For love or money?
Need satisfaction as the road to qualitative volunteer motivation

Public defence to obtain the degree of
DOCTOR IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

of
Jemima Bidee

which will take place on
Thursday October 30, 2014 at 6 P.M.
promotiesaal building D
room D.2.01

Please confirm your attendance before 27/10/14
Jemima.Bidee@vub.ac.be

JURY
Prof. dr. Sara De Gieter
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology

Prof. dr. Koen Lamberts
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Department of Educational Sciences

Dr. Anja Van den Broeck
Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel/
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Dr. Rein De Cooman
Lernius Hogeschool Antwerpen/
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

PROMOTERS
Prof. dr. Roland Pepermans
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Department of Experimental and Applied Psychology

Prof. dr. Marc Jegers
Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Department of Applied Economics

How to reach the Campus Etterbeek?
Parijslaan 2, 1050 Brussel

Scope of the dissertation

Why do people engage voluntarily in activities aiming at the welfare of others with whom they are often not related? Is it an altruistic act, or do volunteers also gain personally from their participation? The current dissertation relies on Self-Determination Theory—a widely applied theory on the motivation of human beings—to distinguish between volunteers’ quality of motivation, its antecedents and its consequences. Using a traditional questionnaire study and a series of diary studies among junior and senior volunteers in organizations from the social profit and health sector, this work unravels the critical role of volunteers’ basic need satisfaction to qualitatively motivate them during their activities. In line with research in other social domains (including the world of sports, education and paid work), volunteers’ satisfaction of their basic needs for autonomy (i.e., being the origin or source of one’s behavior), competence (i.e., feeling effective in one’s ongoing interaction with the social environment), and relatedness (i.e., feeling connected with others) was positively linked to their experiences of fun and pleasure. Hence, it appears that altruism is not representing the whole story of volunteer motivation, but volunteers also want to enjoy activities. This can be done through situations that satisfy their needs. Moreover, all this also leads to volunteers putting more effort in their work. Thus, although people might differ in their reasons to become a volunteer, and may even have varying motives for participating in a voluntary activity, it is the responsibility of volunteer managers to foster the quality of their volunteers’ motivation, by stimulating the satisfaction of the volunteers’ basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Curriculum Vitae

Jemima Bidee was born in Leuven (Belgium) on the 28th of February 1985. In June 2009 she obtained her Master’s degree in Work and Organizational Psychology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. In August 2009 she got a position as an academic researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and was involved in a government project on the attractiveness of this working profession. In July 2011 she started her PhD research on the motivation of people in their volunteer work. During her academic career she was a teaching assistant for two courses on organizational psychology. She participated in several (inter)national seminars and was an active member of round table discussions in the practical field. Her work is being published in scientific, peer-reviewed journals and is presented at (inter)national meetings.

Reception:
You are cordially invited to the reception after the public defence in the convivium on the VUB-Campus.