Towards transformative policies

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

A Policy Paper by Team Transformers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To achieve sustainable development, fundamental transformations are needed. Companies could accomplish these by integrating transformative learning theory in their corporate volunteering programs. By doing so, the sustainability values of employees and their personal and professional behavior could be changed, leading to sustainable development. But what should these corporate volunteering activities and programs look like? This policy paper aims to answer that question based on academic literature.

Corporate volunteering (CV) is volunteering of employees that is in one way or another stimulated, facilitated or organized by the employer. It is the most implemented strategy of corporate social responsibility, which is understandable since CV programs have many benefits. Employees who volunteer, do not only make a positive social impact, they also show more engagement, commitment and loyalty to their workplace. Furthermore, CV could be a means for employees to develop skills and could be a means for a company to improve its reputation.

Recently, companies are showing interest for another potential outcome of CV, namely transformative learning (TL). TL theory is a dominant line of scholarship in the field of adult education and it describes a learning process as well as the distinct outcome of transformative learning, which is a change of one's worldview. Every individual has a particular and unique view on the world, which is based on a web of assumptions, values, feelings and expectations. These derive from an individual's upbringing, life experience, culture, community or education and are, for the most part, uncritically acquired in childhood through the process of socialization and acculturation. These frames of references form the basis of our actions.

TL helps someone to become more critically reflective about ideas, beliefs and their world views, resulting in a more open and inclusive meaning perspectives. To establish such transformations, academic literature suggest that three concepts are key: experience, critical reflection and taking action. Ultimately, TL can lead to a change in personal and professional behavior. The theory is used in leadership development programs since these outcomes help transformative learners to become more autonomous thinkers who negotiate their values, meanings, and purposes rather than uncritically act on those of others. In addition, companies can change the sustainability values of their employees through TL and it can therefore be used as a means to foster sustainable development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When it comes to designing a CV program, companies have to make several decisions: employer-led or employee-led, group or individual, episodic or continued, and hands-on or skill-based. All have their advantages and disadvantages and implications for the TL chances of the CV program. Depending on the goal of a CV program in terms of TL, CV programmes could be designed differently to give direction to the employees' TL outcomes.

When it comes to designing a CV activity, companies can integrate certain steps to increase the chance of TL outcomes. These steps are based on the key concepts of transformations, and are: 1) A briefing; to create a safe and open space, 2) The activity; to stimulate engagement, 3) A debrief; to change worldviews and habits of minds and 4) The action; to make the experience stick and change the behavior in the long term.

However, there are some things to consider when implementing a CV program with TL outcomes as a goal. For example, the question of whether an employer may consciously try to change an employee's behavior. Furthermore, transformations may vary in degree and are, thereby, hard to measure. However, implementing the suggested steps would be an effective start which will cost relatively few resources.

By reading this report, companies can obtain information about how to develop sufficient corporate volunteering programs and activities to increase the chances of achieving transformative learning outcomes. There is no 'one size fits all' suggestion and every design can have a different effect on every employee. However, based on academic literature, this report gives some tools to maximize the change of achieving transformative learning through corporate volunteering.

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INTRODUCTION

Companies are taking diverse roles in contributing to the world's Sustainable Development Goals, as proposed by the United Nations. However, fundamental transformations, instead of incremental changes, are needed to foster sustainable development and achieve these goals (Bostrom et al., 2018; Sachs et al., 2019). These transformations could be facilitated, or even accelerated, by applying transformative learning theory. Recently, companies are showing interest to do so by integrating transformative learning processes in their corporate volunteering programs (Harvel, Ullrich, & Dore, 2018). This policy paper aims to help companies develop sufficient corporate volunteering programs and activities to increase the chances of achieving transformative learning outcomes.

Corporate volunteering (CV) is the most implemented strategy of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Roza, 2016). Most of the companies within Western Europe and North America have already adopted CV into their CSR policies and this is also becoming more popular in the Dutch context (De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005; Pajo, & Lee, 2011). By partnering up with NPOs and letting employees volunteer, companies can fulfil their social responsibilities and improve their reputation with external stakeholders (Roza et al., 2017; Pajo & Lee, 2011). Besides, employees who volunteer have shown more engagement, commitment and loyalty to their workplace. CV is also a potential means for employees to develop skills and could, therefore, be a way of training (Caligiuri, Mecin & Jian 2013; Jones, 2010; Rodell et al., 2016).

A recent development in the intentional strategy of CV is to use it as a means for transformative learning (TL) (Harvel, Ullrich, & Dore, 2018). TL helps someone to become more critically reflective about ideas, beliefs and their world views, resulting in a more open and inclusive meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1997). Making decisions or acting upon these new world views is assumed to be an improvement of one's behavior since the transformed world view is more likely to lead to beliefs and opinions that are more reliable guides for choices and actions (Mezirow, 1997; Jones, 2010). Furthermore, the principles of TL are identified as the key to developing effective leadership, by establishing valid and useful mental models (Johnson, 2008). TL has already been applied and researched in several volunteering contexts, as student community volunteering (Castañeda, 2008), volunteer tourism (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011)
- and now CV.

