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Leadership of Volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict

- An explorative study

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Abstract

Background: Major conflicts and disasters are affecting people around the world and create a huge need for help mitigating their impacts. A large number of international organizations are involved in this work and local volunteer workers form a core of the human resources body. When looking for research on leadership of volunteers there seem to be little work in this area.

Aim: The aim of the study is to describe and add to the knowledge of need for leadership during crises, catastrophe and conflict from the point of view of local volunteers and local volunteer leaders.

Method: Eight local volunteers and five local volunteer leaders working with the Red Cross in South Sudan have been interviewed. Qualitative methods have been used to explore the need for leadership, and data have been collected and analyzed with an inductive approach.

Results: Five important leadership factors were identified; 1) the importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs, 2) the complexity of being a volunteer *and* a leader, 3) the need for a working communication tree, 4) the importance of belonging and 5) the need for motivational work.

Discussion: The results show that needs belonging to the lower part of Maslow's pyramid of hierarchy of needs, i.e. physiological needs and needs related to safety, are highly relevant for volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict.

Conclusion: The results from this study create a base for a hypothesis about what can be important in leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict.

Keywords: leadership, local voluntary work, catastrophe

Svensk sammanfattning

Bakgrund: Allvarliga konflikter och katastrofer påverkar människor runt om i världen och skapar ett stort behov av hjälpinsatser för att minimera dess inverkan. Ett stort antal internationella organisationer är involverade i detta arbete och i organisationerna formar frivilliga från respektive land (lokala frivilliga) kärnan av de humanitära resurserna. När man söker efter forskning om ledarskap av frivilliga tycks det inte finnas mycket forskning gjord inom det här området.

Syfte: Syftet med studien är att beskriva hur lokala frivilliga och lokala frivilligledare som arbetar för Röda korset i Sydsudan upplever behovet av ledarskap under kris, katastrof och konflikt.

Metod: Åtta lokala frivilliga och fem lokala frivilligledare som arbetar för Röda korset i Sydsudan intervjuades. Kvalitativ metod användes för att utforska behovet av ledarskap och data inhämtades och analyserades med en induktiv ansats.

Resultat: Fem faktorer av betydelse vid ledarskap av frivilliga identifierades; 1) vikten av att uppfylla basala omvårdande behov, 2) komplexiteten i att vara en i gruppen *och* samtidigt ledare, 3) behovet av ett fungerande ”kommunikationsträd”, 4) vikten av en känsla av tillhörighet och 5) behovet av motivationsarbete.

Diskussion: Resultaten visar att behov som hör hemma i basen av Maslow's behovspyramid, och som handlar om fysiska behov och behov av säkerhet, är ytterst relevanta för frivilliga som arbetar i kris, katastrof och konflikt.

Slutsatser: Resultaten från den här studien skapar en grund för hypoteser om vad som kan vara av vikt i ledarskap av frivilliga som arbetar i kris, katastrof och konflikt.

Keywords: ledarskap, lokalt frivilligarbete, katastrof

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1 Background

Since the start of the new millennium, more than 35 major conflicts and some 2,500 disasters have affected billions of people around the world. This creates a huge need for help mitigating their impacts (Europeiska kommissionen, 2012). A large number of organizations are involved in this work, and within these organizations – whether global or local – unpaid local volunteer workers form a core of the human resources body. When looking for research on leadership of volunteers there seem to be little work in this area. The majority of studies found focus on voluntary work and do not look into the perspective of leadership. The most relevant research in this area is by Gerry Larsson and is about leadership under stress and in crises, catastrophe and conflict. Most research referred to in this work therefore is from this area. The purpose of this study is to look into what is needed in terms of the leadership of local volunteers when working in crises, catastrophe and conflict through the example of the work of the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC).

