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Dynamics in motivations and reasons to quit in a Care Bank: a qualitative study in Belgium

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Abstract

Background: The aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of why volunteers in a time bank known as "NeighborhoodPension," which involves community-based care, are motivated to start, continue, and quit volunteering. The time bank started in 2013 and is the first time bank in Brussels, Belgium.

Methods: A planned prospective longitudinal study involving qualitative focus group interviews was used to study a group of volunteers at four time points over one year.

Results: There were two main themes, the first of which pertains to older adults' motives for volunteering with the time bank. These motives are largely attributable to the volunteer organization's contextual factors. The second theme focuses on reasons for quitting volunteering. Factors for retaining volunteers relate strongly to the purpose of the volunteer organization. Co-production (i.e., engaging the volunteers in the design of the project) and having an attention officer (i.e., a confidant who listens to the volunteers' worries) are examples of retention strategies. Moreover, earning time credits did not appear to be a motive for continued volunteering.

Conclusions: These theoretical perspectives could help to improve organizational support of volunteers and increase the participation of older citizens in community-based volunteering. The complexity associated with retaining volunteers stems from the fact that although initial motives for volunteering are generally clearly defined, other contextual factors (such as relationships with other volunteers and organizational structure) change the initial motives and can result in volunteer turnover.

Introduction

Western Europe has been facing a continuing trend away from institutional care towards community care for the last 30 years (Means et al. 2008). Recently, increasing importance has been attached to informal carers, to compensate for health and care sector budget cuts (Miller et al. 2010). Hence, volunteers are increasingly being engaged to provide solutions to meet the current care challenges (e.g., Wilson 2012). This paper examines one of the possible solutions for engaging volunteers in Brussels, Belgium, and examines how volunteers can be attracted using a community currency system (neighbor-to-neighbor time bank), specifically focusing on care.

In addition, in Belgium, "aging at home" is the residential strategy that most older people prefer, even when they are in need of care, have economic difficulties, or live in inadequate houses or deprived areas (De Witte et al. 2012). As a consequence of population aging, health care systems are faced with growing client demand, i.e., growing numbers of frail older people who want to stay at home for as long as possible (Gautun and Bratt 2016). However, there is less capacity to respond, as health care systems are facing budget cuts and reductions in government provision (Bolin et al. 2008).

In response to the increasing demand and decreasing professional provision, innovative volunteer community care projects have arisen, such as community currency systems. Within the purpose of the article we will only focus on time banking, which is an alternative transaction-based system for mutual aid and assistance that fosters social inclusion, community self-help, and civic engagement amongst citizens (Collom 2011; Seyfang 2003).

One particular type of time banking is called "neighbor-to-neighbor time banking," which has been described as "community-based volunteer schemes whereby participants give and receive services in

exchange for time credits" (Seyfang 2003). Members list services that they can offer and services that they need. Subsequently, each member is matched with other members by computer, or with the help of a time bank coordinator (Marks 2012).

Within this specific type of time banking, a small number of initiatives focus only on care services, the so-called Care Banks. For instance, the UK project Care4Care (United Kingdom) was set up to provide older citizens with volunteer care services; in return, each volunteer earned time credits (and built up a "care pension") that could be used for support later in life, and likewise build up an own "care pension" (The Young Foundation 2012). However, the initiative failed, despite considerable funding, as it lacked long-term sustainability and scalability. Additionally, the project leaders and managers had fundamental disagreements about how best to proceed with the project and lacked the skills required to upscale the project to the national level. Likewise, the Japanese time banking equivalent, hureai kippu, which translates as the "Caring Relationship Ticket Scheme," is a system that encourages people to volunteer as care workers; for each hour of work that a volunteer does, credits are available to them and their relatives anywhere in the country (Nakagawa et al. 2011). This scheme is still running but it has faced a slowdown since 2000. Time banks face three main obstacles: lack of investment, management issues, and dependence on volunteers. The volunteers' motivations have been reported to be mostly selfish whereas the main motivation should come from altruism (Nakagawa et al. 2011).