Regarding CSR, companies could also use CV as a form of TL to foster sustainable behavior of their employees. For example, TL is used as a means to foster environmental engagement (Dean et al., 2018), to promote action against climate change (Hampson & Rich-Tolsma, 2013; Tarnoczi, 2010), to examine global consumption (O'Sullivan, 2003) and to increase social justice and equity (Brown, 2006). By having TL as the purpose of a CV program, companies can change the sustainability values of their employees, leading to more sustainable behavior in their personal and professional life (Singleton, 2015). Thereby, TL processes are said to be "necessary to change the prevalent anthropocentric eco-paradigm of western culture toward more sustainable values and behaviors" (Singleton, 2015, p. 1). Companies can, therefore, use TL as a means to foster sustainable development (Bostrom et al., 2018).

However, establishing a TL experience is not an easy task, which is due to the unpredictable nature of TL. It more often than not turns out to have been experienced unexpectedly and in hindsight, instead of being experienced in an explicit, planned and controlled situation (Taylor, 2014). Therefore, it can not be taken for granted that CV will lead to transformative outcomes.

Despite this challenge, the current academic knowledge does give some pointers on how to achieve an increased chance of TL. By connecting the literature to practice, the academic insights might help CV managers to develop effective CV programs and activities with a higher chance on TL outcomes. In order to create a more in-depth understanding of CV and TL, this policy paper is structured as follows. First, an incisive overview of CV and TL literature is given. Second, the conditions for fostering TL will be discussed. Also, a toolbox is presented with practical information that can be used when designing TL. Thereafter, the things that are important to take into consideration when designing such an experience are explained. By applying these tools, the chances of reaching TL are optimized. Finally, this paper will end with a conclusive chapter.

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Definition Corporate Volunteering:

VOLUNTEERING THAT IS IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER STIMULATED, FACILITATED OR ORGANIZED BY THE EMPLOYER

Brewis, 2004

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Definition Transformative Learning

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING CRITICALLY AWARE OF HOW WE PERCEIVE, UNDERSTAND AND FEEL ABOUT OUR WORLD; OF REFORMULATING THESE ASSUMPTIONS TO PERMIT A MORE INCLUSIVE, DISCRIMINATING, PERMEABLE AND INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Mezirow, 1990, p.5

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

This chapter will first describe why organizations should involve Corporate Volunteering (CV) into their policies. Then this chapter will continue to define CV and close with a description of the different forms of CV.

Why corporate volunteering?

The temporary context of the corporate structure can, among other aspects be characterized by its interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The concept of CSR is based on the assumption that organizations retract natural resources, which are the heritage of humanity. Since it is impossible to reverse the effects on society, humankind should at least use these resources efficiently. By integrating social and environmental responsibility, organizations can be a part of sustainable development and therefore contribute to the efficient use of resources. Organizations can show their CSR by CV – a way in which organizations stimulate their employees to commit time and effort to non-profit organizations (NPOs). This can either be done during official working hours or in the free time of employees with compensation from the employer (Meijs & Van der Voort, 2004).

The reason for the marching popularity of CV is that it increases employee retention and job performances. Also, it educates people in the context of citizenship. By involving employees into CV, they will become more motivated, develop better work-related skills and feel more satisfied with their job. Moreover, not only the employees will benefit from CV, but the organization itself as well. By engaging in CV, firms show to external stakeholders that they positively contribute to the social environment in which they serve (Pajo & Lee, 2011). Also, CV will improve the organization' reputation and therefore create more appeal for potential employees (Rodell, Breitsohl, Schröder, & Keating, 2016).

Variety in corporate volunteering

Although CV has a lot of benefits, the concept itself does not know a unified definition. Instead, there are multiple definitions which explain what CV is and how it is part of CSR. Despite all the different definitions, there is a core message which states that CV contains employed individuals who are given time from their employer to engage in a planned activity for an external NPO or charity. The organization deliberately initiates the opportunities for employees to volunteer and facilitates or organizes such activities (Roza, 2016; Pajo & Lee, 2011; Rodell et al., 2016). However, how CV is implemented, differs widely. This is because CV comes in all shapes and sizes which varies from a one-time experience, to more longitudinal and intensive programs (Meijs & Van der Voort, 2004). Also, the purpose of the CV activity influences the implementation method. Organizations can integrate CV into their policies with different focuses such as creating an environmental understanding for employees, creating a positive impact on the community in which the firm operates or aligning the motives of the employees with the values of the company. The following sections will, therefore, discuss the different flavours and their characteristics.

Employer- vs Employee-led programs

First, there are employer-led programs. For this type, employers pick a charity and proactively create strategic volunteer opportunities for their employees. There is often an assumption that employers strategically select volunteering programs at a charity to maximize the strength of a partnership, rather than meeting the needs of the community in which they operate (Porter & Kramer, 2002).

However, employers also do select programs which dominantly affect their employees with the assumption that it will positively affect the community. Employees might experience a form of organizational pressure to participate in such volunteering programs, especially since the emphasis of the purpose lays on company benefits (Benjamin, 2001).

There are also employee-led CV programs. This is when employees themselves select a charity for which they would want to volunteer while receiving minimal support from the company they work for. Employee-led programs are often not aligned with the corporate strategy of their employer but are rather aligned with the interests of the employees and the community benefits. The employer has little influence in this type of volunteering. They do however take some responsibility by explaining and motivating people to take part in a voluntary program (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Episodic vs continued volunteering

Second, companies can decide to let their employees experience voluntary work for 'one time'. Within the literature, this is known as 'episodic'. The assumption here is that the provided service is of short duration, with the maximum of one day. The employee is involved in an NPO for one day and will not return or otherwise engage in the practices of the NPO. Companies and/or employers could also decide to engage in CV programs which have a more structural commitment and last for a longer period of time, which is referred to as continued volunteering (Rodell et al., 2016).

