# Volunteer Participation in Doornenburg

An insight into the current strategies of attracting and maintaining volunteers in Doornenburg

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# Editorial information

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# Summary

This report presents the results of an research project on volunteer organizations in Doornenburg. In line with the national and international trends of promoting self-governance and community participation, the DKK Gelderland (Dorpshuizen en Kleine Kernen) has initiated a project regarding volunteer work in small villages in Gelderland. This study focuses on volunteer organizations in Doornenburg specifically and is part of the above mentioned project. The aim of this research is to gain insight into how volunteer organizations organize in a local setting (Doornenburg), specifically focusing on ways to attract and maintain volunteers. Methods of data collection were literature study, desk study and semi-structured interviews. The literature and desk study focused on motivations to volunteer and 'best practices' to recruit and maintain volunteers in an organizational setting. In total ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with inhabitants who are involved in one of Doornenburg's volunteer organizations. Most of them were board members.

A comparison between content analysis and results from the literature- and desk research, results in a various lessons learned regarding how volunteer work is organized in Doornenburg. The main lessons learned relate to the lack of younger volunteers, the context-specific circumstances and the methods used to attract and maintain volunteers. The results of this research can help organizations in Doornenburg and elsewhere to reflect on their strategies in order to increase volunteer participation in the future.

Key words: **societal change, volunteer participation, attracting and maintaining volunteers, village of Doornenburg.**

# 1. Introduction

*This chapter provides the reader with a general overview of the problem at stake in Doornenburg. A short introduction about Doornenburg is given, and the political and societal contexts are outlined. This leads the reader to the problem statement, which describes how volunteer organizations are struggling with defining their role, as well as with finding new volunteers. Finally, research possibilities are mentioned by introducing the research questions.*

## Context

All over the world, governments are exploring different types of decision making that consider the increased interdependence of public actors on private, semi-private, and other public actors (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006). At the international level, as well as the national level, there has been a notable growth in the interest in community participation and self-governance. In fact, processes of planning and decision making related to environmental issues are increasingly characterized by attempts to involve the public. Citizen panels, citizen charters, new types of participation, and other forms are being used to increase the influence of citizens on decision making, and to improve the relation between citizens and elected politicians. In fact, more and more government responsibilities have been devolved to lower levels of government. Local government organizations, such as municipalities, in turn, are transferring tasks and responsibilities to groups of organized citizens (volunteer organizations). This trend can also be identified in the village of Doornenburg (Aalvanger, 2017b; Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016).

## Doornenburg

About 3 years ago, the citizens of the Dutch village Doornenburg started to work together to establish a foundation, which aimed at increasing the livability of the village in the future. In 2016, the village of Doornenburg developed a Village Development Plan describing its future developments as a village. This development plan is based on the input provided by local citizens, and provides ideas about how to deal with the current and future challenges of the village. One of the characteristics of this document is that it has a particular focus on the involvement of citizens, accordingly it names citizen participation as the means to stimulate local decision making (Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016).

Doornenburg is a small village in the rural areas of Gelderland. It is characterized by a relatively low number of inhabitants. This specific context influences the way in which village-life and volunteer work is organized. Doornenburg is for example, a very close-knit community, where everybody knows each other. Consequently, there is a nice village community. Currently, Doornenburg is characterized by a strong sense of togetherness and social solidarity. The fact that Doornenburg is such a close-knit community results in many people participating in activities that are organized within the village. This also explains the relatively high level of participation in various (sport) clubs, volunteer organizations, and associations, which is a unique feature of Doornenburg.

## Problem analysis

Nevertheless, social and demographic trends challenge Doornenburg's village community. Processes like individualization, secularization, migration, and an aging population (Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016) need to be incorporated into the plans for Doornenburg's future. Other challenges are for example a decreasing birth-rate, a decline in the number of younger people in the village, and a shortage of starter residences in the village (Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016). As a consequence, there is a major challenge to safeguard the facilities in the village (such as the grocery store and the school), and to keep the village lively and attractive for (potential) inhabitants (Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016).

Next to this, the process of decentralization itself poses some challenges. The government devolves tasks to citizens and expects them to contribute to society, for example as volunteers. However, the problem with this is that in smaller villages in Gelderland, such as Doornenburg, there is already a relatively high level of participation in volunteer work. Therefore, the increasing demand for volunteer

participation is not being met (Aalvanger, 2017a). At the root of this problem is an imbalance between the insufficient number of volunteers, and the demands (in terms of tasks and responsibilities of volunteers) that need to be met. According to Aalvanger (2017b), this could be due to a variety of reasons such as a lack of communication between different organizations, as well as antiquated recruitment techniques and organizing methods. Furthermore, it may be that there are gaps between volunteer organizations mutually, as well as between volunteer organizations and (potential) volunteers (Aalvanger, 2017b). For example, it could be that there is little contact between the Voetbalvereniging GVA and the Tennisclub, although they are both sports organizations who work with volunteers.

The above mentioned difficulties also challenge volunteer organizations, as they are struggling with defining their role, and finding new volunteers. The village life in Doornenburg, and the various organizations in Doornenburg, highly depend on the involvement of volunteers. Therefore, this research analyzes current strategies of attracting and maintaining volunteers, in order to come up with an overview of lessons learned to help increase volunteer participation in Doornenburg.

## Research purpose

The previous mentioned problem description leads to the following overarching research purpose:

*To gain insight into the current strategies of attracting and maintaining new volunteers in Doornenburg, in order to provide the organizations a starting point for discussing what they deem the right way forward to increase volunteer participation.*

In line with the research purpose the following research question and sub-questions can be identified:

*What lessons can be learned from analyzing the current strategies used by volunteer organizations, in order to gain insights into volunteer participation?*

Sub-questions:

1. What are strategies to attract and maintain volunteers according to the literature?
2. How do organizations' in Doornenburg describe their current and desired volunteers?
3. What strategies do organizations in Doornenburg use to attract and maintain volunteers, and why do they use these strategies?
4. To what extent do the organizations' strategies correspond with approaches described in the literature?

## Reading guide

This introductory chapter has provided the reader with a general overview of the problem at stake in Doornenburg. The following chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this research, providing a definition of volunteerism and an outline of methods to attract and maintain volunteers is given. The methods used in this research will be further explained in the following chapter. After this, the empirical analytic part of this report will begin, starting with presenting the data generated. In the final chapter, the findings of this research are discussed, and related to the theoretical framework. Besides, this chapter provides the general conclusion, and an answer to the main research question. Each chapter in this report opens with a short outline of its content.

# 2. Theoretical framework

*Any account of strategies used by volunteer organizations needs firstly to present a clear definition of what volunteerism is. This theoretical framework starts with an outline of what volunteerism is. Next to this the motives of volunteers are provided and are linked to ways of attracting volunteers. The second part of this theoretical framework is about managing and maintaining volunteers.*

## Part 1: Attracting Volunteers

### Introduction

This chapter provides insight into potential strategies which volunteer organizations could use to attract and maintain volunteers as described in the literature. The theoretical framework is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on the volunteers themselves and strategies to attract potential volunteers. Before deciding the appropriate strategies to get volunteers on board, it is important to first understand what volunteerism is, what motivates volunteers to participate in the first place, what types of volunteers exist, and how to approach potential volunteers effectively. The second part focuses on ways in which volunteer organizations could manage their volunteers, in order to maintain them within their organization. To begin, it is important to briefly operationalize the concept of volunteerism.

#### *Operationalizing volunteerism*

The first and most obvious characteristic of volunteer work is that it is not paid. A more in depth description may be that whereas material compensation is mostly appreciated when doing paid work, volunteers often perceive more intrinsic rewards from doing their work (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001; Gidron, 1985). Furthermore, Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2001) also noted that volunteer work strongly relates to volition: volunteer work results from a free choice to spend leisure time working without getting paid. Secondly, whereas paid work is instrumental and motivated by economic and social necessity, volunteer work puts more emphasis on social responsibility towards society and helping others. Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2001) describe how volunteers engage in a different work related 'psychological contract' than employees. In other words, volunteers interact differently with their volunteer organizations, then they would as employees with their work place. Therefore, from the description above, volunteerism can be described as unpaid work that is motivated by an individual's volition and social responsibility, in contribution to the community.

### Motives of volunteers

A variety of different factors that could motivate volunteers to participate in volunteer work have been described in literature. For example, Agostinho and Paço (2012) describe how an individual's decision to participate in volunteer work is based on their motivation, values and expectations. Motivations could involve the expectation of certain rewards from volunteering, such as personal, social or indirect economic gain (Gidron, 1978; Saksida et al., 2017). Other reasons are for example, career advancement or love of the game/activity (Gage & Thapa, 2012; Ryan et al., 2001). Motivations could also be linked to issues of altruism, social obligation, and selfish motives (Fitch, 1987).

Many different models have been constructed by scientists that serve to grasp and organize factors that motivate volunteers to participate in volunteer work. One of the most commonly used models is the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI), which makes a distinction between six different factors or functions that result from doing volunteer work (Clary & Snyder, 1999). These determine peoples' decisions on whether or not to do volunteer work (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). In other words, the VFI describes what volunteers get out of the act of volunteering, which subsequently relates to motivations that people have to do volunteer work. The first function is *Enhancement*, which relates to feeling useful and important. This function serves to improve one's self-esteem. The second function is *Career*, which is about gaining experience and other benefits for one's career. Third is *Social*, which serves to build connections and strengthen one's relationships with others. The fourth factor is *Values*, which includes humanitarian and altruistic concerns. The fifth factor is called *Protective*. It is described as a way to lessen negative feelings (e.g. guilt) and to acknowledge personal issues. The sixth and final factor is *Understanding*. This is about volunteering in order to

explore one's own strengths, create new experiences, acquire new skills, or improve existing skills. The VFI is a widely accepted model in scientific literature, and has proven to be useful to gain insight into why volunteers decide to participate in volunteer work. Butt et al. (2017) constructed the ABCE model, which serves as an overarching model for the motivations for volunteering mentioned in the literature. The ABCE, as described by Butt et al. (2017) is summarized in the following four paragraphs. This model is strongly based on the VFI, described above, and the VMI model. The VMI, or Volunteer Motivation Inventory, is a model designed by Maxine McEwin and Linda Jacobsen-D'Arcy in 2002. It makes the distinction between eight motivational factors: career, personal growth, recognition, hedonistic, social, values, reactive, and reciprocity (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004).