The UK and Japanese schemes formed the basis for the community-based time bank in Brussels that focuses on community care, which is called "NeighborhoodPension." Its mission is to encourage local residents to care for one another and to promote the value of existing informal care. Local residents are recruited as volunteers to provide informal care services (which do not require a professional qualification) for disabled and frail people, such as grocery shopping, making breakfast, and having coffee together. For every service, time spent supporting a disabled or frail person earns an equivalent time credit (calculated in 1-hour segments), which can be redeemed for the volunteer's own care or that of others whom they identify as their "beneficiaries." For example, a member spending 1 hour

making breakfast for their neighbor then earns 1 time credit (1 time credit equals 1 hour), which is recorded for future use. The service is limited to tasks where no professional qualification is required. In this way, members save time credits and build up their own "care pension" for their old age.

Volunteers: recruitment and retention

In recent years, a burgeoning interest in the non-profit sector and volunteers emerged among policymakers and academics (Tang et al. 2010b; Overgaard 2015). Time banks rely on volunteers, but recruiting and retaining reliable, long-term, and cost-effective volunteers is a constant challenge for voluntary organizations (Warburton and McDonald 2009). Volunteer turnover, recruitment, and training are costly to organizations and can become a high proportion of spending (Miller et al. 1990). In addition, retaining volunteers is crucial for the stability of the organization (Chacon et al. 2007) and for the volunteers themselves (Stevens 1991).

In light of this, growing attention is being paid to motives for volunteering (e.g., Chen and Morrow-Howell 2015; Clary et al. 1998; Kahana et al. 2013; Morrow-Howell at al. 2009a). After all, understanding volunteers' motives can help organizations to develop strategies for attracting new volunteers (e.g., Pavey et al. 2011) and determine what makes people stay committed or not (Grube and Piliavin 2000; Liao-Troth 2008). Psychologists have predominantly used motivational theories to explain why people decide to take up volunteering (Wilson 2012). The dominant model is the functional and multifactor approach to volunteering, operationalized by means of the Volunteer Function Inventory (Clary et al. 1998).

However, research on time bank volunteers' motives is almost non-existent, with the notable exceptions of the studies by Collom (2007, 2011) and Valor and Papoikonomou (2016). The latter study found that the most common motives for participating were integrative social relationship motives (i.e., belongingness, social responsibility, equality, and resource provision); expressive motives (i.e., protesting against the system and showing others how to be responsible); and cognitive motives (i.e., understanding, exploration and intellectual creativity) (Valor and Papoikonomou 2016). Collom (2011)

performed an extended review of 12 studies on the motives of participants in social movements, community currency initiatives, and volunteer organizations, and the author distinguished four types of motivation: "economic/instrumental," "ideological/value," "social," and "altruistic."

The economic/instrumental motivations are divided into three sub motivations: "needs motivations" (i.e., volunteering to meet personal needs), "wants motivations" (i.e., volunteering as a way to obtain goods you want), and "instrumental motivations" (i.e., volunteering as a way to create or improve the local economy and skills). Regarding the ideological/value motivation, there is a distinction between "values motivations" (i.e., volunteering as a tangible act reflecting important values such as humanitarianism) and "independence motivations" (i.e., volunteering to be more independent from large corporations and the government). Social motivations deal with the extent to which one can enhance existing social ties and one's self-esteem and personal growth. Lastly, volunteering as a means to give back to the community, help people in need, and use skills to do something for others is encompassed by the altruistic motive.

Volunteering (e.g., in time banks) may be driven by multiple types of motive (Clary and Snyder 1999; Collom 2011). For instance, volunteering with a time bank appears to be predominantly due to economic motives, but community engagement to create a better society may also play a role (Collom 2011).