Individual vs group activities

Thirdly, companies can choose to make CV either an individual experience or a group experience. By selecting a group experience, which could be seen as a team activity, employers and/or employees can focus on projects which enhance the social cohesion between co-workers. During activities which are not work-related, employees have the opportunity to share experiences which they would not have shared in another context and therefore grow closer to each other (Bartel, 2001). On the other hand, employers and/or employees could also decide to give everyone an individual experience. This does not mean that employees cannot participate into a team assignment within an NPO, but it means that there are no co-workers involved in the program. However, in many cases there is an assignment which needs to be fulfilled individually such as providing a workshop at a school or a buddy program (Roza, 2016)

Hands-on vs Skills-based activities

Last, corporates can either expose their employees to a hands-on-based or a skill-based CV activity. When employers decide to focus more on hands-on experiences, they will focus on activities which are physically challenging and contribute to new knowledge, skills and attitudes. By involving employees in a physical task, they tend to apply their new skills and information better in their habits rather than when they are just told the information (Waliczek & Zajicek, 1999). On the other hand, organizations could also decide to involve their employees more into a skill-based experience in which employees have to apply their existing knowledge and skills in a new context.

By using this type of CV, employees will be directly involved with the NPO partners of the company and therefore employees can help others by contributing to their talents. Next to helping others, skill-based activities will also support the strength of the skills of employees and therefore contribute to abilities, skills and knowledge. For the company, this will eventually lead to employees who work more effectively and therefore it advances the competitiveness of the company (McCallum, Schmid & Price, 2013).

Ocean CleanUp [1]

Currently, there are more than 5 trillion pieces of plastic drifting through the oceans. To help solve this issue, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek -a Dutch law firm- participates in a program of an NGO called The Ocean Cleanup. The purpose of this NGO is to clean the oceans from plastic and other harmful waste.

De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek contributes by providing pro bono legal services and assisting The Ocean Cleanup with all their legal practices. These practices range from drafting property matters to dealing with public contacts. Simultaneously, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek is involved with more risky operations such as patenting new technologies, which makes them a trusted advisor to The Ocean Cleanup. This is an example of an employer-led, continued and skill-based CV programme, in which employees work individually or in teams for the NGO.

Do something for people in need of assistance [2]

Deloitte, a multinational professional service network, tries to make a difference in the lives of people who are in need of assistance. There are several ways in which their employees try to have a positive impact on society.

First, they regularly visit child oncology clinics where they help doctors and parents with organizing events, cleaning, painting and assisting in daily routines. Sometimes, when children are receiving a treatment in such clinics, they need to stay there together with their parents for a long period.

Second, Deloitte helps in homes for the eldery. By keeping the elderly company, taking them for walks, providing them with clothes and care products, the employees from Deloitte try to brighten up their days (Deloitte, 2020). This is an example of an employer-led, episodic and hands-on CV programme, in which employees support NGOs either individually or within a group.

This chapter has given an overview of the concept of CV, its relevance and its forms. Since there are many different shapes and forms of CV, companies need to determine the goal of their CV first before they choose the program. The next chapter will focus on the concept of Transformative Learning (TL)

1: De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek, 2020
2: Deloitte, 2020

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

This chapter will describe the concept of transformative learning (TL) and how it can be used to change people's worldviews.

The concept of TL has become one of the dominant lines of scholarship in the field of adult education. The TL theory offers both a description of the learning process as well as the distinct outcome of TL, which is a change of one's worldview (Jones, 2010; Santalucia & Johnsen, 2010).

How people view the world

Every individual has a particular and unique view on the world, which is based on a web of assumptions, values, feelings and expectations that have arisen from their habits of mind. This is described as a frame of references through which we understand our experiences. Moreover, adults have acquired a coherent body of experience that defines their worldview (Santalucia & Johnsen, 2010; Mezirow, 1997).

These frames of reference, perspectives and paradigmatic assumptions derive from an individual's upbringing, life experience, culture, community or education and are, for the most part, uncritically acquired in childhood through the process of socialization and acculturation. The set of preconceptions becomes an implicit belief system that selectively shapes and delimits expectations and cognition. These frames of references create the lens through which we see the world and forms the basis of our actions (Mezirow, 1990).

Taken-for-granted frames of references can include, among others, fixed interpersonal relationships, political orientations, cultural bias, ideologies, stereotyped attitudes and practices, paradigms and frames in science and other unquestioned beliefs and assumptions (Santalucia & Johnsen, 2010; Mezirow, 2003). They are often distorted as a result of the internalization of the dominant socio-cultural assumptions prevailing in our social context and adopted from parents and teachers (Mezirow, 1990; Christie et al., 2015; Jones, 2010). People tend to accept and integrate experiences that comfortably fit within our frame of reference and reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labelling those ideas as unworthy of consideration (Santalucia & Johnsen, 2010; Mezirow, 1997). However, one's worldview is not set in stone. There are ways to alter or adjust the frames of references. This is where TL comes into play.

Transforming one's worldview

Regarding the habit of mind, there are four processes by which one can learn. One process is to elaborate on an existing point of view. The second way of learning is to establish a new point of view. A third way is to transform a point of view. Finally, one may transform their habit of mind by becoming aware and critically reflective of their world view. Transformation of frames of references can occur by an accumulation of transformations in point of view or by a transformation of habit of mind through critical self-reflection. In other words, TL occurs in situations where someone becomes aware of the inadequacy of their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997; Jones, 2010).