The ABCE model distinguishes four directions which may influence an individual's decision to volunteer. Due to the broad directions, new motives are easily placed in one of the four directions. The ABCE stands for the following: *Affiliation, Personal Values & Beliefs, Career Development* and *Egoistic Motives*. These four directions will be discussed briefly below.

1. According to Butt et al. (2017), *Affiliation* is about an individual's desire to socialize with the people around them. Under this label, a distinction is made between social motives, and socialization. Social motives were identified in the VFI by Clary et al. (1998) and described in the previous paragraph. They include motivations such as friends and family members doing volunteer work, or because they promote volunteer work. Socialization is more about an individual's need to socialize with the people around them, which can be made possible through participation in volunteer projects. Motivations could be gaining social interaction and connections through volunteering, or participating in social events and other social opportunities. Law et al. (2011) describe that often times an individual tends to consider whether or not their peers participate in similar volunteer work, before accepting volunteer positions.

2. *Beliefs & Values,* according to Butt et al. (2017), represent the motives that are based on the desire to help others. These kinds of motivations are found to be one of the most dominant functions (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). Values are formed by the beliefs held by individuals. Therefore, it is assumed that value motives reflect an individual's beliefs. This direction is divided into three sub-factors: Pro-social, organization and religion. Pro-social motives include altruism, such as the concern about those "less fortunate" than one's self, or feeling compassionate towards people who are in need. Organization reflects the volunteer's beliefs relating to their organization, such as the desire to follow their organizational leader, or believing in the cause (vision and mission) of the organization. Religious beliefs can play a role if volunteers believe their work will be rewarded in the afterlife, or if the volunteer perceives volunteering as being part of their religion.

3. *Career Development* is thought to be a rather weak link to an individual's motivation to volunteer (Butt et al., 2017). However, this finding could also be reinforced by socially desirable answers provided by volunteers. Especially in the case of students, participating in volunteer work is a good way for them to improve their career perspective (Afrouzeh, 2008; Ghose & Kassam, 2014; Handy et al., 2010; Holdsworth, 2010). Besides career development, improving one's understanding of certain concepts is part of this direction. For example, volunteer work may provide opportunities to improve one's capacity to complete specific tasks in relation to their employment. Volunteerism may also provide new perspectives and opportunities to explore one's strengths and weaknesses, which may be useful for life in general.

4 Butt et al. (2017) continue by describing the *Egoistic* direction which represents any motives, actions, and wishes related to the individual's ego. This relates to the VFI model as it shows two motives for participating in volunteer work: enhancing and protecting the own volunteer's ego. The protective motive includes that volunteering may help individuals to escape from their own negative feelings, such as loneliness or guilt. On top of that, it can help people to work through personal issues, and remain busy in life. The enhancing motive explains how individuals can make themselves feel important and useful by participating in volunteer work. It might also have developed from the idea that the government or society cannot fulfil their tasks, but the volunteers can fulfil them by participating in volunteer work.

## External Communication

In this paragraph the communication between organizations and potential volunteers is described. We refer to this as external communication. This includes ways to approach potential volunteers, the content of the message provided to potential volunteers, and ways to screen potential volunteers.

### *Content of the message*

Once an organization has gained insights into the motivations of individuals to do volunteer work, an important next step in attracting new volunteers would be establishing clear communication with potential volunteers. This paragraph is about what exactly should be communicated to the potential volunteers. This would take the form of a medium that is communicated to the potential volunteers in such a way that they can process the message effectively. Emphasized within the external communication of volunteer organizations would have to be the mission and visions of the organization (CIVIQ, 2005). As stated before, one of the reasons individuals participate in volunteer work is because they believe in their organization's cause. Therefore, it is important that the cause becomes very clear when approaching potential volunteers. By making this clear, the organization can ensure that the volunteers applying to them are aware of the difference they can make by participating. In other words, if the invitation to volunteer strikes with the potential volunteer's beliefs and motivations, the volunteer will more likely be interested in participating (CIVIQ, 2005). The organization should be clear about tasks which they are already undertaking, as well as their goals for the future.

Furthermore, it is important that the message is clear on what is expected of the volunteers if they decide to participate. This could prevent people from rejecting the invitation due to uncertainty. From here, it has been suggested by Brudney (1999) that creating task descriptions for volunteer positions within the organization would be highly beneficial. For the potential volunteer this is beneficial because the descriptions highlight the specific tasks that they need to complete (Brudney, 1999). For the organizations this is highly beneficial because it allows them to narrow down their search, and instead of targeting everyone, they only target those who match the description they have created (Brudney, 1999). Within these descriptions it would be important that the organization highlights the specific tasks the volunteer might be required to undertake, the skills required, as well as clarifying the time commitment required of the volunteer (Brudney, 1999). It has been suggested that the more clear the information is during this initial attraction phase, the more likely the volunteers will be satisfied with their work in the future, and the more likely they will stay with the organization (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). If applicable, establishing a variety of positions with various well-defined skills required would be beneficial, as it would allow the volunteer organization to draw in individuals from all demographics and socio-economic backgrounds. On top of that, noting any remuneration or rewards that the volunteer could receive is an important antecedent to ensuring volunteer satisfaction in the future (Brudney, 1999).

### *Ways to Approach*

Practicing active outreach of volunteers is an important strategy for organizations (Brudney, 1999). Part of this strategy is identifying where the potential volunteers can be typically found. However, how to recruit volunteers is not thoroughly explored in the literature. Thereby, for the purpose of this report, recruitment of volunteers will be compared to the recruitment of employees. According to Saks (1994) recruitment strategies can be described as informal or formal. Formal being through the use of advertisements or third party mediators, and informal being through word of mouth (Saks, 1994).

### *Screening*

After an application has been received, it is important for the volunteer organization to screen the candidate in terms of having the appropriate skills, time commitments, and motivations required by the organization (Grossman & Furano, 1999). An example of questions that could be asked to find out motivations of volunteers can be found in Figure 2 in Appendix 1.

# Part 2: Managing and Maintaining volunteers

## Introduction

Apart from attracting new volunteers, maintaining and managing volunteers that are already actively participating is very important. This is because doing so generates a greater degree of volunteer satisfaction, as well as higher levels of volunteer retention (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Jiménez et al. (2010) found that the most motivated individuals are those who intend to stay, meaning that volunteers intention to stay may be dependent on whether an organization can meet their motivations or not. In cases where individuals quit volunteering, Hager and Brudney (2004) suggested that approximately 40% of the time it is due to poor volunteer management.

This chapter addresses strategies on managing and maintaining volunteers, and is divided into three parts: volunteer assignment, volunteer supervision and support, and internal communication of volunteer organizations.

## Volunteer assignment

Volunteer assignment refers to "having the right person for the right task" (Grossman & Furano, 1999, p. 208) In terms of tasks, appropriate work assignments that strike with the volunteers' personal preferences leads to greater satisfaction amongst volunteers as indicated by Barnes and Sharpe (2009). Their research indicates that involvement in volunteer work (in this case a neighbourhood park in Toronto, Canada) is strongly tied to the volunteer's individual interests, passions, and values. This includes providing volunteers with tasks that not only match the skills they possess, but that are also challenging and allow them to learn new skills. This is stated by Barnes and Sharpe (2009, p. 177) as follows:

> *"Along with providing a forum to do work related to their interests, the park also gave volunteers the opportunity to further develop and expand their skills and competencies in these areas, through the projects they were involved in."*

If possible, providing volunteers an assortment of tasks that they can choose from, contrary to just one, helps to accommodate the volunteer by catering to a greater variety of strengths (Grossman & Furano, 1999).

Another important aspect of volunteer assignment that helps ensure volunteer satisfaction, is allowing experienced volunteers to manage newer, less experienced volunteers. Enabling this leads to a setting where volunteer experiences is valued and trusted (Brudney, 1999).

Finally, assigning volunteers to tasks where they can see the results of their work is important. By providing them with such tasks, organizations are able to appeal more closely to their motivations, which in turn keeps them more satisfied. This is also related to offering volunteers the possibility to try out new ideas, and develop skills that they see useful to them in ways that extend beyond the volunteer context (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

Furthermore, it is important that tasks provided to volunteers are designed and framed so that the volunteer clearly perceives that the work being done actually benefits people other than themselves. This is referred to as participation efficacy, and has been found to be a predictor of intent to remain as a volunteer (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001).

## Supervision & support

Once volunteers are attracted, a volunteer organization should provide necessary support activities to make sure volunteers stay involved.

One of the initial support activities that should be undertaken by the volunteer organization, is that new volunteers should be given an orientation period, just like any other job, regardless of their individual tasks. This orientation should consist of a brief, general teaching program, that is arranged with the purpose of giving an overview of the organization's mission and vision, colleagues, culture, and activities executed (Brudney, 1999). Equally important is ensuring the feeling of social embeddedness amongst the volunteers. This provides the volunteers with the feeling that they are part of the group and contribute to the organization's aim. Research has shown that greater volunteer satisfaction is correlated with increased group integration. And oppositely, lesser group integration, and the subsequent poor relationships that evolve from it, can lead to decreased satisfaction within volunteer work, as well as the possibility of volunteer burnout (Cyr & Dowrick, 1991). Furthermore, there is a relationship between an individual's social network and their participation in volunteer work, namely actively participating in volunteer work increases the volunteer's chances of expanding their social network (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Another important support activity that should be provided to the volunteers by the volunteer organization is basic training. This is done with the purpose of providing information about the skills, knowledge, and the procedures that are required by the volunteers (Brudney, 1999). Volunteer organizations should not expect that their volunteers can start working effectively without any instructions. Although a small percentage of the volunteer organizations already make use of basic training (i.e. health and crisis organizations), many still underestimate the training needs of their volunteers (Grossman & Furano, 1999).