In contrast, much less is known about reasons for quitting and volunteer turnover: factors other than the initial motives could be decisive when leaving a volunteer role (Tang et al. 2009a; Tang et al. 2010b; Willems et al. 2012). A volunteer study by Willems and colleagues (2012) showed that only a limited number of motivational dimensions influence the decision to quit volunteering. Reasons to quit do not correspond to the generic motives to start volunteering and require focused research.

In addition, volunteers' motives appear to be dynamic (Butrica et al. 2009). Volunteering is an inherently dynamic process and an individual evolves within a volunteer organization. Experiences,

emotions, and one's motives to volunteer change as one settles into a volunteer role (Haski-Leventhal and Bargal 2008). Major research contributions have been made regarding motives to start volunteering, but research on changes in these motives and in reasons to quit is scarce (Dysvik et al. 2013). Moreover, the question remains as to what contextual factors influence these changes (Haski-Leventhal and Bargal 2008; Willems et al. 2012). A Spanish study on time banks discovered that volunteers who take the managing role as a time broker often resign quickly due to lack of efficiency and fatigue (Valor and Papoikonomou 2016).

Given the previously established importance of examining (changes in) motives for and reasons to quit time bank volunteering, we investigated what motivates people to start and what encourages or prevents them from continuing, and whether these motivations change throughout the project. In addition, we examined the moderating effects of individual and contextual factors that may play a role in the changes in motives and reasons to quit volunteering with a time bank.

To achieve our aim, we posed the following research questions:

1a. What motivates volunteers to start participating in the NeighborhoodPension project?

1b. How do these motives change over time?

1c. Which moderating factors change participants' motives over time?

2a. What reasons to quit do volunteers express at the start of their participation in the project?

2b. How do these reasons change over time?

2c. Which moderating factors change participants' reasons over time?

Design and Methods

Project Context

The data for this study, collected between December 2013 and November 2014, are derived from the NeighborhoodPension project in Brussels, Belgium. The study took place during the first year of the project. The project was funded from September 2013 to September 2014 by the Flemish government, and is now running independently. In the summer of 2013, the project coordinator, local service center manager, steering group members (i.e., managers of several care organizations), and local associations recruited volunteers and beneficiaries. Moreover, the project was announced in the media, which attracted further volunteers. The project started with five volunteers and grew slowly until there were 13 in November 2014. The services that are exchanged are very diverse, ranging from social services (making breakfast for a neighbor, meeting for tea, and playing cards) to more practical services (getting medicine from the pharmacy, helping with administration, and driving someone to the doctor). The volunteers and beneficiaries are invited to a monthly gathering with the project coordinator to evaluate the project. As group meetings might pose an obstacle for some people to give their opinion on the project, a questionnaire was developed for use at two time points, and filled out anonymously.

A planned prospective longitudinal qualitative interview design involving focus group interviews (Calman et al. 2013; Hermanowicz 2013) was selected as the most appropriate method, with four interview time points (at the start and after 4, 8, and 11 months). Each interview involved the same investigator and approximately the same group of volunteers. Almost all previous relevant studies adopted a quantitative approach, so the use of a qualitative approach was considered helpful for providing valuable new insights. In addition, a longitudinal design enables in-depth exploration of the

participants' motives and experiences of the project, identification of temporal changes, exploration of how the volunteers interpret and respond to the changes, and determination of the mechanisms that cause these changes (Hermanowicz 2013).

Although focus groups cannot guarantee confidentiality, they were selected as the most appropriate means to organize the four data collection points to achieve our objectives for several reasons. First, focus groups aim to "encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues" (Hennink 2007). Second, respondents may be more reluctant to discuss contradictions in an individual interview in which the researcher has the "authoritative voice" (Madriz 2003). Focus groups permit researchers to reduce the power imbalance and enable discussion between participants in order to hear issues that may not emerge during individual interviews (Liamputtong 2011).