The TL theory explains how a shift is produced in the way we see and make meaning of the world (Jones, 2010). The process transforms such frames "through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). To establish such transformation, three concepts are key: Experience, Critical Reflection and Taking Action (Chang, 2017).

Experience

The first step in the process of transformation is for an individual to have an experience that is disorienting and disturbing. By creating a 'disorienting dilemma', participants are presented with a reality they have not considered before. This brings about confusion and discomfort as an emotional response. Consequently, frames of reference (habit of mind and belief of the world) could be questioned and revised. The challenge for learning to be transformative is that what is learned, needs to be outside of existing frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997). The goal of disorientation is to activate inner conflict and to release a more open-minded, well-justified and reflective worldview (Walter, 2016). Participants should be inspired to move beyond their comfort zones and expertise, leading to feelings of discomfort and unrest (Walter, 2016). This will make them reach the so-called "stretch zone" (Figure 1). This is the zone where participants feel just enough discomfort to learn new skills and ways of thinking, while not being so far from their safe zone that they will enter their panic zone (Brown, 2008). In the context of CV, activities that are physically, mentally or emotionally challenging can stimulate disorienting experiences.
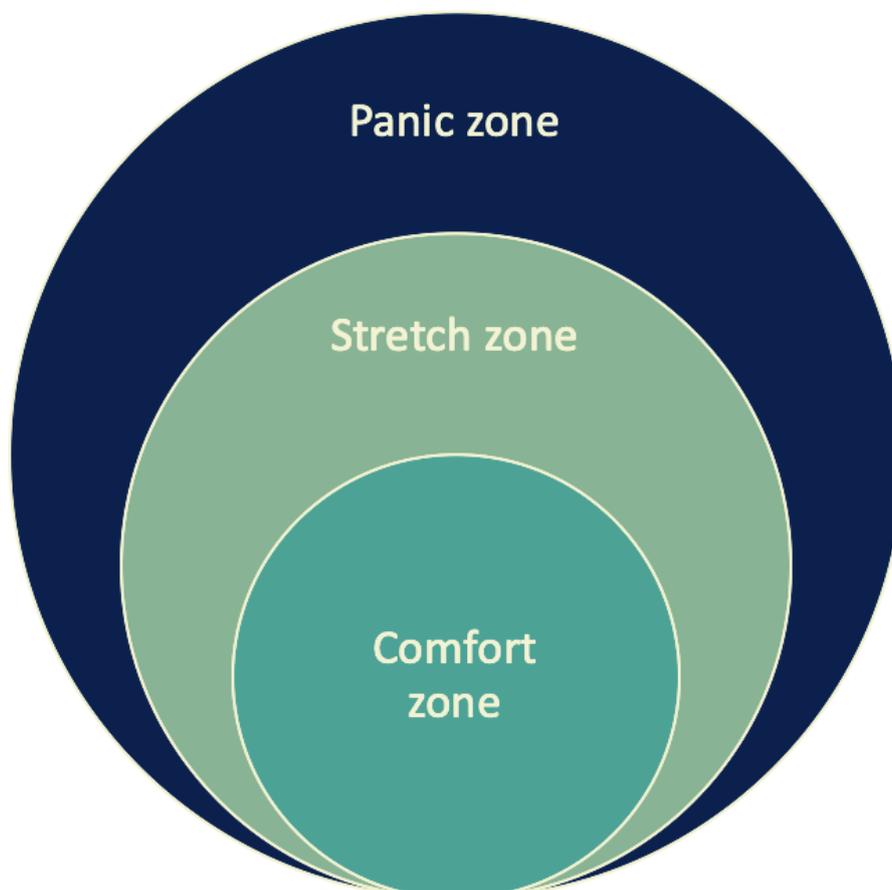

Figure 1 comfort-stretch-panic zone model (Adapted from Brown, 2008)

To enlarge the possibility of creating a disorienting experience, it is important that participants feel engaged in the activity. This can be created by having a briefing before an activity starts, which can be accomplished by including several task characteristics (Sonnentag et al., 2017). First, a task is experienced as meaningful when all the work is completed as a whole (task identity). Second, the task should be meaningful and significant, making volunteers feel like they are making an impact on others (task significance). By telling a story of who or what benefits from the volunteering activity, proximity to the beneficiary can be developed, which is important for generating empathy. This will lead to a higher motivation to learn and actively help the NPO. Also, the activity should allow for a variety of learning new skills and applying routine skills, to make volunteers feel both competent and challenged by the experience. Fourth, participants should have some freedom in deciding how to accomplish a certain task. This enlarges the energy willing to invest. Lastly, the activity should end with feedback on how effective an individual or group has completed the task (Sonnentag et al., 2017).

Critical reflection

Next to the disorienting experience, participants need to have the possibility and capacity to reflect on these experiences. This allows for challenging and identifying deeply rooted assumptions and beliefs, thereby creating the possibility to change their habits of mind (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). This has been identified in the literature as 'critical reflection', which entails assessing how or why one has perceived, felt, thought or acted a certain way. This reflection takes place on an individual level, examining personal values and assumptions (Mezirow, 1997). It is of importance that within the context of corporate volunteering, the experience feels as sufficiently challenging and thus needs further consideration.