Once a volunteer has been through the orientation phase and learned the basic skills, ongoing training is still needed. The type of training is dependent on the type of volunteers the organization has selected. Every volunteer is different with different circumstances, and because of this they also have different needs. That being said, whatever the needs of the volunteer are, they should have the feeling that they are supported when necessary (CIVIQ, 2005). Thereby, two types of ongoing training can be distinguished. The first is called content-focused training, which is about how to complete tasks. The second is process-focused training, which is about how the volunteer can work effectively in the given environment (Grossman & Furano, 1999). By including ongoing training in their support activities, organizations can keep their volunteers satisfied by ruling out volunteer boredom (Brudney, 1999). Next, it is important to recognize the volunteers for their achievements. In terms of the organization, they should select someone to be responsible for recognition activities. The reason for this is that providing recognition shows the volunteers that the work they are doing is being noticed, and this in turn leads to greater levels of satisfaction (Brudney, 1999). The most effective type of recognition is in person, face-to-face communication (CIVIQ, 2005). Conversely, public recognition such as newsletter publications or thank you notes, is much less effective (CIVIQ, 2005). Another example of a great recognition tool to use when personal recognition cannot be done, is the handing over of a certificate of achievements the volunteer has completed (Bruinsma et al., 2001). In summary, a person-oriented communication is essential for the recognition of volunteers (Adams & Shepherd, 1996).

Another important aspect in terms of supervision and support, is providing supervision, mentoring, and routine feedback to ensure the effective management of volunteers. When board members or other important people within the volunteer organization spend time interacting with volunteers, it has been shown to motivate the volunteers further, and also encourage them to do better work (Grossman & Furano, 1999). This is especially applicable in the early stages of the work. In light of this, in the later stages of work, interaction with important members of the organization can help volunteers get through barriers and difficult situations. These otherwise might have led to frustrations, and a possible subsequent exit of the volunteer (Brudney, 1999). Mentoring is a form of supervision that has been highly successful in practice. Mentoring is defined as a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and a mentee (CIVIQ, 2005). In most mentoring relationships, the contacts between mentor and mentee are based on certain routines. In the beginning of the relationship there is often a lot of contact, and later on to a certain (agreed) regularity. Mentor and

mentee must get to know each other, determine together which goals they want to achieve, and what is needed to do their tasks. Over time the contacts moments become fewer, and gradually become more of a "catch up". An important part of feedback, contains the formulation and distribution of evaluating the volunteer's performance. Before arranging an evaluation session, it is necessary to keep formal records of the volunteer's performance, including such information as the number of hours contributed (Brudney, 1999).

## Internal Communication

Internal communication, which is communication within the organization, is crucial in order to maintain volunteers. It has been suggested that:

> "The more extensive the amount of communication within a voluntary association, the greater the level of members' commitment and the lower their detachment from the organization" (Knoke, 1981, p. 144).

This begins with appropriate scheduling of both the tasks and time of the volunteer. In terms of time, letting the volunteer know when they are needed, and providing them with a time schedule in advance. This ensures that they know what to expect, and that they are not showing up at the wrong times, but also that they are showing up at the right time (Grossman & Furano, 1999). Another effective form of internal communication is a newsletter for the volunteer, as it creates a sense of togetherness amongst them (Brudney, 1999). Within this newsletter, information about the organization itself, volunteer achievements and recognition, ongoing organizational events, and changes that have or will be made within the organization, should be highlighted (Brudney, 1999). By having an adequate flow of information within the organization, volunteers are able to perform their tasks more effectively (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001).

# 3. Methodology

*This methodology chapter describes the methods used during this research. First, the way in which data was collected will be described, followed by information about the analysis of the data. This chapter also includes ethical considerations.*

## Introduction

In this research project, we chose to conduct a literature study, desk research, interviews, and a data analysis. We chose this mixture of methods because we expected that it would enable us to take an explorative approach towards answering our main question, within the time available for this project.

## Literature study and desk research

We chose to conduct a literature study and desk research in order to establish a foundation for our theoretical framework. The literature study was helpful in providing a background on the topic and the issue at stake that was needed for the study. According to Kumar (2014), in any study it is necessary to provide a basis for the theoretical framework in order to set boundaries for the project content.

For the literature study, we searched for scientific articles and research findings via Google Scholar and the WUR Library database. We used keywords such as: *voluntary work, volunteer participation, attraction of volunteers, best practices in voluntary work, strategies in voluntary work, volunteers, volunteer organizations, volunteer types, volunteer motivations* etc. The search resulted in a variety of articles, which we scanned for relevant information regarding potential strategies to attract and maintain volunteers. We highlighted the most common topics, organized them by theme, and formed two overall subchapters, namely 1. Attracting Volunteers and 2. Managing & Maintaining Volunteers.

For the desk research, we searched through Google for information about Doornenburg: general information about the citizens, volunteer work, volunteer organizations, the dynamics in the village, and the demographics. In order to get a better understanding of Doornenburg's context, we used (Dutch) keywords, such as: *"Vrijwilligerswerk in Doornenburg, demografie Doornenburg, vrijwilligersorganisaties in Doornenburg" ["voluntary work in Doornenburg, demographics Doornenburg, volunteer organizations in Doornenburg."]*

Our search resulted in a variety of websites, which provided information regarding the current practices of ongoing volunteer work in Doornenburg, the active associations, their vision, goal, and demographics. The literature study and the desk research helped us to gain insight into the context of Doornenburg. Additionally, it helped to identify potential organizations who we could approach for the interviews, as well as provided the necessary information needed to construct the interviews, which will be explained in more detail in the next section.

## Interviews

Conducting interviews allowed us to answer the following sub-questions of our research:

*How do organizations in Doornenburg describe their current volunteers?*

*How many volunteers do the organizations require, and how do they describe their desired volunteers?*

*What activities do organizations in Doornenburg undertake to attract and maintain volunteers, and why do they use these strategies?*

Interviews are highly appropriate for cases which require specific, but in-depth analysis within a complex setting (Kumar, 2014). In terms of this project, this research method will allow for an exploration of what we assume to be a complex setting in Doornenburg. Although quantitative research would enable us to study a larger population, we argue that it would merely scratch the

surface of what is going on in Doornenburg, regarding how and why volunteer organizations organize, as well as how they attract and maintain volunteers in their organization. Because there is little knowledge about the challenges that volunteer organizations in Doornenburg face, it seemed appropriate to do a qualitative study. Doing a qualitative study applied to Doornenburg allowed us to create an overview of all the happenings around volunteer work in Doornenburg.

### Selection procedure

For the input of the interviews, we approached several volunteer organizations in Doornenburg. The organizations were selected based on the following criteria. First, we chose to only approach volunteer organizations located within the village of Doornenburg itself, because this location is the focus of the study. Second, we expected that smaller organizations may have different views and practices than larger organizations. So, in order to create a broad and diverse view on volunteer organization in Doornenburg, we chose to approach volunteer organizations of varying sizes, including large and small organizations. For reference, the limit that qualified an organization as "large" or "small" was set to 50 volunteers; organizations with less than 50 volunteers were considered to be small, and organizations with more than 50 volunteers were considered large. This choice was made based on the desk research. Ultimately, we interviewed individuals of four large and four small organizations.

It was beyond the scope of this research to interview all volunteer organizations in Doornenburg. Besides, due to time constrains, this was not even possible. Yet, in order to create a report with credible results we aimed to at least conduct 5 interviews. The time between contacting the organizations and the actual interview was short, and therefore we expected a low response rate. In order to be able to conduct at least 5 interviews, we decided to contact twelve volunteer organizations in total. We invited the organizations initially via email for the interview. When there was no response after four working days, we tried to contact the organization via telephone. Later on, during the interviews, the respondents referred us to other potentially interesting organizations (snowball effect), who we then also approached. In the end, we conducted interviews with members from nine volunteer organizations, as well as two people who were not responsible for a specific volunteer organization, but still could provide us with more insight into the organization of volunteer work within Doornenburg. The organizations and their locations can be found in Figure 1 below.
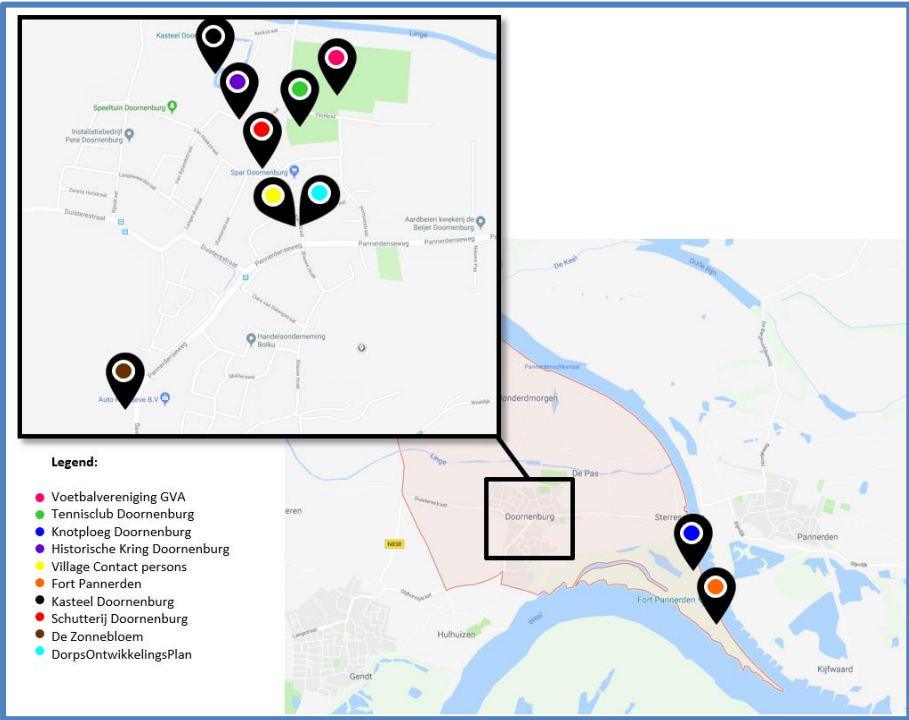


*Figure 1: Interviewed organizations and their location.*

### Conducting the interview

The conducted interviews (see appendix 2 and 3) were semi-structured. A semi-structured interview allows the respondent to elaborate on their answers. Next to this, according to Kumar (2014) semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to dig deeper into the answers given by the respondent. Based on the literature review and desk research described above, an interview guide was created. The interview guide examined general information about the volunteer organization, their current volunteer situation, the strategies they used for attracting and maintaining their volunteers, and finally any other insights that could be potentially relevant for our research. These formed the themes touched upon during the interview, and thus directed the interview.