As the project was a pilot study funded by the Flemish government, from the start, we chose to invite every NeighborhoodPension volunteer to participate in each focus group. As the project evolved, new volunteers asked whether they could participate, which was allowed in order to maximize the richness of the findings on developments that might take place during the project. The four focus groups included almost every volunteer, so the number of participants per focus group increased: the first involved all five volunteers, the second involved six (out of seven who were volunteering at the time), the third involved five (out of eight), and the forth involved all thirteen volunteers. Each participant was given basic study information, as well as an expression of appreciation and assurances of confidentiality, anonymity, trust-building, and the provision of comfort and security (McHenry et al. 2015).

Interviews were arranged at the participants' convenience in the service center in their neighborhood (known as "Icarus"). Table 1 gives an overview of the participants. They ranged from 40 to 82 years old, with the majority of respondents being older than 60 years. With the exception of one participant, all were women. Compared to other regular volunteers, a large number of them had fewer resources

and were vulnerable (physically, psychologically, economically, or socially).

< Insert table 1 about here >

Procedure

The focus groups involved an interview schedule that comprised a topic list with open-ended questions (see Table 2), which was developed based on a literature review and input from the project steering group (consisting of professionals working in the local service center, the senior center, a social care organization, a center of expertise for living and care, etc.) (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). The interview schedule was based on three types of questions to help structure the analytical process to enable understanding of temporal changes (see Saldana 2003): 1. framing questions (on changes that occurred and definitions of changes that happened during the other time point(s)), 2. descriptive questions (on behavior in a particular environment, such as the main volunteer tasks conducted), and 3. interpretive questions (on behavior within the context of relationships, mediators of and barriers to volunteering with the time bank, and support required as a volunteer).

The first focus group explored participants' motives to start volunteering with the time bank, as well as their expectations. The results were then discussed by the steering group, which informed the development of the interview schedule used in the following focus group. The same procedure was repeated after each focus group. The follow-up focus groups involved questions on the changes in the participants' experiences of the project, current motivations, future expectations, and effects experienced as a result of the project (see Table 2). In every focus group, the participants were encouraged to describe and reflect in detail upon their experiences of the project. More specifically, the discussed how they, as volunteers, perceived the added value of the time bank, what motivated or demotivated them, their expectations as volunteers, their expectations of other volunteers and the organization, and how they perceived the future of the project.

< Insert table 2 about here >

Analysis

All the focus groups, which had a mean length of 100 minutes, were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were analyzed by performing a thematic content analysis using MAXQDA (VERBI Software, Berlin, Germany) software. The first themes were derived from the interview topics (and scientific literature on time banks and motives to start and quit volunteering) and new themes emerged from the data collected (Braun and Clarke 2006). To increase the credibility of the findings, the coding frames and strategies were subject to systematic review by the principal investigator and two other investigators and refined through a consensus-building process involving triangulation (Bengtsson 2016). For each focus group, to ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher and two other investigators first identified the themes separately and then jointly re-read the transcripts to refine and verify the overall themes. Secondly, key themes were developed by clustering codes on motives and reasons to quit volunteering.

To properly analyze the longitudinal qualitative data, we used two analyses. First, we performed a recurrent cross-sectional analysis to describe differences between time points (e.g., "What are the motives to be a volunteer within the time bank?"; during each focus group, we asked the volunteers about their motives to volunteer and we analyzed them separately). In addition, to identify changes over time, we conducted a trajectory analysis, which focuses on understanding individuals' experiences over time, capturing continuity and changes between time points.

Results

The findings are presented according to the research questions. Two main themes relating to volunteering emerged from the data. The first theme addressed motives for volunteering, the results for which are presented in three subsections: initial motives to volunteer, changes in motives, and moderating factors. The second theme focused on reasons for quitting volunteering, the results for which are also presented in three subsections: initial reasons to quit, changes in these reasons, and moderating factors.