Besides individual reflection, participants can engage in reflective discourse, which entails an open dialogue with other participants to understand and process the meaning of an experience (Mezirow, 2000). Proposed questions could be "what did you experience?" or "what did you expect?" According to Diduck et al. (2012), it is most effective for such reflection to take place in small groups because this creates higher emotional support, validation and social identity. This, in turn, helps participants to process their thoughts, receive other points of views and create a common understanding. Reflective discourse can be stimulated by giving volunteers non-active time after the experience, after which a critical dialogue is initiated by asking questions that are challenging and provoking (Williams, 2001). This can lead to higher levels of self-reflection (Santalucia & Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, critical reflection can be stimulated by questionnaires, opportunities to write a blog about the experience, experiences within a group, staying in touch with the organization and receiving follow-up learning materials (Walter, 2016). These pre- and post-experiences are important to influence the impact the experience had on a volunteer. Sense-making of experiences could lead to changes in attitudes and behavior.

A crucial element for critical reflection to succeed is the willingness of a participant to be open to new ideas. Hence, transformation starts with the willingness to reflect on one's assumptions (Wessels et al., 2011). This is a challenging step since individuals are naturally motivated to stay within their existing beliefs because this is more comfortable. To trigger the willingness to be open, positive emotions should be stimulated. Feelings of excitement can facilitate engagement, especially to those that are not as involved in the topic (Dean et al., 2018).

Taking action

The process of TL is complete when participants decide to take action (Mezirow, 1997). As a result of critical reflections, a change in habit of mind could take place, leading to a change in point of view and different courses of action. This step can be seen as most challenging since it involves integrating learning insights into daily habits. Falling back into daily routines is an easy pitfall. It is argued that volunteers who are motivated to engage in an activity are more likely to take their time for such an integration to happen (Robledo & Batle, 2017).

To enlarge the possibility of volunteers implementing new courses of actions into their routines, it is important that volunteers feel empowered. Volunteers can get the feeling that they are making a difference by developing an action plan and setting corresponding goals (Walter, 2016). Next to telling volunteers how to execute new behavior, information should be provided on why this behavior is important and when this should be performed. It helps to place the new behavior and norms that were established during the volunteering activity, in a group setting. This fosters a sense of belonging and by seeing colleagues making an effort, good behavior is stimulated (Diduck et al., 2012)

The importance of context in transformative learning

What Mezirow's theory does not address are the implications of contextual dimensions, thereby limiting the role that context plays in the process of TL (Clark & Wilson, 1991). The connection between the meaning of an experience and the context in which it arises and is interpreted, is not made. Mezirow argues that TL can be applied across all contextual dimensions, thereby limiting the role context plays. Contradictory, Clark & Wilson (1991) argue that "all human meaning is context-dependent (p. 76)". Similarly, it is argued that TL "does not happen in a vacuum, solely through the free will of an autonomous learner; rather, it is contextually bound and influenced by relationships with others (Taylor & Snyder, 2012; p. 44)". By creating a context, proximity to the beneficiary can be created. It is seen as important to paint a picture of the person or project a volunteer is helping, or even meet the person you are helping. This is one of the most crucial steps for generating empathy. Especially when engaging in critical reflection, the role of context is important. Only when individual reflections and assumptions are confirmed by others, the provoked change is likely to stick. Otherwise, it is expected that newfound insights will only be used temporarily and with little meaning (Taylor, 2017).

Reasons to initiate Transformative Learning

The question arises why companies would want to transform their employees. Several reasons could be indicated. First, TL is said to transform "problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)— to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow, 2003). By this definition, the transformations are inherently good since they are transformations of problematic frames of references. These outcomes help transformative learners to become more autonomous thinkers who negotiate their values, meanings, and purposes rather than uncritically act on those of others (Grabove, 1997). Because of this 'improvement' of persons, TL is used in leadership development programs. TL is said to help executives in becoming better leaders (Johnson, 2008).

Moreover, companies can use TL as a means to foster sustainable development (Boström et al., 2018). A paradigm shift is needed for companies to move toward strategies aimed at sustainability. Therefore, training and management programs need to include transformative learning processes (Palma & Pedrozo, 2016). Hence, through TL, companies can change the sustainability values of their employees (Singleton, 2015). Eventually, the transformation in values can lead to more support for the companies CSR activities and more sustainable business initiatives. Besides, it can also change the employee's behavior in daily life.

Enlarging the chances for learning to be transformative

It is quite impossible to know beforehand if a CV activity will have a transformative effect on an individual or group. TL does not happen to everybody all the time. It is highly dependent on previous experiences, the setting and context. The experience needs to be out of the current frame of reference, which is different for every individual. It is necessary to keep in mind that creating a TL experience differs and it is not possible to design an experience that works for a whole group (of employees). But if designed correctly, it could happen to quite a lot of people a lot of the time.

When designing a TL experience, it is important to consider the above-mentioned steps. First of all, TL is about changing a person's worldviews and habits of mind. For change to occur, an experience needs to push an individual into the stretch zone, leading to a disorienting experience. Through critical reflection on an individual level and reflective discourse in small groups, participants can reflect and share what the experience meant for them. An experience is seen as transformative if participants change their course of action due to the volunteering activity. By supporting participants to set goals and develop action plans, new behavior can be encouraged.

TOOLBOX

This chapter will dive deeper into the ways how organizations can increase the chance of TL within their CV programs and activities. The previously discussed theory is translated into information that can be used in practice.