The original plan was to ask the respondent the (exact) questions from the interview guide. However, what proved to be more effective was using it as guideline rather than as specific set of questions. This allowed for a more flexible conversation in which the respondent could elaborate on their answers, and new directions and insights could be explored. Most of the interviews were conducted in duo's. One interview was conducted by three team members; three interviews were conducted by four team members. In most cases there was only one respondent. However, some interviews were held with two or three respondents of an organization simultaneously. In terms of interview procedure, we were clear on the fact that we intended to record the interviews, and asked for informed consent to do so. All interviewees agreed on this, and accordingly we recorded the interviews (except from one interview where we had some troubles with the recorder).

At the end of each interview, the respondent was asked whether they were interested in a summarized document of strategies that we would come up with as a result of our research project. They were also asked if they were interested in attending the final presentation on the 18th of December 2017.

## Content analysis

Completing a content analysis is suitable for the presentation of interview data (Kumar, 2014). First we transcribed the interviews. These were done in Dutch because the original language of the interviews was Dutch, and we did not want to lose any important information in the translation. From here we created a summary of each interview in English. We then scanned all summaries of the interviews, and wrote down all noteworthy topics/quotes ourselves, thereby creating a "red-line". Next, we combined this into various categories. This process was based on similarities regarding the content. Task description was for example linked to providing vacancies and so on. The categories we came up with appeared to be very similar to the categories used to structure the interviews. Therefore, we chose this structure as the most appropriate structure as it addressed most of the topics we found. We chose to organize our results according to our semi-structured interview list, namely: general information, organizations, volunteers, attracting volunteers, maintaining volunteers, and other insights.

Lastly, we scanned the transcriptions of the interviews for quotes to support and illustrate our findings, which were constructed by listening back the recordings of the interviews. Since the interview with the Knotploeg was not recorded properly, no quotes from this interviews were included in the data analysis.

When conducting content analysis, it is important to stay mindful that the content of the interviews does not get twisted. In order to reduce the chance of misinterpretation, Kumar (2014) suggested to look at the content analysis with multiple researchers, which is exactly what we did.

# Ethics

## Discretion

Because this study could potentially deal with sensitive information provided by respondents, it was essential that the information was dealt with in a discreet manner. We made efforts to avoid evoking (personal) conflicts based on the information provided by the respondents. In order to reduce the risk of people feeling offended by the research outcomes, we have coded the quotes from the respondents by referring to them as Organization A, B, C, and so on. The assignment of a letter to an organization was done randomly. For protection of the respondents, the transcriptions have not been included in this report.

We aimed to ask every respondent whether they would like their identity to remain anonymous. This was especially important in Doornenburg because of how close knit the community is. However, not all respondents were asked whether or not they wished to stay anonymous. Therefore, we decided to anonymize all respondents to deal with this inconsistency. It should be noted that the content of the quotes may still give away which organization, or perhaps even which person made the statements. However, there was little we could do to prevent this without censoring the quotes themselves.

## Transparency

We felt that being straightforward with the respondents about the aim and purpose of our research was important in order to build an initial relation of trust with them.

We informed the respondents about how the interviews would be used: that the interviews were part of our project focused on Doornenburg, and that our project is part of a larger project that is looking at a variety of small villages in the province of Gelderland. We also informed the respondents about where they could find the results of the Gelderland project, and that our project is part of an initiative started by the DKK Gelderland (Dorpshuizen en Kleine Kernen Gelderland). All in all, we were trying to be as transparent as possible within our means about the content and use of our project. However, it should be noted that the project was not always introduced in a similar way. Some respondents required more elaboration on the projects than others. We were also honest with the respondents about our (limited) background knowledge on the subject, our uncertainty regarding the goal of the research, and our uncertainty regarding the outcomes of the interviews.

In terms of interview procedure, we were clear on the fact that we intended to record the interviews, and asked for informed consent to do so. Finally, as mentioned before, we promised to send the respondents a two-page summary document of the results of our research project. We intentionally remained vague about the content of this document, as we were uncertain about what exactly could be included and what we would come up with. This issue was openly communicated to the respondents.

## Giving Back

We made clear from the beginning what we could offer the respondents in return for their participation in our research. We did not promise the results of the study, but we told them that we aimed to send them a two-page document containing a summary of our findings. After each interview, we offered the respondents a small gift as a sign of our appreciation. All respondents received the same gift (a chocolate bar) to avoid favouritism.

# 4. Results

*This chapter presents the findings of this research. The results in this chapter are structured and presented according to the structure of the interviews.*

## Village Doornenburg

Based on the analysis of the interviews, this section will provide an exploration of the volunteer practices in Doornenburg, and how they are organized.

To start, Doornenburg is characterized by a rather low number of inhabitants (~2700). It is a small village in the rural areas of Gelderland. Respondents reported that the small size of Doornenburg has had a considerable influence on how both village-life and volunteer work are organized. For example, a respondent from Organization **E** elaborated on this by arguing that the isolated geographic location results in a very close-knit community, where everybody knows each other. He explained that, the fact that Doornenburg is such a close-knit community, results in many people participating in activities that are organized within the village. When answering the question if the small size of Doornenburg is a strength in relation to volunteer work, a respondent of Organization **F** made a similar point regarding the positive effect of Doornenburg's size on volunteer participation.

Respondent of Organization **E**:

*"De pool van vrijwilligers is, in een klein dorp als Doornenburg, natuurlijk niet zo groot. Maar het enthousiasme compenseert dit wel. [...] Ook loopt het verenigingsleven in Nederland natuurlijk een beetje achteruit, maar in het dorp hier lijkt het te floreren. [...] Families hier zijn hecht".*

*["The pool of volunteers is, in a small village like Doornenburg, of course not that big. But, the enthusiasm compensates this. [...] Also, the associations within the Netherlands seem to decrease, though, in this village, it seems to flourish. [...] Families are very close".]*

Respondent of Organization **F**:

*"Ja dat denken we wel. Als we kijken naar Huissen of Bemmel, die zijn al een heel stuk groter, is het veel lastiger het te doen".*

*["Yes, we think so. If we look at Huissen or Bemmel, these places are a lot bigger and more difficult".]*

The fact that Doornenburg is a small, but active village correlates with its strong social cohesion, where people know each other personally. We experienced the latter first hand; when we visited Doornenburg and were walking on the streets, looking for the house of one respondent, a pedestrian asked us where we needed to be. When we tried to pronounce the street name, he interrupted by asking who we wanted to meet. It turned out that he knew exactly who we were looking for, and where he lived.

The degree of participation appears to be relatively high in Doornenburg. Many inhabitants are involved in volunteer work, often participating in several organizations simultaneously. A respondent of Organization **H** also stressed that approaching potential volunteers personally is quite effective because Doornenburg is a small village with strong social cohesion. This respondent answered this

when questioned about if there were problems regarding the attraction of volunteers in Doornenburg, in comparison to organizations in other villages.

Respondent of Organization **H**:

> *"Nee, ik denk dat wij daarin als dorp, als Doornenburg, ook wel een beetje uniek in zijn. Want ik merk wel dat er heel veel gedaan wordt om, hoe moet ik dat zeggen, omdat iedereen elkaar kent ben je ook geneigd om ergens in te stappen. Omdat je het dat leuk vind om het met zijn allen te doen".*
>
> *["No, I think we are, as Doornenburg, unique because everybody knows each other, you will be more inclined to do voluntary work. We enjoy doing it all together".]*

Pride seemed to be a recurring element when asking respondents about Doornenburg, such as the following statement by the respondent of Organization **A** illustrates:

> *"De Doornenburgers zijn een trots volkje. Dat heb ik ervaren, ze zijn trots op alles".*
>
> *["The Doornenburgers are proud people. I have experienced that, they are proud of everything".]*

Challenges for Doornenburg

Apart from high social participation, cohesion, and pride, Doornenburg's characteristics also raise certain challenges for the village. Respondents from Organization's **A** and **C** described these challenges as following:

Respondent of Organization **A**:

> *"Ik woon hier al 10 jaar met plezier, maar je moet daar wel mee uitkijken hoor, als import [...] Kijk uit dat je geen dingen gaat zeggen die niet kunnen, want iedereen kent elkaar".*
>
> *["I have been living here for 10 pleasurable years, but you have to be careful with that, being an 'import'. [...] You should pay attention to not say things you can't say, because everyone knows each other".]*

Respondent of Organization **C**:

> *"Dit dorp heeft echt een eigen cultuur, ja. [...] Daardoor is er natuurlijk wel een inner circle hier, van mensen die steeds aan de voorkant staan".*
>
> *["Doornenburg has a distinct culture, yes. Therefore, there is an inner-circle of people here, of people who always stand in front".]*

These statements illustrate that people know each other, and that there are strong, informal networks. It could be argued that these characteristics make Doornenburg's culture rather exclusive. In other words, the informality that comes with strong social cohesion, and knowing everyone results in strong networks that may be challenging to access for people outside the network. Furthermore, there is a distinct culture in Doornenburg and accordingly, there is a certain way of interacting in the village. Decisions are often made by an inner-circle, as mentioned by a respondent of Organization **C**, which causes there to be a certain way to organize volunteer work.

