coordinator, which settles the account and financial transactions for VIA. Other roles of some heads are very clearly defined from the description of each committee. Being a president of Volunteers in Action does not deny the fact that I have to be responsible for my academic life at AUC. I worked hard to maintain my GPA and to study hard in parallel to the community service work in Volunteers in Action. For both targets I was nominated to the Mahallawy Award for Graduates of Spring 2009. Surprisingly I took the award with one of my board members who were a previous president, too. We both wrote this letter to the Mahallawy family as a thankful letter and to let them share with us the best moments in our lives.

TO THE MAHALAWY FAMILY: A TRULY ONCE IN A LIFE-TIME EXPERIENCE



Yosra Helmy and Tamer Abdul Aziz with the faculty advisor Dr Dina Rateb in Awlady Orphanage (May 2009)

MAHALAWY AWARD LETTER BY YOSRA HELMY AND TAMER ABD EL AZIZ

This time, we decided to write about the big and little things that make Volunteers in Action such a unique experience for both of us (Tamer Abdul Aziz and Yosra Helmy).

To begin with, I'm Tamer Abdul Aziz, an electronics engineering graduate hoping for continuing my studies in the field of electronics engineering with a minor of Computer Science, mainly science oriented. Therefore, I applied for the master degree in Ain Shams University and will take off with my studies beginning of the Fall semester. I was in "the Amier el Shoara el Thanaweya" school and did the "Thanaweya Amma" with a high score of 99.2%. As for me (Yosra Helmy), I am a Business Administration graduate concentrated in Finance with both minors Economics and Sociology. I will begin my path with working in an advertising agency and planning to do the CFA starting next September. This letter is sharing some of our experiences throughout our definite work together in Volunteers in Action. We would like you to understand why we get up each morning with such a smile on our faces, and go to sleep with an even bigger one. We know, it is an impossible mission to convey even a small percentage of the experiences that we have, but it's worth a try. As we have different extra-curricular activities at AUC, we both were first working in diverse fields, not only community service and not only presidents of Volunteers in Action. As the president of Volunteers in Action for the year 2007/2008, I Tamer worked in the Student Union as an example and was Dimensions Managing Editor. As for me (Yosra), besides being the president of Volunteers in Action for the year 2008/2009, I also worked in diverse fields such as being the Vice President and Logistics Head in Anti- Cancer Team, a member in Model Arab League and ICGE.

Talking about Volunteers in Action and the significant development that faced us both, we were very much believing in the cause and the mission of this organization. As both of us being presidents of this great and meaningful club, we experienced a lot of things. The experience, especially, in Volunteers in Action clarifies the fact that there are many causes and motives why people volunteer in the society without even a reward, however, people's explanations for taking part will show a discrepancy. Some positive impacts that we both faced are like having the chance to make a real difference to someone's life such as an orphan or a family in "Meet Okba" district, where VIA launched its first family planning there. Not only volunteering without limits, for us Volunteers in Action opened up an exciting network of people and experiences, it is also a tool for students' personal development that improved many skills in us, especially communication skills. Moreover, it influenced our career choices. Many positions in the work field are much related to what we did in Volunteers in Action such as the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) department. It also opens up for us a whole range of new opportunities in life. Many of these benefits listed in this paragraph are also benefits that apply to other students at AUC. We both appreciate you taking the time to read our letter about our experience in Volunteers in Action and working in the community service sector. We are very excited about this opportunity of such a well-regarded award. The award, as it was presented, seems to be the best sentence on our resume besides the work in Volunteers in Action. We are confident that our volunteerism in AUC will enable us to protect this award and make it very well-sound on campus and off it. We also appreciate the time you all took to interview us. In addition to this we also appreciate the information and advice

our faculty advisor and the Office of Student Development gave us throughout our work.
Their expertise and help have been invaluable during this process.

Sincerely,

Yosra Helmy and Tamer Abdul Aziz 2008-2009

A WORD BY EMAN KOURTAM (AYB PRESIDENT 2008-2009)

Below are the reasons why I am honored to be in AYB, all of the things I have learned, and all the changes that have happened inside me. I am honored because AYB is an organization filled with dreams, and inspiration. Dreams of seeing Egypt a beautiful country, with all the youth's potential being recognized, and all the parents working and being able to support their families. Dreams of eradicating illiteracy, child labor, and poverty. Dreams of creating a better country.

We have inspiration in every action we take. Every single time a woman is consumed with the feeling of success after she is now able to read and write. Or when a new generation that has aroused from under our supervision have learned new skills that could help them get better jobs. Or finally when we do an inspirational campaign mobilizing the students of AUC to work for their country. To me this is all inspirational.

In AYB We are all gathered together all believing in one cause, and we are all ready to die working for this cause. This is why I am honored to be an AYBian and this is why I love Alashanek Ya Balady, Below are the lessons that AYB has taught me, it is these lessons that make AYB a huge reason for development of the people who work in it.