First a 'menu card' will be presented, which provides an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of every 'flavour' of a CV program. This menu card will also present possible goals of a CV program and give an overview of possible design combinations to work towards the desired goal. It is important to take into account the different possibilities and trade-offs when designing a CV program.

Second, a checklist will be provided to enlarge the possibility of TL to take place during a volunteer activity. This list can be taken into consideration when designing an experience. The checklist will instruct organizations on what they should take into consideration before, during and after their CV activity.

MENU: PICK & CHOOSE

How it works

CV programs come in various shapes and forms. In order to come as close as possible to the desired results, this menu presents all the possible ingredient choices with their advantages and disadvantages. After choosing ingredients, a specific flavor can be added to give the program a disctinct character. Finally, the options provided below function as a guideline and can therefore be mixed and match according to the desired goals, current program and other preferences. Don't know where to start? Pick one of the recommended Chef's Specials! Bon appétit! .

Employer -led   VS   Employee -led

+
- More influence on design
- Easier to get out of comfort zone
- Shows support from employer

- Less resources needed
- Alignment with personal interest
- More differentation possible

−
- Less motivation participants
- More organisational pressure
- More resources needed

- Less organisational alignment
- Less control on tranformative results

Group   VS   Individual

+
- Peer-reflection
- Community building within group
- More insight in strengths within group

- More focus on personal frame of references
- Better insight in individual impact
- Easier to fit into schedule

−
- Risk of being seen as an 'fun' work activity
- Differences in dedication can lead to frustration

- Risk of feeling isolated
- No opportunity to share experiences
- No peer pressure

Episodic   VS   Continued

+
- No routine, so easier to reach stretch-zone
- Limited time-investment
- Lower drop-out rate

- More time to reach transformation
- More impact on community
- Better understanding of complexity of issue

−
- Lower chance of transformation due to short exposure
- Difficult to determine impact
- Less societal impact

- More difficult to fit into schedule
- More resources needed
- Chance of reaching comfortzone

Hands-on   VS   Skill-based

+
- Physically challenging
- Different from day-to-day job
- Easy to measure impact

- Offers a new perspective on own skills
- More impact by exchanging knowledge
- Can boost confidence

−
- Risk of being to far out of comfort zone
- Lack of expertise can hold back efficiency

- Easier to stay in comfort zone
- Risk of focusing on personal development instead of on societal impact

MENU: PICK & CHOOSE

Flavor options

Exotic Eco

Creates a nature shock for employees which causes an ecological change in their mindset. This leads to changes of participants behavior into more eco-friendly actions.

Spicy Society

Creates positive impact on community in which the organization is operates. This can be accomplished by letting employees experience differences in cultures and communities.

Crunchy Corporate

Brings employees in more alignment with the company values. As a result, there will be a higher chance that they will work collaborative towards 'cohesive' goals.

Episodic ➕ Hands-on ➕ Group ➕

A one day experience where employees make the beach plastic free will expose employees to a complete different environment. This exposure can contribute to some sort of a nature shock because it is out of their comfort zone and it is required to use more physical skills rather than knowledge skills. Also, if this activity is done within a group, employees will have the opportunity to interchange their experience and reflect up on it. Together with this group of colleagues, the employee can take colletive action and collectively change their behaviour.

Continued ➕ Skill-based ➕ Individual ➕

A continued project in which employees on an individual basis support NGOs by applying their expertise. For example, law firm sends their employees to several NGOs in order to work pro bono on certain cases. Via this way, the lawyers are put in the position where they need to apply their skills in a different context. In addition, the employees contribute to the community in which they operate and therefore make a positve impact. By doing this over a continued period, it will be easier to 'measure' the impact.

Employer-led ➕ Episodic ➕ Group ➕

In order to align employers more with the values of the company, it is favourable to let the CV project be led by the employer. To increase the impact made, employers should go for an episodic activity which either lasts a day or a few days. Employees will be more motivated and experience it less as an obligation. Also, by engaging employees as a group, they will have the opportunity to get to know each other on a different level. This will result in a better 'understanding' and improved collaborations on the workfloor. Also, by doing an activity with a group, there is a possibility to reflect together and make action plans together, in line with the company's values.

CHECKLIST

How it works

This checklist is meant for people within an organization responsible for creating a meaningful and maybe even transformative learning experience. By looking at the practical steps developed in the checklist, the goal is to make it easier to go from just a regular volunteer experience to a transformative experience that will stick and change the habit of mind and course of action of participants. Moreover, in Appendix A, a practical example has been provided to show the difference between a 'regular' and 'transformative' experience.
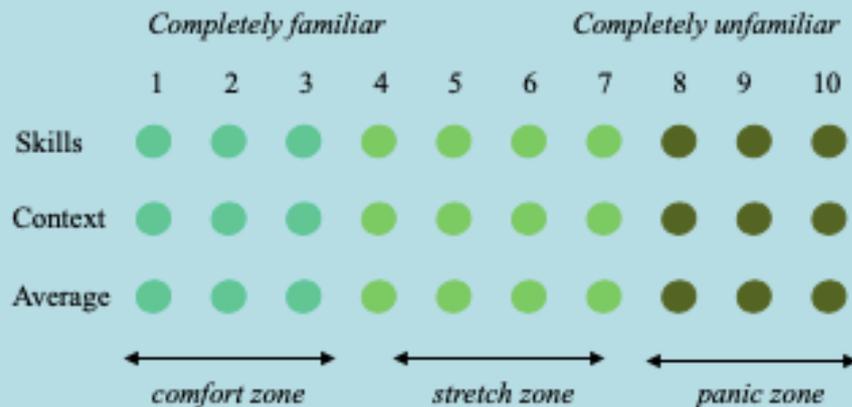
1

BRIEF

Before the experience

Introduction of participants *(if applicable)*.
- Why are they here and what do they expect?