Something that is fundamentally different in leadership during crises, catastrophe and conflict compared to leadership under other circumstances is the process of decision making. In crises, catastrophe and conflict decision making to a larger extent needs to be intuitive and built on recognition (Larsson, 2010). There are some personality-related resources identified as important in leadership during high stress situations; *physiological capacity* and a *confident personality and values*. Other important factors are *education* and *training*. The personality-related resources also affect development of components like proficiency, social competence and the ability to cope with stress.

Studies have shown that good leadership in crises needs to provide a balance between the need for structure and routines on one hand and the need for freedom and space of action on the other (Larsson, 2010). Research on leadership of humanitarian relief work after the tsunami of 2004 supports these results because it shows that a balance between the need for structure and the need for freedom is important to take into account. Leaders who are trying to create structure at the expense of freedom of action delegate less and are more likely to wear themselves out. At the same time those who strive to create great

freedom of action bypass many links in the organizational chain (Alvenius et al., 2010).

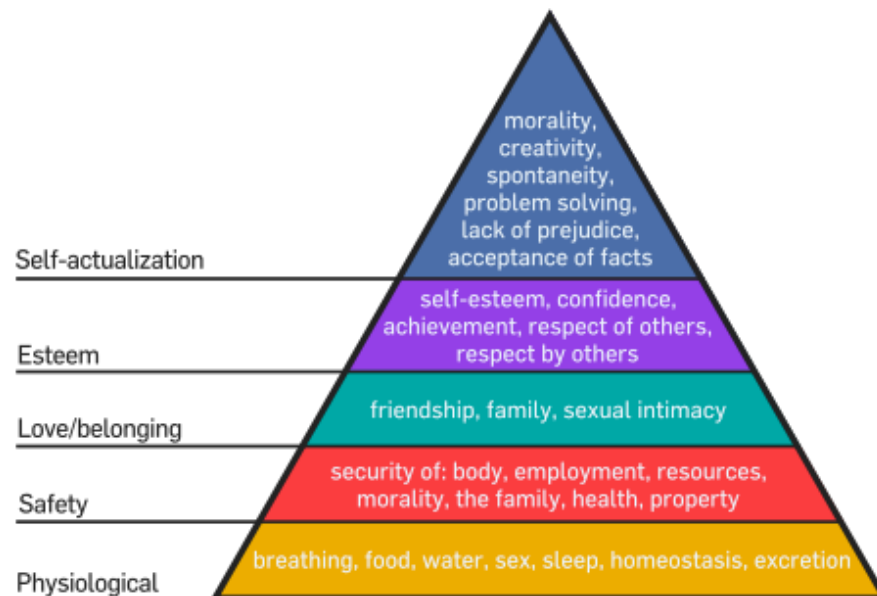
Transformational leadership is a leadership model characterized by inspiration and a visionary approach toward the followers. It is built on creating respect, confidence and desirable behaviors through inspiration and intellectual stimulation (Jackson, 2011). Studies have shown that a transformational leader acts as a role model by his/her nature, showing individual consideration, inspiration and motivation. Such leadership has been successful in the military (Larsson et al., 2012).

In a study about developing volunteer management, made by The Institute for Volunteering Research, motivation was found to be a key factor for volunteer leaders to take into account when managing volunteers. Other factors of importance are continuous support through communication and information systems. The results from this study show that training programs for the volunteer leaders need to focus on efficient management and needed competence (Gay, 2001).

Volunteers working in emergencies work long hours under stressful conditions and themselves sometimes become victims of disaster when they lose property or face the death of family members. Others may be affected emotionally by what they face which can make them vulnerable to depression or exhaustion (IFRC-Report, 2011). In an IFRC-Report from 2011 examples are reported from the Red Cross of how psychological support can be meaningful for the volunteers' mental health. The reports described how traumatic experiences sometimes stop volunteers from working and how sessions that give the volunteers an opportunity to talk about their thoughts, feelings and reactions can make a difference. Volunteers sometimes find a way of coping with their own loss by helping others (IFRC-Report, 2011).