# Volunteer Organizations in Doornenburg

This section will summarize and describe the interviewed organizations. General information about the organizations, including the number of volunteers, the activities conducted, and the presence of a board or commission are summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1: Organizations, numbers of volunteers, the activities conducted by volunteers, and the presence of a board or commission.*

| Organization | Number of volunteers | Activities conducted by volunteers | Presence of Board/Commission |
|---|---|---|---|
| Voetbalvereniging GVA | +/- 100 | The volunteers fulfil tasks such as cleaning the building, maintaining the terrain/fields, training teams, or being part of the board or commission. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| Kasteel Doornenburg | 60 | The volunteers are organized in around eight groups, all with their own specific topic and field of work, e.g. work in the garden, being part of music groups or maintaining the Castle itself. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| DorpsOntwikkelingsPlan (DOP) | 20 | Responsible for the creation and implementation of the DorpsOntwikkelingsPlan. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| Tennisclub Doornenburg | +/- 40 | The volunteers fulfil tasks like cleaning the building, being a commissioner or member of the open tournament, technical commission or bar commission, the doing of maintenance or being part of the board. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| Village contact persons | 2 | Being facilitators of voluntary work in Doornenburg through networking. | Board: N/A Commissions: N/A |
| Historische Kring Doornenburg | 40 | Volunteers are write articles, organize meetings and provide lectures, manage the archives or are part of the board. | Board: Yes Commissions: No |
| Schutterij Doornenburg | 700, +/- 275 active | Volunteers form commissions for all sorts of activities, such as ticket selling, running the bar or selling coins. Also, activities like being a leader of a commission or being part of the board, is done voluntarily. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| De Zonnebloem | 21 (local, in Doornenburg) | The volunteers visit elderly person and other clients and organize all kind of activities for them throughout the year. | Board: Yes Commissions: No |
| Fort Pannerden | 84 | Volunteers provide tours through the Fortress or help with the maintenance of the Fortress. | Board: Yes Commissions: Yes |
| Knotploeg Doornenburg | 26 | The volunteers gather to handsaw and maintain the willows in and around Doornenburg. | Board: No Commissions: No |

# Volunteers in Doornenburg

The following section will discuss the general character of the volunteers in Doornenburg. As stated previously, it became clear that Doornenburg as a village, had a high number of inhabitants participating in volunteer work. It became clear that the typical age of the volunteers in Doornenburg ranged from 40 years to 80 years, with the majority of the volunteers being retired. Respondents of Organization **A** and Organization **B** elaborated on this:

Respondent of Organization **A**:

*"Het gros is toch wel ouder: mensen die toch wel meer vrije tijd hebben".*

*["The majority is indeed older: people who have more spare time".]*

Respondent of Organization **B**:

*"De omgeving, waarin zij leven, wordt steeds kleiner en er vallen steeds meer mensen weg. En het wordt voor hen hier dan ook een soort van tweede huis. [...] Ik weet bijvoorbeeld dat mensen die hier op het terrein aan het werken zijn, dat zijn toch wel 60 plussers, het heerlijk vinden om elkaar te zien. Dan zie je dat een stuk vergrijzing kan leiden tot eenzaamheid, waardoor een vereniging weer waardevol wordt voor z'n persoon".*

*["The environment, in which they live, is getting smaller and more and more people are passing away. Here, it's becoming a sort of second home for them. [...] I know, for example, that people who are working on the site here, 60 plus, love to see each other. Aging can result in loneliness, this could make an association valuable again".]*

It became apparent that younger people (roughly aged <40 years) are often not part of volunteer initiatives. Young adults were described as challenging to get in touch with. According to a respondent of Organization **B**:

*"Dit is een groep die heel lastig te bereiken is. [...] Die middengroep is een lastige groep, die krijg je bijna niet te pakken".*

*["This group is very difficult to reach. [...] This middle group is a challenge, it's hard to get in touch with them".]*

Furthermore, once the organization had managed to get in touch with this group, they faced the fact that the group were too busy to participate in volunteer work, as illustrated by the following statements of respondents of Organization **A** and Organization **F**.

Respondent of Organization **A**:

*"Ik denk dat jullie dat ook wel ervaren, het hebben van te weinig tijd voor vrijwilligerswerk. Tenminste als ik mijn eigen kinderen hoor, die hebben er ook geen tijd voor".*

*["I think, you also experience that, to have too little time to volunteer. At least, when hearing my own children, they don't have time for this either".*

Respondent of Organization **F**:

*"Deze jongeren zijn vaak met andere dingen bezig".*

*["These younger people are often busy with other things".]*

Besides, describing the demographics of the volunteers, the respondents also told us about the current volunteers. The current volunteers within the organizations were described as being loyal. Once involved in an organization, the volunteer continued participating actively for many years. Examples of this can be found in various volunteer organizations; the Knotploeg, whose volunteers stay with the organization for an estimated 6-8 years; Voetbalvereniging GVA, whose current group of volunteers have been participating with the organization for the last 20 years; the Zonnebloem, who has a volunteers who participated for the past 30 years. As a respondent of Organization **H** says:

*"Iedereen die zit die blijft zitten".*

*["Once people are involved, they will remain".]*

Next to being loyal, we found the purpose of the volunteer organization is an important issue for the volunteers. By purpose we mean what the function of the organization is, and what activities the organization undertakes. According to respondents, this is due to the fact that individuals will often choose to participate when the organization's purpose aligns with his or her own personal interests or history. Examples are given by respondents of Organization **B** and Organization **J**:

Respondent of Organization **B**:

*"Mijn motivatie was tweeledig. Één, ik heb hier 25 jaar mogen voetballen en alles werd voor mij geregeld [...]. Nu wordt het ook tijd om iets terug te doen. Mijn tweede reden is: je wil [...] betrokken te blijven".*

*["My motivation was twofold. Firstly, I played football for 25 years and everything was arranged for me, I wanted to do something in return. [...] The second reason is: you want to [...] stay involved".]*

and:

*"De motivatie komt echt, puur, door de activiteit die er moet plaatsvinden".*

*["The motivation is, purely, because of the activity that needs to take place".]*

Respondent of Organization **J**:

*"Het Fort zelf is natuurlijk ook een motivatie!".*

*["The Fortress itself is, of course, also a motivation".]*

Lastly, a very often mentioned motivation for every volunteer was being part of the social group, as illustrated with a single quote from a respondent of Organization **J**:

*"Die sociale binding van gezamenlijk drinken van koffie en gezelligheid is ook een motivatie".*

*["The social bond, the drinking of coffee together and just socializing, is also a motivation".]*

## Attracting Volunteers

When asking organizations about their volunteer strategies, they often stated that they did not have explicit strategies. However, follow up questions made clear that organizations do indeed have various ways in which they attempt to recruit new volunteers. The most commonly used strategy to recruit volunteers is personal, face-to-face communication, which is done by meeting up with potential volunteers and asking them if they wish to participate. For example, a respondent of Organization **F** stated the following:

*"Op een gegeven moment merk je gewoon dat opzoeken het beste werkt. Binnenlopen en vragen. [...] Je merkt gewoon als je niet iemand persoonlijk vraagt, dat er dan gewoon geen reacties komen. Dat weten we gewoon dat dat zo werkt".*

*["At a given moment you simply notice that actively meeting up works best, approach and ask. [...] You simply notice if you do not ask someone personally, that there will simply no reply. We just know that it works like this".]*

In addition, the respondent of Organization **D** also emphasized that, in order to get people enthusiastic about volunteer work, volunteer organizations must really make efforts to connect to potential volunteers on a personal level:

*"Je moet het ze wel vragen, en dat kun je niet voldoen met maar even een stukje op de website zetten. [...] Door de telefoon, op afstand, is het veel gemakkelijker om nee te zeggen. Één op één is het een ander verhaal, je moet het gewoon een beetje slim aanpakken!".*

*["You have to ask them. It is not sufficient to just ask it via the website. [...] Through phone, from a distance, it is easier to say no. One on one is a whole other story, you need to approach it in a clever way!".]*

Approaching potential volunteers personally is a strategy used by all interviewed organizations and was reported to be the most effective way to attract new volunteers.

Additionally, organizations mostly used their members' networks to identify potential new volunteers. During the interviews, some volunteer organizations stressed the importance of making efforts to connect to the potential volunteers via the known network. The respondent of Organization **E** mentioned:

*"Het gaat hier heel vaak mond-tot-mond. Daarbij gaat het ook om: wie vraagt het? Dit is bepalend of men ja of nee zegt".*

*["This often goes mouth-to-mouth. Important is the fact: who asks the question? This determines whether someone says yes or no".]*

Other ways to attract volunteers were reported to be less successful. Firstly, using a website to recruit volunteers was mentioned by almost all respondents, although it mostly was reported to be a rather ineffective way of recruiting volunteers (i.e. not many volunteers signed up via the website). Secondly, flyers were mentioned by half of the selected organizations as an attempt to recruit volunteers. The organizations were not satisfied with this strategy, and it was said to be one of the least effective ways to approach volunteers. Thirdly, using other (volunteer) organizations' help was also mentioned by half of the interviewed organizations. Examples of this include the Fortress, which made use of the vacancies at volunteer centres and the Historische Kring, who made use of networks within the Schutterij. Next, the Schutterij and the Historische Kring mentioned hosting activities as a way to recruit new volunteers. These activities are organized for everyone, and hence people will feel involved in the process. Another activity reported was hosting a stall to talk with people, such as at the Christmas market, which was argued to be not very effective. The Fortress only recruited two volunteers by hosting a stall for the whole day. Lastly, strategies reported by only one of the interviewed organizations were creating (financial) incentives for volunteers, using local newspapers, magazines, making volunteer work somewhat obligatory for members, and promoting volunteer work via videos, radio, and social media (i.e. Facebook and Twitter). Generally, these strategies were reported to be less effective for attracting volunteers.

In terms of task distribution, we have identified two approaches utilized by volunteer organizations. On the one hand, organizations have a task for which they need volunteers. Therefore, organizations approach potential volunteers to ask if these people would like to help with that specific task. For example, the Knotploeg approaches potential volunteers to ask if they want to cut willows. Similarly, the Tennisclub and Voetbalvereniging GVA approach young adults asking if they would like to join the bar commission.