1a. Motives

Volunteers were asked at the beginning of the project what motivated them to join the new project. Their motives were mainly altruistic and social, whereas economic motives appeared to be the least frequent factors. With regard to altruistic motivation, most volunteers predominantly indicated that "helping other people" was their main motivation: "I joined the project because I like to help others." (Woman, 64 years, focus group 1 [FG1])

Many also commented on how their previous experiences motivated them to become a volunteer. For instance, some were caregivers and others had to enlist professional help themselves. Consequently, these people felt more aware of the need for the project. The importance of this specific altruistic motivation is illustrated in the following comments:

"I've been a caregiver for my mother for two years, but the problem is that you do not get any support." (Woman, 62 years, FG1)

"At the moment a nurse comes by three times a week for my toilet and stuff but they do not have time to chat." (Woman, 70 years, FG3)

Besides altruistic motives, social motives were also very frequent. Some respondents indicated that being asked personally by someone they know motivated them to join. Another social motive that respondents indicated was to increase their self-esteem, feel needed, and feel better about oneself. Some respondents identified that their motives also stemmed from ideological/value motivation, such as motivation involving the wellbeing of the neighborhood and quality of life in the neighborhood.

Finally, economic reasons, specifically the needs motive (i.e., the benefits of time credits) also motivated the respondents, because of anticipation of future needs: "I'm single and I have a disabled son. In return for the earned time credits, I can ask help to take care of my son when I'm in the hospital or not around." (Woman, 66 years, FG2)

1b. Change in motives

Analyses of the four focus groups showed that motives evolved during the project in two different

manners. The first change in motives related to motives in the same category. For instance, a volunteer

joined the project to feel useful (social motive) and continued to volunteer because of the new friends

she made (social motive): "I joined especially to feel useful, that gives such a good feeling. Now for

me the project is important because of the friendships that I'm building." (Woman, 66 years, FG2)

The second change involved a shift from one motive category to another. For instance, some initially

joined for social motives but continued to volunteer due to altruistic motives. One volunteer began

volunteering to feel useful and better about herself (social motive) and remained active due to

satisfaction from helping others and using skills to do something for others (altruistic motive): "My

motive was to feel useful, otherwise I sit at home anyway and I start thinking, and that's not always

positive. You do something for people, I can mean something to people." (Woman, 40 years, FG3)

Another volunteer started volunteering merely to collect time credits for the care of her son (economic

and needs motives), but this motive shifted into the background and was replaced by the motive to

make friendships (social motive): "I'm single and because of the care of my son I was isolated, but

thanks to the project I made friends." (Woman, 66 years, FG2)

1c. Moderating factors of changes in motives

Respondents indicated that changes in motives were largely attributable to the organization's

contextual factors. They specified reasons that can be classified into four categories: co-production,

monthly volunteer meetings, incentives, and having an attention officer.

Co-production: Both during the set-up and the project, the project coordinator deliberately created

active roles for the volunteers and engaged them in the design of the project. In a bottom-up process,

the volunteers were asked to make decisions about different aspects of the project. For instance, the

volunteers decided together which services should be eligible for earning time credits: "It's a moment

where you can ask certain questions that you would probably never ask, now you know that these can

be dealt with at that specific moment, I think that is very useful." (Woman, 64 years, FG4)

The *monthly volunteer meetings* appeared very valuable for the volunteers. During these meetings, volunteers had the opportunity to share experiences, concerns, and questions with other volunteers: "If you do not meet with the other volunteers, everyone will start doing his own thing, and then you no longer feel you're in a group, an organization." (Woman, 40 years, FG4)

As for *incentives*, the volunteers pointed out that formal and informal incentives had a positive effect on their motivation to stay active as community care volunteers. Formal incentives involved receiving a badge, group (information) meetings, parties, and an individual admission interview. Informal incentives involved receiving a "thank you" from the organization and the beneficiary. During the volunteer meetings and focus groups, the organization made sure that there were always biscuits and drinks present, which appeared to also be highly valuable as an informal incentive. The incentive of earning time credits that can be redeemed for care was, for a limited number of people, a driver to start volunteering. Nevertheless, it did not appear to be a factor for continued volunteering. On the contrary, the longer the period of volunteering, the lower the influence of the incentive.