From Maslow's hierarchy of needs McGregor has created a theory that shows how the hierarchy of motives is applicable to the higher needs of the human being. According to this theory the consequence of these higher needs failing to

be fulfilled would be increased hostility, passivity and irresponsibility. Burns further develops these thoughts on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and notes that on the higher levels in the hierarchy of needs, a leader should focus on motivational work (Bolman & Deal, 2012).



Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Wikipedia, 2013).

When developing a non profit organization and training the people working in it is necessary to understand the unique conditions of the situation. One perspective of developing competent workers in a non-profit organization is to look at the organization as the main environment for learning and development. The strategies connected to this perspective are collective competence and organizational learning (Welander, 2013).

1.1 The example of South Sudan

Searching for a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) interested in cooperating making this study about leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict the Red Cross showed interest in the subject as a part of developing their volunteer work and leadership of volunteers. The study context is voluntary work by the Red Cross in South Sudan. One of the protracted and complicated crises situations going on in the world is between Sudan and South Sudan. The official division of Sudan into two countries started under calm

circumstances. The Republic of South Sudan declared its independence in July 2011, officially separating itself from The Republic of Sudan, and becoming the 196th country in the world. Armed conflicts along the new border are on-going, however, and there are still negotiations concerning unresolved questions such as how to divide oil incomes and where to draw the border. Meanwhile, new crises have occurred that have caused heavily increased humanitarian needs in Sudan and South Sudan (Europeiska kommissionen, 2012). In July 2011 The Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), working in the area of South Sudan, transformed itself into a new National Society – the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC). The SSRC is a humanitarian relief organization working in peace and conflict in accordance with the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles. SSRC has its headquarters in Juba and ten branches are located in each of the ten states. The major areas that the SSRC programs cover are Emergency Preparedness and Response, Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction, Tracing, First Aid, HIV/AIDS, WatSan Hygiene Promotion (HP), Community Based Health First Aid and Emergency Health. SSRC has faced difficulties in the last two years associated with operating in an environment where human-made and natural disasters tremendously affect the life of the South Sudanese population. The difficulties are often associated, among other things, with limited financial and human resources as well as logistical challenges (SSRC-Report, 2010-2012).

The volunteers working in SSRC are doing so on a voluntarily basis but within the structure of the Red Cross organization. The voluntary work is unpaid, only a compensation for food is given. Unemployment is high among the population and many of the volunteers are out of work. The ones that have a job are doing Red Cross voluntary work outside of working hours. The volunteers are people belonging to the local population and are led by local volunteer leaders. The volunteer leader is responsible for organizing the humanitarian relief programs and for leading the volunteer work in an acute situation. Organizational documents that guide the volunteers' and the volunteer leaders' work are the SSRC Volunteering Policy and Code of Conduct for Volunteers (SSRC-Policy, 2012, SSRC-Document, 2012). The Code of Conduct covers the areas of integrity and commitment, misconduct, disciplinary procedures and

implementation. It also clarifies that SSRC volunteers are recruited on the basis of their competence, integrity and commitment to their work and the mandate of the SSRC. The SSRC's Volunteering Policy expresses that its headquarters and all its branches are responsible for having a well-functioning volunteer management system to supervise, support and encourage volunteers.

1.2 Expectations of volunteer leaders

The practical guidelines for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies managing volunteers in emergency situations state that the volunteer leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that volunteers carry out their tasks safely and effectively
- Updating volunteers with new information
- Maintaining the well-being of the volunteers, in particular volunteer mental health
- Collecting information to report back to the National Society
- Thanking the volunteers at the end of the activity and collecting and passing on any volunteer feedback

The volunteer leader is one of the volunteers and is nominated and chosen by the group. The qualifications needed are the ability to speak English and Arabic, which is the local language, and the capability of leading a team. The organization expects the volunteer leader to coordinate an effective response and fast mobilization when volunteers are needed. The volunteer leader decides, together with the volunteers, what activities should be performed in the branch. The volunteer leader is also a "communication channel", a part of the communication tree, and reports to the employed dissemination officer. The practical guidelines for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies managing volunteers in emergency situations state that the leader of the volunteers should have training in volunteer management (IFRC-Report, 2012).