The first lesson AYB has taught me is to be inspired by the world around me. Before I used to walk to university really quickly, not really looking at the people around me, because I felt that I was surrounded by so much negativity that, I chose to ignore. But AYB taught me to Pay attention and be inspired. When I paid attention, anything negative that would happen in the streets would cause me to be proactive; it would stimulate my thinking and make me wonder how it can be changed. When I paid attention

I was able to see all the good things in Egypt that are hidden under all the dust of negativity, It made me realize the potential that we have in our beautiful country, and made me energized to work even harder! When I paid attention I saw hope, I realized that all we have to do is give every ounce of energy we have to making Egypt a better place and it will happen! The second lesson AYB has taught me is to never stop trying. When I was a youth development member in AYB There was one kid who grabbed my attention, his name was Ahmed Gameel. He was an 11-year-old kid, who was obviously a big bully. He would go around beating up little girls, and making fun of the guys. He would always say he didn't like being in the sessions, and didn't like playing in our games, nevertheless he always came to our sessions. At first I was so upset, and I felt like we weren't getting through to him, but then it hit me... why did he keep coming if he really didn't like it?, and then the year passed and I saw Gameel changing little by little. I saw him open up and I saw him become a gentler human being. This continued until the last day of the semester. It was the last time I was going to see Gameel until the next year. Gameel came to me carrying a bunch of flowers; he looked me in the eyes and said “hatew7asheeny ya Ms. Eman, shokran” And at that moment , I was proud, I realized that I have affected him and inspired him, I have made a difference. From this I have learned that there is potential in everyone, everyone has it in them to become a better person, they just need constant supervision and motivation. We all have to believe that. There is still hope in our youth, our people, and our future if we just keep trying.

The third lesson that AYB taught me is that a person can never be successful alone. I have learned that the more successful a person is, the more he influences people all around him, and helps those lead better lives. This influence is what will continue to live

on and affect people's lives forever, and in this sense that person would be eternally successful. Margret Mead, a famous anthropologist once said that she measures success in terms of the contributions an individual makes to her or his fellow human beings. I honestly couldn't agree more.

Finally there is one thing that will always make AYB irreplaceable in my heart, and these are the people that I have gotten to know along the way, and are now my best friends. these are the people who I share my goals and my dreams with, the people that I witnessed develop and witnessed me develop. In the end I came out of AYB with a community of leaders who will always work with me to reach our common goal! The goal of the development of Egypt!

THE DRASTIC CHANGE

“I can’t wait to get out of this country”, a friend of mine told me three years ago as we were walking to class, “I can’t wait to travel and start my career abroad, there’s no future here”. I didn’t know what it was back then but deep down inside my heart sunk as I soon as I heard him say these words. I remember thinking there has to be a future or else why are we living? I soon learned I was right, there is a future! I started working in Alashanek Ya Balady, the community service entity of the SU. I was a youth development member then. It was the first time for me to actually enter the poor area of Ain El Seera and see the way these people lived. I was shocked. The people lived in huts on the street and the kids were so violent. There was one kid who grabbed my attention more than any other, his name was Ahmed Gameel. He was an 11-year-old kid, who was obviously the biggest bully in the group of kids we were dealing with. He would go around beating up little girls, and making fun of the guys. He would always say he didn’t like being in the sessions, and didn’t like playing in our games, nevertheless he always came to our sessions. At first I was so upset, and I felt like we weren’t getting through to him, but then it hit me... why did he keep coming if he really didn’t like it?, and then the year passed and I saw Gameel changing little by little. I saw him open up and I saw him become a gentler human being. This continued until the last day of the semester. It was the last time I was going to see Gameel until the next year. Gameel came to me carrying a bunch of flowers; he looked me in the eyes and said thank you Ms. Eman.

That moment meant the world to me, in that moment I saw the drastic change from Gameel the bully, to Gameel the gentle and caring kid. And at that moment, I was proud.

I have made a difference! That led me to believe that we are blessed to be born or raised in a developing country, because we have a chance to change people's lives. We are blessed to be Egyptians.

Eman Kourtam, AYB president

2008-2009.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Age:

Id Number

Major:

Minor:

1) When was the first time you got engaged in community service work?

.....
.....

2) What are the activities you participated in?

.....
.....

3) What are your current community service activities?

.....
.....

4) Please cite, which of these activities were the reason behind your volunteering

- a. Your religious background
- b. The desire to participate in the development process
- c. To kill your free time
- d. Other:

5) What was the opinion of your parents about volunteering?

- a. Supporting and encouraging you
- b. Neither supporting nor encouraging
- c. Indifferent
- d. Other:.....

- 6) Are your friends engaged in voluntary work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 7) Do they encourage you to participate in voluntary work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 8) How many hours do you spend in voluntary work?
 - a. 1-4 hours per week
 - b. 4-8 hours per week
 - c. 8-12 hours per week
 - d. More than 12 hours

- 9) Do you believe in voluntary work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No