Finally, the volunteers attached great importance to having an *attention officer*, which is a confidant who listens to the volunteers' worries. Worries can be diverse, ranging from a simple question on insurance to more sensitive issues such as neglect or an urgent care deficit. Volunteers enter peoples' homes and may be exposed to difficult home situations, so the attention officer supports them. From the beginning of the project, the identity of the attention officer and what the officer does was clearly communicated to all volunteers: "An attention officer is really nice, when you have a problem, you have a person you can go to… that's interesting and very important also." (Woman, 73 years, FG2)

2a. Reasons to quit (when starting to volunteer)

At the initial stage of the project, the volunteers were very motivated. Nevertheless, several reasons for quitting, grouped into two themes, were expressed at the beginning: project-level and individual-level factors. Regarding project-level factors, the volunteers experienced several insecurities about the

project, e.g., they were unsure about the added value of the project, citing examples of other non-profit voluntary or professional home care organizations "doing the same." Individual-level factors included anticipating potential future problems related to specific volunteer activities; several volunteers expressed the following concerns: "What if the family disagrees that I come to help?"; "What if I get falsely accused of theft?"; "What happens if I have a car accident and I am not insured?" Not knowing how to respond to these questions caused discussions in the focus groups, with some indicting that these reasons could result in quitting.

2b. Changes in reasons to quit
During the project, the volunteers remained motivated partly due to changes in the volunteers' reasons to quit: some reasons were no longer applicable, new reasons emerged, and other reasons resulted in quitting.

Reasons that were no longer applicable included those that were resolved in an information session (i.e., reasons related to insurance) or by co-developing rules of conduct (i.e., to avoid accusations of theft). However, new reasons emerged during the project, such as a "need for more professional development," "lack of appreciation from the beneficiary," and "fear of overload due to the beneficiary's demands." The latter reason is well illustrated by the following comment: "There are many people that I can help, but you get a new person to help and that person only wants to be helped by me and does not want another volunteer and is afraid to lose me. That's a problem, because I have to do a lot of visits and they do not want to let me go either." (Woman, 68 years, FG4)

The third possibility during the project was to quit volunteering with the project. Even seemingly committed volunteers expressed potential reasons to quit volunteering, but they often found that these reasons dissipated over time or were no longer applicable. However, some reasons remained or emerged later during the project, which led people to quit volunteering. During the project, a total of two volunteers stopped volunteering, both due to the administration overload.

2c. Moderating factors of changes in reasons to quit volunteering

Reasons to quit volunteering were immediately noted by the organization and closely monitored, with the aim of responding to these issues as fully as possible in various ways. The different actions taken by the organization in order to tackle the reasons to quit were almost all the same as the actions related to the moderating factors of changes in motives for volunteering. Similarities were the monthly volunteer meetings, incentives, and having an attention officer. Besides these, volunteers also highlighted new moderating factors that removed their reasons to quit: information and training sessions, official registration, and attachment and bonding among volunteers.

Information and training sessions were sessions organized by the organization on a specific topic such as insurance or dementia. During these sessions, the volunteers were able to ask questions and receive tips. Volunteers experienced these sessions as educational and as an opportunity to have their volunteering acknowledged.

The *official registration* of beneficiaries was crucial for the volunteers, mainly because the beneficiary is consequently insured: "They must be a member first so that we know who that person is and that that person is insured… if there is a conflict one day, that person [the beneficiary] can negotiate and [one] knows who that person is." (Woman, 66 years, FG2)

The volunteers also revealed that their intentions to quit increasingly shifted into the background because of the *attachment and bonding* they developed with fellow volunteers: "We must do everything in our power to keep the volunteers. We have a good group and we do not want to lose any." (Woman, 40 years, FG4)

In addition, respondents reported that the project was successful and that they felt that it supported community wellbeing.