Define roles and tasks.
- Explain what the goal of the activity is and why it is important.
- Paint a picture of who you are helping with the volunteering work.

Determine zone of experience by using the model below:

Check if the following characteristics are in place:
1. Can the task be *finished* (within the time set)?
2. Is the task *meaningful* and *impactful* on others?
3. Can the participant use a mix of *routine skills* and *new skills*?
4. Do participant(s) have *freedom* in how a task can be finished?
5. Can *feedback* be provided on how the participant(s) completed the task?

Goal: create a safe and open space

CHECKLIST

2

VOLUNTEER

During the experience
Motivate employees
Create feelings of excitement
Empower participants
Goal: stimulate engagement

3

DEBRIEF

After the experience

Critical self-reflection

Give participant(s) some alone time after the experience. If possible, hand out a form with questions for self-reflection.	*How did you feel during....?* *How did you act when...?* *How did you perceive...?*

Share reflections

1. Share reflections with a small group
2. Ask challenging/provoking questions
3. Create a safe space for thoughts and feelings
4. Come to a shared conclusion

This can be led by an engaged and professional facilitator who will try to engage the group

Pre- and post volunteering activities

- Pre-activity orientation and questionnaires
- Writing blogs and journals
- Stay in touch with NPO through social media
- Receiving follow-up learning materials

Goal: change world views and habit of mind

CHECKLIST

4

ACTION

After the experience: long term

Support participants to take action by:
- Providing information on how to execute new behavior
- Setting realistic goals
- Making individual or group action plans
- Sharing and measuring progress
- Ensuring management support if participants want to try new roles as a result of the experience

Tell volunteers:
- **How** to engage in new behavior
- **Why** to perform that particular behavior
- **When** to perform it, by providing reminders

Goal: make the experience stick and change behavior in the long term

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The previous chapters dealt with creating the best conditions and choosing the right design for CV practices, to maximize the opportunity for TL to take place. However, next to practical design choices, there are also some ethical issues and contextual matters to consider. Therefore, this chapter will outline some ethical dilemmas and will point out some other matters, such as resources and measurement tools to take into account, when implementing TL.

Ethical dilemmas

There are a few ethical dilemmas that surround TL in CV. Paramount to these dilemmas is the question of legitimacy. The first legitimacy question is what is morally acceptable in terms of how far an employer can and should go with interfering in an employee's behavior. This is especially true for TL because it not only changes the behavior of someone in his employee role but will also affect the way he or she handles things in the personal sphere. For example, an employer might want to transform employee's eco-consciousness, to reduce the amount of plastic used within the business or have them consume less meat and dairy products. But is it allowed for an employer to meddle into the private consumption or dietary habits of an employee? Even though it is with the best of intentions? It's a thin line whether as an employer it is okay to influence someone's personal life.

The second legitimacy dilemma occurs on a more fundamental level. Next to the question if it's ethical to change someone's behavior, one could also argue that it is at least dubious for an employer to decide what behavior should be changed. By steering employees towards a certain transformative experience, an employer imposes specific values and perspectives on them. Because TL is a rather unconscious process (see chapter 3), participants are not in full capacity to rebuttal the proposed values. This is especially true when the CV programme is not on an opt-in basis, but more of mandatory nature. The ethical consequences might not be such an issue when the proposed values are generally regarded as harmless, such as more compassion for others. However, when the values are of a more contested nature, such as when values are based on religion or are politically charged, one should be more careful. When influencing someone's cultural judgements or political preferences, values deemed as deeply personal, TL could come close to a form of brainwashing or indoctrination.
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Unpredictability

On top of that, the outcomes of TL cannot be fully predicted (chapter 3). Not everyone might experience the same transformation. There is still no one-size-fits-all standard of TL and therefore this offers two challenges:

First, the degree of transformation can differ among participants. While some participants might undergo a full-blown transformative experience, others may not encounter even the slightest shift of perspective, even though they follow the same program. Therefore, expectations of transforming each and every participant should be tempered. By developing different types of volunteer work, the possibility could be enlarged that one of them will have some sort of effect on an individual. This could be done by trying out different types of CV (e.g., employee-led, episodic), or different types of themes (e.g., social, ecological).

Secondly, the unpredictable nature of TL makes it hard to measure outcomes. This is partially since every individual can experience his or her version of transformation, resulting in diverse outcomes. Measurement of TL is further complicated by the nature of those outcomes. Results such as 'changed values' or 'altered worldviews' are hard to quantify. One way to overcome this difficulty is offered by Jones (2010). He states that, because a change in behavior is the end goal of TL, measuring changes in action is the best way to discover if TL has occurred. Therefore, taking both a baseline measurement of behavior before the CV and an evaluation of changed behavior after the CV and TL process is paramount to monitor if the program was successful. Thus, measurement of the TL asks for well-thought-out processes.