As background research the author, besides taking part of earlier studies, gathered as much information about the circumstances and factors of importance for the study as possible. Information about the Red Cross, SSRC volunteer work and the circumstances of South Sudan were collected from meetings with

people at the Red Cross, mail correspondence with people at SSRC and interviews with staff at SSRC and ICRC in South Sudan, documents about the Red Cross and SSRC and handbooks about the Red Cross volunteer work. The circumstances of South Sudan, cultural aspects and factors of importance in leadership of volunteer work were also discussed with researchers with experience from working in South Sudan. Information about the difficulties and factors of importance in leadership under circumstances of crises, catastrophe and conflict were discussed at a meeting with researcher Gerry Larsson. The aim of the study and the interview guides were discussed with the instructors, Gerry Larsson and people from the Red Cross.

Red Cross volunteer leaders working in crises, catastrophe and conflict today do not have access to leadership training or training in volunteer management to help them deal with the situations they face within their assignment. Identifying the need for leadership among the two groups of Red Cross volunteer workers in two South Sudanese cities increases the knowledge in this area. This facilitates the development of activities to give to the volunteer leaders in the organization and a stronger base from which they can perform their assignment. The Red Cross and SSRC will follow up the results from this study for future development of volunteer work and leadership of volunteers.

2 Aim

The aim of the study is to describe and add to the knowledge of need for leadership during crises, catastrophe and conflict from the point of view of local volunteers and local volunteer leaders (hereafter called volunteers and volunteer leaders) working with the Red Cross in South Sudan.

3 Method

The author of the study explored the need for leadership of Red Cross volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict in two cities in South Sudan and the time spent there was one week. Qualitative methods have been used to explore the need for leadership among volunteers and volunteer leaders. Data has been collected through focus group interviews according to Wibeck's methods (2010)

and analyzed and described with an inductive approach (Sohlberg, 2009) inspired by Graneheim and Lundman (2003).

3.1 Selection

The selection of the two cities participating in the study was out of convenience and made by SSRC. All the SSRC volunteer workers in these two cities were offered to participate in the study. The interviews were held in the Red Cross office in the two cities. In one of the cities a focus group interview was held with volunteers and another with volunteer leaders. In the second city one focus group interview was held with volunteers and a single interview with one volunteer leader. In the first city four volunteers and four volunteer leaders participated. In the other city four volunteers and the only volunteer leader working there participated. Both men and women participated and their ages ranged between 25 and 45. The participants were compensated with travel money.

Volunteers in the two cities were informed about the study and offered to participate through an information letter in which the purpose and procedure of the study were described (Appendix 1). They also received further information about the study right before they agreed to participate and the interviews began. They were informed that the participation was voluntary; that they could end the participation at any time and that the identity of the participants will not be revealed in the final material.

3.2 Data collection

Data were collected through semistructured focus group interviews and one single interview. This method was chosen for this study because it enabled the participants to answer at a greater length. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one-and-a-half hours and were recorded with an iPhone. An interpreter working as staff for the Red Cross was used during the interviews because some of the participants spoke English and some did not.

The interview guides are based on knowledge from previous studies, personal experiences from several years of work experience as a leader, dialogues with experts on the subject and discussions in the study group (Appendixes 2 and 3).

3.3 Analysis

Data have been analyzed with an inductive approach through Qualitative content analysis with text condensation and thematization inspired by Graneheim and Lundman (2003). In the analysis of the material structures and themes have been identified.

The material was transcribed literally and participants were numbered. The researcher read the transcribed interviews several times to get a sense of the text. Units of analysis were identified connected to the purpose of the study and these later became codes. The codes were categorized and themes describing different phenomena were identified (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). The themes were discussed with the instructors until consensus was reached. The quotes are presented as spoken.