Finally, individual context may also influence volunteers' decisions to quit. Changes in one's personal

context, such as time constraints, may occur, which is beyond the control of the organization.

Discussion

The study examined factors associated with volunteer motives, retention, and turnover in a time bank that focused on community care services in Belgium. Using a longitudinal qualitative research design, the study detected issues faced by time banks and their volunteers, and extends the limited bodies of literature on time bank volunteers, vulnerable volunteers, and volunteers in general. A key finding is that the complexity of retaining volunteers stems from the fact that although initial volunteering motives are clearly defined, other contextual factors (such as relationships with other volunteers and organizational structure) influence the initial motives and can result in turnover. This dynamicity is a constant challenge for organizations working with volunteers. A second key finding is that earning time credits did not appear to be a motive for continuing to volunteer but only for starting to volunteer.

Two major themes emerged from the focus groups. The first theme pertains to older adults' motives for volunteering with a time bank. We used previous theorizing involving the classification of Collom (2011) as the basis for our analysis and we expanded on this theorizing to incorporate important distinctions in different motives for volunteering with time banks involving care services. Regarding economic motives, our results are in contrast with the research of Collom (2011), who discovered that people were mainly motivated to join a time bank for economic reasons. In our study, few people started volunteering for economic purposes. In their descriptions of economic motives for volunteering, the volunteers stated that earning time credits attracted them to start volunteering but this motive shifted into the background during the project. Hence, this motive does not appear to help to retain volunteers. In addition, the particular nature of the time bank influenced the volunteers' motives. Most volunteers were motivated by previous experiences, such as being a care provider (altruistic motive), which consequently made them more inclined to believe in the necessity of the project (Schmidt et al. 2016). Hence, the volunteers were more likely to have altruistic and social

motives (Clary et al. 1998).

The second theme, i.e., reasons to quit, appears to be dynamic and distinct from the initial motives for volunteering (Willems et al. 2012). Previous research has suggested that the volunteering context appears to continually interact with a volunteer's motives and plays a crucial role in retention and turnover (Stephens et al. 2015). In the present study, the volunteers indicated that organizational support (involving co-production, volunteer meetings, incentives, and an attention officer) was key to staying motivated. The context-specific solutions used to address the volunteers' needs increased their commitment to the project. In particular, co-production appeared to be crucial. Co-production is an asset-based approach that rewards contributions and also involves empowering volunteers (Cahn 2004; Marks 2009). Consequently, the volunteers were strongly included in the decision-making processes, which appears to be essential to volunteer retention (O'Meara et al. 2012). Both motivational and contextual aspects are part of the dynamic characteristics of volunteering (Butrica et al. 2009; Haski-Leventhal and Bargal 2008), and they both need to be taken into account by volunteer organizations (Hartenian 2007).

Regarding retaining time bank volunteers, previous results corroborate our findings on the importance of organizational support (Tang et al. 2010a). During volunteering, mutuality and reciprocity are clearly linked to continued volunteering (Allen et al. 2016; Ormsby et al. 2010). For instance, fellow volunteers have an influence on whether a volunteer stays or leaves an organization (see previous results and the results in the present study on attachment and bonding) (Haski-Leventhal and Bargal 2008; Linardi and McConnell 2011), as does organizational support, such as that provided by an attention officer (Tang et al. 2010a). Nevertheless, volunteers' wellbeing may be jeopardized by overburdening the volunteer with tasks or by contact with a beneficiary (van Dijk et al. 2013), which may lead to turnover.