On the other hand, organizations approach potential volunteers and converse with them about their strengths, and the tasks that they would like to do. This ensures that the volunteers get tasks they enjoy and that match their skill set. Both the Fortress and the Schutterij talked about letting the volunteer choose their preferred tasks or roles. The respondents of Organization **G** broadly elaborated on this, and stressed the effectiveness of this approach:

*"Als je vrijwilligers gebruikt, dan gaat het om de vrijwilliger. Dan gaat het niet om de organisatie, maar om de vrijwilliger. Nou wat wil die vrijwilliger doen voor ons, waar ligt zijn kracht, wat is zijn kennis en kunde, wat brengt hij mee? Daar gaat het om. [...] Vaak is het ook belangrijk dat je mensen opzoekt. Misschien heb je al gezien dat hij iets gedaan heeft op dat gebied [...] Dat zag er goed uit. Zou je dat voor ons ook niet willen doen? Dat soort mensen zoeken wij".*

*["If you work with volunteers, it's about the volunteer. It is not about the organization, but about the volunteer. What does the volunteer want to do, what is his strength, what is his knowledge and expertise, what will the work bring him? That's what it's about. [...] Sometimes, it is also important that search for people with the right skills and ask: Wouldn't you like to do that for us? We're looking for your kind of people".]*

It should be noted that these approaches are not black and white, and the organizations are not limited to using just one of them; they can make use of different approaches depending on the setting. For example, the Tennisclub makes use of both approaches. They ask if anyone wants to work in the bar (as mentioned before), but the board also asks members how they would like to improve the Tennisclub, and if the members would be interested in helping with this.

## Approaching younger generations

As stated earlier, younger volunteers (roughly aged <40 years) are considered valuable by various organizations, but they are hard to reach or recruit. Certain tasks, such as working behind the bar, seem to fit younger people better than older people. In addition, one respondent of Organization **G** stressed the importance of younger people's input to enable the organization to keep up with the times:

> *"Ook de jongeren hebben inbreng, en die brengen andere dingen binnen als toen wij jong waren. Elke generatie heeft zo z'n eigen dingen die ze meebrengen. En daar moet je naar kijken. Dat kan zijn op het gebied van muziek, de introductie van allerlei nieuwe middelen. Iedereen moet op een gegeven moment zichzelf daar in kunnen vinden." [...] Zoals social media, WhatsApp. [...] We gebruiken alles wat er is: e-mail, Twitter, Facebook en onze website. [...] Alles loopt tegenwoordig via internet, het is jong en oud he. [...] - Meegaan met je tijd? - Ja inderdaad, je kunt niet anders".*

> *["Younger people, also, have good input. They bring other things than when we were young. Every generation brings his own 'things'. That's where you need to look at. This could be in the field of music or the introduction of all kinds of resources. Everyone must adapt themselves in it at a given moment. "[...] Such as social media, WhatsApp. [...] We use everything that is available: e-mail, Twitter, Facebook and our website. [...] Everything goes through the internet these days, young and old. [...] - You keep up with the time? - Yes indeed, there's no other way".]*

Some organizations also suggested ways in which younger people could be approached. Organization **G** suggested to just approach them personally and ask them what they would like to do. The respondent of Organization **I** explained how he managed to connect to the younger generations. He managed to motivate children in primary school by taking them to a nature spot in Doornenburg, and making them enthusiastic with laughter by speaking "flat out Brabant".

## Screening

Whenever volunteer organizations have high demands of their volunteers, it would make sense to ensure that volunteers can match their requirements. Screening appeared to be used by half of the interviewed organizations, and happens in various ways.

The Fortress and the Castle require potential volunteers to apply for a specific position within the organization. During in-take conversations, both organizations look for volunteers with a professional and serious attitude. In addition to this, the Fortress specifically focuses on applicants with a "positive" attitude. Next to this, there is a "non commitment internship phase" for volunteers, to give the individual and the organization a chance to get acquainted. The Fortress stressed that, in order to manage group processes and reduce internal conflicts, it is important to screen newcomers for a positive attitude.

The Zonnebloem also makes use of screening. For this organization, it is mainly important that the volunteers are able to connect to the elderly people in order to create suitable matches. Other organizations either did not make use of screening, or did not talk about screening during the interviews.

## Maintaining

When asking organizations about strategies to maintain volunteers, it was often stated that they do not use explicit strategies to maintain the volunteers within their organization. According to the respondents of Organization **G**, a specific strategy to maintain volunteers is not necessary because volunteers are very loyal and they stick to the organization for a long time:

> *"Er is geen gestructureerd beleid [...]. Meeste mensen blijven wel hangen, mensen zijn vrij trouw. Wanneer men zich ergens aan committeert, dan blijven ze wel zitten".*
>
> *["There is no structured policy [...]. Most people just stay, people are pretty loyal. When there is a certain commitment, they will remain doing that for at least a while".]*

Yet, we have identified several practices used by the interviewed organizations to maintain their volunteers, as will be discussed in the following sections.

### Communication

Several ways to stay in contact with the volunteers in Doornenburg were mentioned by the volunteer organizations. Most of them explicitly mentioned face-to-face contact as very important for volunteers to both get in touch with the board, and to communicate amongst themselves. The respondent of Organization **D** stressed the importance of face-to-face communication:

> *"Echt, het is echt een uitdaging [...] Het dagelijks bestuur moet onderling communiceren. [..] Dat is heel erg belangrijk. Goede communicatie onderling, [...] meer vergaderen, elkaar meer verantwoordelijkheid geven en nadenken over: wie doet wat de volgende keer. Er is gewoon heel veel miscommunicatie".*
>
> *["Really, it's really a challenge [...] The daily management must communicate with each other. [..] That is very important. Good communication, [...] have more meetings, giving each other more responsibility and thinking about: who does what next time. There is just a lot of miscommunication".]*

Other ways to stay in touch with volunteers is through email and commission meetings. For instance, the Knotploeg informs their volunteers via email about the schedule, as well as changes or cancellation of activities. The Schutterij uses several ways to keep in touch: email, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and their own website. The Tennisclub has representatives of the different commissions attend the board meetings, in this way, both the commission and the board are kept up to date about all ongoing activities.

### Guidance & training

Another way to maintain volunteers is offering them guidance and training. The respondents of the Fortress highlighted the importance of welcoming, guiding, and training new volunteers. Both the aim and structure of the training varied amongst the organizations. Mostly, training was provided to increase the professionalism of the volunteers, and was used by organizations who required this from their volunteers (e.g. the Fortress and the Castle). They provided training related to specific tasks which volunteers could to do, such as guiding tours and transporting visitors. The respondent of Organization **H** illustrated this with following statement:

*"Een keer, in de zoveel tijd, krijgen vrijwilligers van die cursussen. [...] Een verdiepingscursus, bestuurswerk, allerlei verschillende dingen. [...] Door die verschillende cursussen wordt het toch wel makkelijk gemaakt".*

*["Once a while, volunteers get courses. [...] An information course, course about board work, all sorts of different things. [...] These different courses is making the work more easy".*

## Thanking volunteers

Seven out of ten interviewed volunteer organizations in Doornenburg organized events to thank their volunteers for their work. Most of these events were organized once or twice per year in the form of a BBQ, a day-out, or a party. For example, the Zonnebloem organized special days out for their volunteers twice per year. Similarly, the Castle organizes special days out to thank their volunteers, where they visit other castles or attractions. As the respondent of Organization **D** told us, these events were highly appreciated amongst volunteers:

*"We hebben altijd een vrijwilligersdag en dat is leuk. [...] Ja, dat vinden we hartstikke gezellig!".*

*[*"We always have that one volunteer day and that's fun. [...] Yes, we enjoy this very much".*

## Task division

The majority of the interviewed organizations try to tailor the volunteer's tasks to their experience and personal preferences. They do so by speaking to their volunteers in order to find out what their individual preferences are, and thereafter they propose tasks that really fit the person. This ensures that the activities and the volunteer work are both personal and enjoyable. A respondent of Organization **E** said:

*"Wij gaan kijken wat is de achtergrond van die mensen, waar hebben ze al ervaring mee en wat zouden ze dat leuk vinden om op vrijwillige basis en, voor de gemeenschap, willen doen".*

*["We look at the background of these people, in what sort of things do they have experience and what would they like to do voluntarily, for the community".*

## Conflict management

Conflict management is also important regarding the maintenance of volunteers. The respondents of two organizations mentioned their difficulty with handling conflicts among volunteers and in the relation to the board. The reasons mentioned for conflicts were changing group dynamics, a change in the board, and the influx of new volunteers. These changes caused tension and made people feel uncomfortable with their positions in the organization. Sometimes, this even resulted in volunteers leaving the organization. A suggested successful strategy for dealing with these issues, mentioned by the respondents of one of these two organizations, was to screen potential volunteers for positive attitudes towards other volunteers, as well as the board in order to prevent conflicts.

# 5. Discussion & Conclusion

*In this chapter the general conclusions from the research are presented and recommendations are made for future research. First this research will be discussed by comparing the literature with the empirical data generated in this research.*

## Discussion

The discussion section is structured in an attracting and a maintaining part.

### Part 1: Attracting

*Motivations*

The importance of using an individual's motivations in attracting volunteers has been highlighted in the literature. Agostinho and Paço (2012) reflect how one's participation in volunteer work, is based on their motivations and values. Although it is often assumed that younger people have stronger motivations than older people to complete a task (Stone & Tetrick, 2013), the current older (>40 years) volunteer groups in Doornenburg are very dedicated in carrying out volunteer work. This is shown, for example, by the high number of people participating in volunteer work, by the fact that many of these volunteers are active within multiple volunteer organizations, and by the loyalty of volunteers towards the organization. This loyalty, of the volunteer in Doornenburg, is shown by the fact that they stay for long periods in the same organization, ranging from 6 up to 30 years of active commitment. A reason behind this drive to do volunteer work can be found in the strong social cohesion of the village. The inhabitants of Doornenburg feel strongly connected to their village and therefore, they are more willing to participate in tasks that contribute to the functioning of the village. One respondent illustrates this by arguing that there will always be people who stick up for certain activities organized by volunteers, if there is a certain group who is in need of this activity.

The interviewed organizations helped us to understand that their volunteers mainly participate for the following reasons:

- Volunteer work is a manner of spending time usefully for retired people;
- Doing volunteer work allows people to feel part of "the group" and keeps them from feeling lonely;
- The volunteers' values and beliefs correspond with the purpose of the organization.

As, according to literature, these reasons are mainly based on egoistic (Butt et al., 2017; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Gage & Thapa, 2012) and affiliation motivations (Fitch, 1987; Gidron, 1978).