Example:

Meaning Unit	Condensated Meaning Unit	Code	Category	Theme
<i>“If there is no water, they need refreshment, the team leader come to handle that.”</i>	<i>“they need refreshment”</i>	Refreshment supply	Fulfill basic needs	The importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important to take into account in any study. The researcher needs to strike a balance between finding a way to increase knowledge in the area of interest and taking the participants' integrity into account (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011). Ethical principles to take into consideration include: ensuring the participants are well informed, that they agree to

participate according to the information given to them and that the requirements of confidentiality are maintained.

The participants in this study were informed about the purpose of the study and the procedure through an information letter, which told them that their identity would not be revealed in the final material and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. Before the interviews started the participants were informed of these guidelines one more time and they agreed to participate.

4 Results

The results are presented as factors important from the view of volunteers and from the view of volunteer leaders, as needed from themselves and from the organisation. Finally factors important in the leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict from all the material are presented to answer to the higher purpose of the study. When the volunteers and the volunteer leaders use the phrase team leader they refer to the volunteer leader.

4.1 Needs from leadership from the volunteers' point of view

The following seven themes on what was needed from leadership were identified from the volunteer's point of view: 1) basic and nurturing needs, 2) information and communication, 3) need for the leader to take administrative responsibility, 4) need for management, 5) feedback and support, 6) need for a knowledgeable leader, 7) "consensus leadership" and hierarchy.

4.1.1 Basic and nurturing needs

The theme of basic and nurturing needs includes the need for leadership to fulfill basic needs important for survival. This theme was predominant in the interviews and is strongly connected to the circumstances where the volunteers work. It stands out clearly in the analysis of data from interviews with volunteers. In this category the need for the leader's help getting water stands out strongest. One volunteer formulated it like this:

“...the volunteers need from the volunteer leader for them to go to depart for the refreshments.”

It is the leader's role to; if possible, fulfill needs for water and food for the volunteers. Leadership is required ensure work breaks and the limit working hours. The volunteer leader's role is to manage the volunteers' need for a break and to tell them when to go home. Examples of quotes are:

“Sometimes if the work is too much the volunteer leader say ‘Go home to rest’”

“The task is to supervise the volunteers work. Who works well, who's tired, and also sometimes they will tell the volunteers to take a rest for a while if the volunteer is tired.”

A task connected to survival is the volunteer leader's responsibility to protect the volunteers from danger if needed. One of the volunteers formulated the need like this:

“If a volunteer has been taken the leader is responsible to take this person free.”

4.1.2 Information and communication

Another important function of leadership concerns questions about information and communication. The volunteer leaders must form a communication “pipe line” to the media. The volunteer leader is the only one who can talk to the media, who knows what to say and what information to give. One volunteer expressed it like this:

“The person from the media, when they come to us we have to extend this information to the team leader so that this person can give the right information to the media.”

The volunteer leader needs to give clear and explicit guidance during missions. One example of how this is expressed is the following:

“The team leader has to provide better communication for the volunteers. This system is important for the volunteers to know what they are supposed to be doing, when and how.”

Another communication function that is ascribed to the volunteer leader is good communication with the organization. The expression “communication tree” is used to describe the communication within the organization and the volunteer leader’s role in this tree is vital.

“To me it is important for the team leader to observe the personnel communication tree. What I mean – in the communication system the team leader affects the volunteers. The team leader units are headed by the team leader. The communication tree has to be effective and never stop.”

4.1.3 Need for the leader to take administrative responsibility

The volunteer leader is responsible for administration. An example of an administrative task is handling the finances, which is the strict responsibility of the volunteer leader. Handling the finances mostly concerns distributing incoming money. A quote visualizing this is:

“The financing or the inputs from the society and The Red Cross are strictly monitored by the team leader.”

Other administrative tasks included in the volunteer leaders’ responsibility are managing the programme’s activities and writing reports.

4.1.4 Need for management

An important role of the volunteer leader identified in the data is the responsibility for management of the volunteer work. The volunteer leaders need to coordinate the activities and distribute tasks and responsibilities. One of the volunteers formulated it like this:

“The important is, the team leader should distribute the task, who to do what, what everyone in the group should do.”