Resources

This brings us to the question of resources. On one hand, embedding TL into corporate volunteering programmes might bring about opportunities to combine resources, such as both budget from the CSR department as well as budgets labelled for learning and development. This might boost the efficiency and lower the pressure on one of the two budgets. However, because of the discussed unpredictability of TL, the risk of unsuccessful outcomes is higher than with more proven learning and development programs. Therefore, it is suggested to proceed with caution when allocating resources to TL. There is no need to go all overboard with extreme activities or intense sessions. To maximize the chances on TL, most efforts should go to implementing the procedures of the offered toolbox, with a focus on embedding critical reflection and offering guidance with altering actions and behavior.

IMPACT MEASUREMENT:

Expressing the impact of a TL experience is a difficult process, since it is often intangible to measure. In this box, some short take-aways are given to present to organizations an idea of what to take into consideration when designing measurable TL. The most important action points to shape impact measurement are to establish a measurement plan in which output, definitions, method of measurement and planning of measurement are set. The following steps can be taken:

1. Create indicators based on most important outputs and effects. These are used to make concrete if and what needs to change. These outputs and effects could, for example, be a change in assumptions and a change in behavior.
2. Decide on measurement instruments (e.g., questionnaires, interviews) for the chosen indicators.
3. Ensure there is a system of data collection. Where does data end up and how?
4. Make someone responsible for managing and analyzing data, progress and overview.
5. TL is a process with long-term outcomes. Therefore, it is useful to measure the indicators over a longer period of time to evaluate whether a transformation has taken place.

CONCLUSION

This policy paper aims at providing an overview of the conditions that are important for CV to become a TL experience. The insights can help companies to develop sufficient CV programs and activities to increase the chance of achieving TL outcomes. As mentioned in this paper, there is no 'one size fits all' suggestion and every CV program and activity can have a different effect on every employee. However, based on academic literature, this paper gives some tools when designing a CV program and activity.

When it comes to designing a CV program, the following insights are useful:
- Choices between employer-led & employee-led, group & individual, episodic & continued, and hands-on & skill-based have implications for the TL chances of a CV program.
- These implications, as indicated in the menu in the toolbox, are no guaranteed consequence but could still serve as a guideline when designing a CV program.
- Depending on the goal of a CV program in terms of TL, CV programmes could be designed differently to give direction to the employees' TL outcomes.

When it comes to designing a CV activity, the following insights are useful:
- By integrating certain steps in a CV activity, the chance of TL outcomes could be increased. These steps could be applied in all CV activities and are situation dependent.
- These steps. as indicated in the checklist in the toolbox, are based on the key concepts of transformations, namely experience, critical reflection and taking actionare. The steps are:
    - Briefing, goal: create a safe and open space
    - Activity,   goal: stimulate engagement
    - Debrief,   goal: change worldviews and habit of minds

However, when integrating TL in CV, the following should be taken into account:
- The question whether an employer may consciously try to change an employee's behavior
- Not every employer might experience the same transformation, this can not be predicted
- The transformations may vary in degree and are, thereby, hard to measure
- A lot of resources could be allocated to TL in CV. Implementing the steps of the toolbox would be an effective start which will cost relatively few resources

Altogether, CV programs and activities could be designed to increase the chance of TL outcomes. Reasons to do so are that transformations could lead to actions that are based on a more open, inclusive and better-justified world view. Therefore, TL in CV could be used in development programs. Moreover, TL could be used to change the sustainability values of employees, leading to more sustainable behavior in their personal and professional life, fostering sustainable development.

TEAM INVOLVED

TRANSFORMERS

Marleen
Blanson
Henkemans

Luce
van
Kempen

Shanice
Ramautar

Hugo
Soons

APPENDIX A
AN EXAMPLE OF MAKING VOLUNTEERING TRANSFORMATIVE

This example is about a volunteer experience (Jarvis, 2017). The experience described in the red box is the 'regular' volunteer work experience, where the chances of achieving TL are most likely low. In green, information is added to the experience, thereby aiming to achieve TL, or at least to make participants reflect on what has happened.

Imagine this. You work at company X together with your friend and colleague Bill. He is a volunteer ambassador for the company and asks you to join one of the volunteering activities. You commit to the activity even though you do not really want to but you are committed, so two weeks later you show up. You arrive at a house and see Bill when you enter. He hands you a company t-shirt and tells you that you are all going to paint the trim in the place. You can start with taping them and then someone else will come along to paint them. You understand your task and start doing it.

However, before you start, Bill tells you that there is going to be a briefing in 15 minutes to talk about what you will be doing today, how we will get it done, and why this is important. A total of 12 volunteers gather round and all tell their name and their role in the company. You are thanked for being there, the different tasks are explained, everyone is given a job, safety and who is in charge is explained. Then Bil starts telling you why it is important that you came today: you will be working in a transition house developed for youth to get off the streets that want to get their life back on track. He explains that these kids do not believe they deserve a future. By helping them keep up the house, they feel like they have value and dignity, which will make them believe in themselves. You feel like the task you are carrying out is significant. You start working together with the other volunteers.

So, you start your task of taping the stairs and after you're done you clean the windows. And when you finish that task, you help painting the porch. And at some point, it is almost time to head to lunch and you realize you have to go. You went and painted and it was good.

But before everyone has to head off, you gather round once again and Bill asks everyone what you have experienced today and what you expected. You all start sharing experiences and insights developed during the activity. You start the process of sense-making, which happens when you bring meaning to an experience. You reflect on what you have learned. You go to lunch and tell other colleagues what you have experienced today. You go home to your family and share your new insights with them. You went and painted and it was good and you were changed by it in some way.

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POLICY PAPER

Written for the course Managing NGOs (BMME037)

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