When interpreting our findings, several limitations should be considered. First, a limitation associated with qualitative research is "research fatigue" (Clark 2008). However, the volunteers were very

willing to participate in the research because all the practical barriers (related to time, costs, and transport) were tackled by the organization, the volunteers' input was acknowledged (by involving them with the project decision-making and co-production), and the output of the interviews was passed on to the organization to address goal-driven issues. Second, we interviewed the professionals working for the organization, but chose to focus on the volunteers' perspectives. Third, we did not examine the project's economic outcomes. Future research should provide insight into the economic outcomes. Fourth, besides one male volunteer, all the volunteers were female. This may influence the motives to start, continue, and quit volunteering.

Conclusion

Evidence of successful initiatives such as those undertaken by NeighborhoodPension will buttress the recent changes in health and care policies towards promoting aging in place. However, the question remains as to whether the project will maintain sufficient financial resources to ensure the provision of organizational support to volunteers, in order to sustain a healthy volunteer base. Our results reveal that policymakers need to reinforce their policies on aging in place by recognizing the importance of informal support networks. Volunteers providing community care need organizational support to avoid overburdening them and subsequent turnover.

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TABLE 1. *Overview of participants' demographics in the four focus groups*

	Focus group 1 December 2013	Focus group 2 April 2014	Focus group 3 August 2014	Focus group 4 November 2014
N	5	6	5	13
R1: Woman, 73 years	X	X	X	X
R2: Woman, 64 years	X			X
R3: Woman, 62 years	X	X	X	X
R4: Woman, 40 years	X	X	X	X
R5: Man, 82 years	X	X		X
R6: Woman, 76 years		X		X
R7: Woman, 66 years		X	X	X
R8: Woman, 70 years			X	X
R9: Woman, 83 years				X
R10: Woman, 68 years				X
R11: Woman, 64 years				X
R12: Woman, 53 years				X
R13: Woman, 44 years				X

TABLE 2. *Topics covered in the four focus groups*

December 2013	April 2014	August 2014	November 2014
How did they learn about the project?	Experiences of the project • Main tasks involved in volunteering • Experience of the volunteer work within a time bank • Contacts with support-seeker, other volunteers, and project coordinator • Involvement in the project • View on the organization	Experiences of the project • Main tasks involved in time bank volunteering (changes) • Experience of the time bank volunteer work (changes) • Contacts with support-seeker, other volunteers, and project coordinator (changes) • Involvement in the project (changes) • View on the organization (changes)	Experiences of the project • Main tasks involved in time bank volunteering (changes) • Experience of the time bank volunteer work (changes) • Contacts with support-seeker, other volunteers, and project coordinator (evolution) • Involvement in the project (changes) • View on the organization (changes)
Added value of time bank • Estimation of unmet needs in the community • Estimation of personal added value	Added value of time bank • Added value for the community • Added value for the support-seeker • Added value for the volunteer	Added value of time bank • Added value for the community • Added value for the support-seeker • Added value for the volunteer	Added value of time project • Added value for the community • Added value for the support-seeker • Added value for the volunteer
Motivation to participate in time bank • Reasons for volunteering (influence of time credits) • Expectations of the project • Vision on own role in the project • Potential support needed	Motivation to participate in time bank • Reasons for volunteering (influence of time credits) • Reasons for participating in the project • Retention and acknowledgement • Possible barriers/doubts • Support needed	Motivation to participate in time bank • Reasons for volunteering (influence of time credits) • Reasons for participating in the project • Retention and acknowledgement • Possible barriers/doubts • Support needed	Motivation to participate in time bank • Reasons for volunteering (influence of time credits) • Reasons for participating in the project • Retention and acknowledgement • Possible barriers/doubts • Support needed
	Future expectations • Expectations of other volunteers • Expectations of the organization • View on the sustainability of the project	Future expectations • Expectations of other volunteers • Expectations of the organization • View on the sustainability of the project	Future expectations • Expectations of other volunteers • Expectations of the organization • View on the sustainability of the project