

MPS 610 Professional Internship-Capstone

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The Colorado Vincentian Volunteer Program (CVV) as a model for Vincentian leadership in the 21st century, working with the generation of millennials in a faith-based nonprofit organization, and as a basis for an implementation model in the Austrian-German province of the Congregation of Mission (Vincentian Fathers).

To the volunteers and all who serve the poor and marginalized in the Colorado Vincentian
Volunteer program.

My sincere thanks go to father Tom Nelson (+ October 5, 2019) for his brotherly and friendly
advice, for his credible testimony as a Vincentian Father, and everything he has done in 25 years
for the CVV volunteers.

**“Each individual person is a unique and unrepeatable expression of God’s creative love;
that is why each of us must find our own path to God out of the particular circumstances of
our own individual life.”**

Tom Nelson

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Abstract

In the 21st century, there is a broad discussion in the private sector, the public sector, and the nonprofit sector about leadership and what makes a good leader (Tavanti, 2011). This discussion can be seen as a result of increasing mistrust in institutions and the role they play in our society, which also concerns the Catholic Church and many related organizations (Diamond, 2019; Hannan, 2018). In the public sector, this development is reflected in a growing alienation from the state and its tasks, and a growing distrust of an overflowing influence of a state that cannot be trusted (Mackintosh, 1992). The nonprofit sector in all its facets relies on the commitment of people who believe that areas that the public sector does not fulfil sufficiently can be undertaken by the nonprofit sector (Ramanath 2018; Urban Institute, 2016). Berger & Neuhaus (1977) stated that the nonprofit sector should encourage people to become involved in society and to empower them to do so. In addition to the dwindling trust in institutions, a growing individualism represents an additional challenge for all nonprofits organizations. Coleman (1988) and Skopol (2004) have pointed out how indispensable the construction of a civic society is, and that public life is in danger of becoming more and more ailing.

The Colorado Vincentian Volunteer (CVV) program is an exceptional example of Vincentian leadership in the 21st century. This paper is an evaluation of the CVV program and especially its impact and potential for replication. The methods used apply cross-sector analysis, consideration of the millennium, and collaboration with the board of directors. The result of the evaluation identifies some issues that could be improved. Taking into account the situation of the nonprofit sector in Germany and Austria, and the implementation of a similar program is possible.

Introduction

The Congregation of the Mission faces the challenge of making the charisma of its founder, Saint Vincent de Paul, understandable to people in the 21st century. In the 17th century, the Catholic Church in France was in bad condition due to the protracted life of the clergy. Many people turned away and sought refuge in new ecclesial movements. At that time, the trust in the institution of the Church could be regained among others because Saint Vincent de Paul had succeeded in organizing the ecclesiastical charity. The people felt again that the institution of the Church was there for them and shared their worries and needs (Pujo, 2003).

The same possibility is offered to the Catholic Church today when it puts the texts of the Vatican Council II back at the center of its real action, and its context of the social gospel (Diamond, 2019). Hannan (2018) has shown that it is of decisive importance for the Millennials that they recognize and feel that they are welcome in the Catholic Church and have a place there with their background. A vital document for this is the Pastoral Constitution on Churches in the Modern World, (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.d.). "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing human fails to find an echo in their hearts" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Preface, n.d.).

From the perspective of the Congregation for the Mission, the question arises how to respond to this situation and how to regain trust, and how the Vincentian institutions will in future be able to fulfill their mission with fewer Vincentian Fathers, Brothers and Daughters of Charity (Mousin, 2005; Udovic, 2001; Udovic, 2005). For the Vincentian family, consisting of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul,

and other lay organizations, the question is how to transmit Vincentian values in the 21st century (Tavanti, 2006).

From the beginning, all tribes of the Vincentian Family have relied on the Church's collaboration between lay and clergy (Pujo, 2003). To bring the gospel to all people and to take into account the poor and disadvantaged in particular, it is a unique challenge in every era to inspire people for this service. These issues are larger than any sector can resolve on its own. Therefore, the private sector, the nonprofit sector, and the public sector must prepare themselves to cooperate, and to work with a new generation of people who will design the future (Ng & Lyons, 2010).