Many volunteer organizations in Doornenburg mostly consist of older volunteers who are often retired and aged above 40 years. Moreover, the term "young volunteers" caused some confusion; when a respondent mentioned "young volunteers" during the interview, the team assumed the respondent was referring to young adults when they were actually referring to volunteers aged around 40 years. It appears that young people (< 40 years), are barely participating in the volunteer work. The interviewed organizations often reported that they were missing this group. It was suggested by the respondents that this is because young people are of "working age", and simply do not have enough time to volunteer. Adding to this, is the lack of starter residences in Doornenburg. Because of an agreement with the municipality in Nijmegen, Doornenburg has been unable to expand. This has led to a limited the number of available starter residencies for newcomers, influencing younger people to settle down in other areas (Stichting Leefbaar Doornenburg, 2016). The problem with this is that young people are considered to be important for the sustainability of the organization; they are needed for innovative ideas, modernization, and to deal with the aging of the volunteers (volunteers who quit due to aging need to be replaced). Besides, age diversity increases the amount of knowledge and also the exchange of knowledge between persons (Stone & Tetrick, 2013).

Since the vast majority of volunteers are above 40 years old, it would be interesting to look into the motivations of young people and relate them to the recruiting strategies of the organizations. According to the respondent of Organization **B**, young and old people both have altruistic motivation

to do volunteer work, but young people value intrinsic motives more. The added value of volunteer work to career possibilities is a big motive for young people to do volunteer work (Clary & Snyder, 1999). In the theoretical framework, it was suggested that the volunteer organization should really address the volunteers motives and beliefs to recruit them for volunteer work (CIVIQ, 2005).

For the volunteer organizations in Doornenburg, addressing the career enhancing motives of volunteer work could be of help when recruiting young people. Getting to know the motivations of the young people in Doornenburg specifically, and integrating this in the recruiting strategies, might also increase the chances of recruiting young people.

### Recruitment
The recruiting of volunteers in Doornenburg was mainly done via personal contact. This is a preferred method by the volunteer organizations and based past successful experiences. We believe that the success of the informal methods are influenced by the small size of the village. The small number of inhabitants lead to high familiarity within the village, making personal contact highly effective. The respondents reported that formal methods, such as handing out flyers or advertising, were not that effective in Doornenburg. However, two organizations we interviewed did use social media to attract young people and argued that this method was also effective.

It is not, however, only the recruiting method that is important when it comes to attracting young people to do volunteer work. The image of the organization also has to attract the people to come and join in volunteer work. One of the organization's stated that they had quite a dull image in the eyes of young people, which was not really helpful for attracting volunteers. When organizations who deal with a dull image "keep up with the times", and use modern "tools" such as social media to advertise their volunteer work, they might overcome this problem. Related to the issue of attracting young people, it might be useful for the organizations to reflect on how they have coped with young people in the past. Has the organization always had trouble with recruiting young people, or is this an issue which has developed only lately? Reflecting might create insights into the underlying problems that cause the lack of involvement of young people.

As stated in the results, we noticed that the volunteer organizations in Doornenburg utilized two different approaches to relate volunteers to work possibilities. The first approach was having a task in mind beforehand, and then trying to find a volunteer to match that task. The second approach was discussing the strengths and preferences of that volunteer, and then trying to find them a task to match those strengths and preferences. It became apparent in our research that organizations who had work "ongoing" (i.e. not project-based), more often utilized the first approach. They would have a defined task, and then approach potential volunteers, and ask if they wanted to complete that task. We assume that utilizing this approach is effective for "on-going" organizations because they always have tasks that need to be completed, and they know what these tasks are. Therefore, for the organization finding a volunteer to complete the task is more efficient than looking into their strengths and preferences. Furthermore, by utilizing this approach, they can effectively screen their candidates for the appropriate skillset, ruling out those who do not meet the qualifications they desire (Brudney, 1999). In Doornenburg for example, both the Castle and the Fortress screened candidates for professionalism and the right attitude. For potential volunteers, organizations that utilize this approach are attractive because they know exactly what the task requires of them in terms of work and skills (Brudney, 1999). Therefore, it can be concluded that the strength of this approach, lies in its ability to attract volunteers.

Nevertheless, utilizing the first approach does have its weaknesses. First of all, this approach is not effective at maintaining volunteers, as it does not feed into their personal motivations and strengths, which leads to less long-term satisfaction, and subsequently higher turnover (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009). One particular limit of only using this approach, especially in Doornenburg, is that by creating tasks beforehand, organizations inadvertently cater to a specific demographic or type of person. This consequently, could be contributing to the ongoing problem of not having enough younger volunteers. That is, the organizations create tasks that do not interest younger people, or do not

feed into the motivations of younger people, subsequently leading to fewer younger people wanting to join the organizations.

Conversely, volunteer organizations who are not necessarily "ongoing", but instead work based on specific projects or events, are more likely to utilize the second approach. This way, they have discussions beforehand with potential volunteers, identifying what they would like to do and where their strengths lie. The organization will then match the potential volunteer to a task accordingly. It is beneficial for these "non-ongoing" (project- or event-based) organizations to utilize this approach because, unlike their counterparts, they do not always have work, and or they might not know exactly what their volunteers could do for tasks. Instead of having a specific task in mind, the organization uses the input of their volunteers to create tasks. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to maintain volunteers. That is, utilizing this approach is beneficial because it matches the strengths and interests of the volunteer to the task, which leads to greater long-term satisfaction (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009).

In terms of attracting, this approach is not effective because there is no clear description provided to potential volunteers. The literature states that the more clear the information is from the beginning, the more satisfied the volunteer will be (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). By not having clear information beforehand, the organization is relying heavily on the intrinsic motivations of the potential volunteers to get involved. Additionally, with no clear task defined beforehand, the potential volunteer might not be aware that the organization is looking for volunteers, causing them to be less likely to approach the organization in the first place.

Therefore, it can be concluded that utilizing both approaches would be highly beneficial in the attraction and maintenance of volunteers. Although this is done in some of the organizations in Doornenburg, especially the bigger ones such as the Fortress and the Castle, it is not done by all of them. Perhaps by making use of both approaches, the organizations can better meet the needs of both themselves and their volunteers.

### *Screening*
Screening potential volunteers was done by a large portion of the interviewed volunteer organizations to ensure the potential volunteer had the right attitude and commitment. According to the literature, this strategy allows the organization to know beforehand whether a potential volunteer is the right fit for the organization in terms of time commitment, skills, and motivation (Grossman & Furano, 1999). By screening in advance, the organizations are able to effectively avoid conflicts that might arise by accepting an unfitting candidate.

## Part 2: Maintaining

Organizations often reported that they do not have consistent ways to reflect on their practices (e.g. recruiting and maintaining volunteers and the way they organize). There seems to be little reflection on the practices and approaches of the organization, and no organization clearly stated concrete ways to address this. Furthermore, it became apparent from the interviews that there is little communication between volunteer organizations, which could be potentially useful for exploring alternative ways to manage volunteers. Generally, we found that organizations do not actively think about their way of organizing, and are happy with the way things are. This could create complications regarding reflection and future changes in relation to both their volunteers and their ways of organizing. Reflection on the used strategies could help to amend the strategies in such a way that they are more goal-oriented. When asking the organizations about the strategies they use to maintain their volunteers, more often than not the organizations stated that no specific strategies were used. Organizations rarely discussed the topic of attracting volunteers during their board meetings. In fact, they even stated that such a strategy is not necessary because volunteers are loyal and intend to stay at an organization for a long time. However, when asking follow-up questions, it turned out that organizations always made use of certain strategies, such as organizing thank-you events for volunteers, providing training and guidance, sending sick letters, etc. However, it seemed that the ways in which some organizations maintain volunteers is more inherent, and results from intuition rather than actively thinking in terms of "strategies". In other words, there are little signs that the volunteer organizations actively think about their approaches when it comes to maintaining volunteers. This however depends on the size and professionalism of the organization. For a more professional organization, which for example needs to earn money with guided tours, it is more important to train their guides.

Providing training to volunteers in the beginning phase of the volunteer work was perceived as important by all organizations. Content based training (CIVIQ, 2005) was used to help the volunteers become skilled at their task. Training was mainly offered in the starter phase. Some organizations also provided training when the volunteer was no longer a beginner. Brudney (1999) stated that providing training was useful to prevent boredom of the volunteers, which is useful in keeping volunteers motivated to complete their tasks.

Although Hager and Brudney (2004) stated that feasible ways to maintain and manage volunteers are important, it became apparent that organizations in Doornenburg seem to take a more intuitive approach. It became evident that distinctions between various maintenance strategies, although clearly described in the literature, are much more blurred in practice. Whereas the literature indicates that volunteers quit due to poor volunteer management (Hager & Brudney, 2004) ,this does not seem to line up with our results. Although some volunteers were said to quit due to internal conflicts, poor management was not given as reason by the respondents.

## Limitations

This research has been an attempt to gain insight into the current strategies of attracting new volunteers in the village of Doornenburg. This research has been executed by using certain methods and by addressing a specific context. As is the case in every research, this research has a number of limitations.

First of all, we noticed that a large proportion of the inhabitants of Doornenburg are involved in local volunteer work. We stated that this is likely to be due to the contextual factors of Doornenburg, such as strong social cohesion and pride towards the village. We argued that the context-specific circumstances in Doornenburg can be seen as an explanation for the use of certain strategies regarding attracting and maintaining volunteers. The respondents, for example, argued that there is a distinct culture in Doornenburg and accordingly, there is a certain way of interacting in the village, and a certain way to organize the volunteer work. However, these assumptions should be taken with a grain of salt. It was not possible to check whether the selection of certain methods used to attract and maintain volunteers is indeed related to context specific circumstances, because we did not compare the situation in Doornenburg to other villages.

Next to this, our results are only based on the motivations mentioned by the organizations and not by the actual volunteers themselves. It is likely that there are more motivations for people in Doornenburg to volunteer that could have contributed to this research, but have not been addressed. This lack of information is a limitation of our research.

Besides, this research is based on the findings of just one case and the input provided by the respondents. However, the interviews could have been a means for the respondents to portray the situation as more extreme (better or worse). Besides, it could have been the case that the respondents themselves did not recognize problems and accordingly, they did not tell us about certain problems. Because the input is only based on one case and on the respondents, it is difficult to check the reliability of the results.

Finally, there are some limitations related to the setup of this research. The way of collecting data can be seen as a second limitation as the case study is limited to one case, and this case itself has a very specific context. Another limitation is the Anglicization of Dutch terms. This report is written in English though the interviews were conducted in Dutch. Sometimes if a Dutch word is translated into English it does not always cover the concept. So this research was a constant weighing of the usage of terms, covering the terms as much as possible. As a final limitation it should be mentioned that the literature used in this research might not be appropriate for the Doornenburg context. In the theoretical framework we included literature addressing for example, the Canadian context. Some of the topics addressed in the literature appeared not to be an issue in Doornenburg, this could also be the case because the context described in the literature we used, is not really appropriate.

Based on the limitations mentioned above, it can be concluded that the issue of volunteerism in relation to methods of attracting and maintaining volunteers remains a field that is wide open for more empirical research. Future research could therefore explore multiple villages, so that the influence of context-specific circumstances can be analyzed. Future research could also pay more attention to the perspective of volunteers themselves, and take their opinion into account.

# Conclusion

We started this study by exploring current volunteer participation in Doornenburg. We saw that high social participation, strong social cohesion, and pride resulted in a relatively high willingness to participate in tasks that contribute to the functioning of the village.

This study aimed at gaining insight into the current strategies of attracting and maintaining volunteers of Doornenburg, in order to provide the organizations a starting point for discussing what they deem the right way to forward to increase volunteer participation. This study focused on what lessons could be learned from analyzing the current strategies in Doornenburg, and comparing them to the strategies described in the literature. By doing so, we provided several insights about the way literature and practice differ from each other. For example, we found that no explicit strategies regarding attracting and maintaining of volunteers, were used by the volunteer organizations, but implicit strategies were used. We can now formulate an answer to the main question:

***What lessons can be learned from analyzing the current strategies used by volunteer organizations, in order to gain insights into volunteer participation?***

The first lesson learned is that Doornenburg's context determines very much which strategies, in regards to increasing volunteer participation, are effective. Doornenburg has its own culture, social interactions, and history that may inhibit general strategies from being applied there specifically.

Next to this, we learned that volunteer organizations in Doornenburg mostly consists of older volunteers (>40 years), while they are at the same time looking for more younger volunteers (<40 years) to participate. At this moment, the volunteer organizations have very few younger volunteers, which prevents the organizations from using the full potential of the younger people's views and ideas on innovation and modernization. In order to attract and engage younger volunteers, it is important to emphasize motives and potential benefits of doing volunteer work that are specifically related to younger people.

Thirdly, we learned that face-to-face contact is currently the most effectively used strategy for attracting potential volunteers in Doornenburg. With regard to this, the use of social media in relation to attracting younger volunteers is an issue to take into account more often. Social media is already successfully being utilized by two volunteer organizations. We also learned two other effective approaches regarding attraction. The first is having a task in mind beforehand, and then trying to find a volunteer to match that task. The second is discussing the strengths and preferences of volunteers, and then trying to find them a task to match those strengths and preferences. The utilization of both approaches together, within the volunteer organizations, would be highly beneficial in the attraction and maintenance of volunteers.

Lastly, we noticed that most volunteer organizations do not think that they make use of specific strategies for maintaining their volunteers. However, these volunteer organizations do make use of certain maintaining strategies, such as providing training, guiding, rewarding-days, and keeping personally in touch with volunteers. This illustrates that volunteer organizations may not consciously think about or reflect upon their practices. Broader internal discussion may therefore be beneficial for volunteer organizations to reflect and potentially reformulate their vision.

With the help of these outcomes, organizations in Doornenburg and elsewhere could potentially increase volunteer participation within their community in the future.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Types of questions to find a volunteer's motivation

**Items addressed in the questionnaire to measure satisfaction (7 scales).**

The availability of getting help when I need it.

The realism of the picture I was given of what my volunteer experience would be like.

My relationship with paid staff.

The support network that is in place for me when I have volunteer-related problems.

The way in which the agency provides me with performance feedback.

The flow of communication coming to me from paid staff and board members.

The support I receive from people in the organization.

The amount of information I receive about what the organization is doing.

How often the organization acknowledges the work I do.

The amount of permission I need to get to do the things I need to do on this job.

The degree of cohesiveness I experience within the organization.

The degree to which the organization communicates its goals and objectives to volunteers.

The progress that I have seen in the clientele served by my organization.

The difference my volunteer work is making.

My ability to do this job as well as anyone else.

The opportunities I have to learn new things.

The fit of the volunteer work to my skills.

How worthwhile my contribution is.

The amount of effort I put in as equaling the amount of change I influence.

The chance I have to utilize my knowledge and skills in my volunteer work.

The access I have to information concerning the organization.

The freedom I have in deciding how to carry out my volunteer assignment.

My relationship with other volunteers in the organization.

The friendships I have made while volunteering here.

The amount of interaction I have with other volunteers in the organization.

The amount of time spent with other volunteers.

*Figure 2: Types of questions to find a volunteer's motivation*

# Appendix 2: Interview guide for volunteer organizations

## General Info

**Topic 1. General Info (don't stick too long on this topic)**
- Name interviewee, function within the organization
- Name organization, function of organization in village
- In what ways are you involved in Doornenburg's village community
- Short description of previous experiences (e.g. other organizations)

## Volunteers

**Topic 2. Organizations need for volunteers**
- Description of organization: tasks, board, goal
- What does the organization need the volunteers for?
- What are the tasks of the volunteers?
- How can the current volunteers be best described?
- How do the volunteers experience the amount of workload?
- Do you have enough volunteers at the moment?
- Any problems in terms of enough volunteers?
    - IF YES How come that you do not have enough volunteers?
        - Did the organization put effort in investigating the problem?
        - Age of volunteers? Not qualified/skilled people? Supply is not enough? Disinterested people?
        - Are the volunteers committed to the organization? (membership for longer period?)
    - IF NO Why do you think you have enough volunteers?
- What are the main challenges for the future of volunteer work for your organization, if any?

## Attracting

**Topic 3. Attracting volunteers**
- Does the organization have a model/strategy for recruiting volunteers?
    - IF YES, what strategy? How did they come to this strategy? How successful is this strategy?
    - IF NO, why don't you have a strategy? How do you attract volunteers?
- What activities do you organize to attract new volunteers?
- Do you get any help in attracting more volunteers? (e.g. by the municipality/other volunteer organizations)
- Why did you choose these approaches? (how do they justify this approach?)
- Did you compare these approaches with approaches used by other organizations/in other villages?
- What were the results of using these approaches? (were these approaches effective?)
- Do you reflect (regularly) on the recruiting strategy?
- Do you have contact with similar organizations about the volunteer interests you are addressing? (do they have the same interests/problems as you?)
- Are there any platforms in Doornenburg organizing things in order to attract new volunteers? (e.g. werkgroep Dorpscontactpersoon, Platform Doornenburg & Participatiepunt Doornenburg)
- Did you think about other (new) ideas of attracting new volunteers?
    - IF YES What kind of ideas? And what do you think of this ideas? (individual, in a group, organized session/meeting, something else?)
    - IF NO why didn't you have ideas for organizing a way to attract more volunteers?

## Maintaining

**Topic 4. Maintaining the volunteers**
- Do you have strategies to keep your volunteers with you?
    - IF YES, What methods do you use to keep your volunteers? Why do you have a strategy?
    - IF NO, Why don't you use strategies to keep your volunteers?
- Do you have any problems maintaining volunteers?

- How do you motivate your volunteers to keep doing their voluntary work? Or being enthusiastic about their voluntary work?
- Do you thank your volunteers?
  - IF YES, how do you thank them? And why?
  - IF NO, why don't you thank them?
- Do you provide training or education for your volunteers?
  - How do you keep your volunteers up to date about the required knowledge for their voluntary work?
  - How do you keep your volunteers up to date about the required skills for their voluntary work?
- How do you keep volunteers informed about ongoing events and developments?
  - E.g. newsletter, e-mail
- Do you evaluate with your volunteers on their contribution to the organizations? (inspraak)
  - IF YES, How and what is the amount of influence of the volunteers on change?
  - IF NO, Why not?

## Other questions (IF there is time left)
- Description of current situation: any problems? Organization is doing fine?
- Organizations' history: were there major changes in the organizations management in the past years?
  - IF YES Did these changes cause problems? What kind of problems? How did the organization cope with these problems?
  - IF NO Why do you think that there were no problems?
- How open are you to a possible workshop together with other organizations on creating insight in volunteer processes related to your own organization?
- Would you (or other board members) be interested in attending our presentation about our research (18 december 2017, in the afternoon)?

# Appendix 3: Interview guide for village contact persons

## General Info
**Topic 1. General Info (don't stick too long on this topic)**
- Name interviewee, function of village contact persons in Doornenburg
- In what ways are you involved in Doornenburg's village community
- Short description of previous experiences (e.g. volunteer organizations)
- Why have you become the village contact person? Motivations?
- How do you as a village contact person influence the community (gang van zaken)?
- Has there been 'improvement' since they got appointed as village contact people?

## Doornenburg
**Topic 2. Problems in Doornenburg (to get a feeling of what is going on in Doornenburg)**
- Short introduction of Doornenburg
  - Community
  - Volunteer community
  - Social cohesion?
- In general how are the volunteer organizations doing?
  - Financially?
  - Enough volunteers?
  - Supporting by municipality? Any problems with this?
  - Are they struggling with other things?
  - What is the moral towards problems/challenges (optimistic, depressive, neutral, anxiety)?
- Are there big issues playing in the village? Social/municipality/projects/problems?
- What is the role of social control in the village?
  - How does this affect the way of living?
  - How does this affect peoples' moral?
  - Does it affect other things
- When was the fusion of municipalities (2001)? How has this affected the state of affairs?
  - Does it still have an effect? How do the people cope with this?

## Relevant organizations
**Topic 3. Relevant organizations**
- In relation to our research topic, what organizations do you think are relevant for us to talk to?
- Could you bring us into contact with these organizations?