He or she may also need to monitor the Red Cross program activities. This person is responsible for setting the direction of the work and analyzing whether an idea coming from the volunteers is a bad or a good idea. The need for the leader to coordinate the tasks and set the direction is described like this by one of the volunteers:

“He coordinate the activities and move things in the right direction.”

4.1.5 Feedback and support

Another important leadership area concerns feedback and support. Volunteers need support from the volunteer leader. Cohesion and encouragement from the leader are necessary:

“To say thank you for their time, that’s a good leader.”

4.1.6 Need for a knowledgeable leader

An important aspect of the leadership of volunteers found in the material concerns the volunteer leader’s knowledge about leadership itself. Volunteers are concerned about leadership issues and request this kind of qualification. One statement reads:

“So a leader must be someone who is knowledgeable, he must bear the quality of leadership.”

4.1.7 “Consensus leadership” and hierarchy

Volunteers refer in the interviews to the dynamic of leadership, that is the complexity between hierarchy and democracy in decision making. This affects all the themes as “consensus leadership” and hierarchy. The concept of “consensus leadership” occurs in the data several times. The volunteers described the concept as the democratic parameters in the process of decision making, the importance of everyone being heard, rather than seeking consensus

in decision making. One of the volunteers formulated the need for the consensus kind of leadership like this:

“I expect to get consensus kind of leading from the team leader so that he can bring us all together and observe consensus.”

The importance of the volunteer leader being “one of them” was also pointed out in the material as was the need for the leader to be there at all times. One of the volunteers said:

“The volunteer leader is good in his leadership because he is also like us.”

At the same time hierarchy defined a difference in the roles of the volunteer and the volunteer leader and was respected.

“I think we need our leader because here we work in hierarchy. We respect each other’s positions.”

The material also clarified that the volunteer leader is responsible for the group and the work and is the one who makes the decisions.

“It is the person responsible, who is responsible and in control of the group. Because everyone cannot make decisions.”

4.2 Leadership from volunteer leaders’ point of view

The following six themes of importance were identified from the volunteer leaders’ point of view; 1) basic and nurturing needs, 2) information and communication, 3) need for management, 4) motivational work and support, 5) strategic work, 6) “consensus leadership” and cooperation.

4.2.1 Basic and nurturing needs

The theme of need of basic and nurturing needs can be found in data from interviews with the volunteer leaders as well. Here statements about the need for

the volunteer leader to provide water is repeated but from the view of the volunteer leader. One volunteer leader says:

“If there is no water, they need refreshment, the team leader come to handle that.”

The volunteer leader considers it a responsibility to go to get water and feel frustrated when he or she cannot provide it to meet the needs of the volunteers. The volunteer leaders connect their role as a leader with the function of fulfilling the volunteers’ needs. This is expressed like this by one of the volunteers:

“...if maybe volunteers ask for water and water is not there. So at least you know it will give him a confusion a lot of this time... He takes time to go ask for the money, so he is not given, so this brings some hard time to him.”

Interviews with the volunteer leaders express the important function of the leader helping the volunteers if they get wounded. The volunteer leader needs to take the volunteers to hospital to make sure they get proper care. One volunteer leader formulated it like this:

“The support that he can do as a volunteer leader, he will take the volunteer to hospital for treatment.”

4.2.2 Information and communication

The importance of the volunteer leaders is expressed in different ways in the area of information and communication. One dimension of this is the function of the leader as passing along information and acting as the mouthpiece for the “communication tree” of the organization. The volunteer leader passes on information about the volunteers and plans for working programs after discussing these in the group of volunteers. Volunteer leaders describe this in following quotes:

“Leadership is very important because when you have a leader, and you are leading a certain group, you will always listen to their affairs and then present it to the highest authority.”

“As a volunteer leader you will be responsible in the way that if something happens to the volunteers you are responsible to report to the director... To give all the information about what happens with the volunteers to the director.”

The data show difficulties in communicating with the volunteers when the volunteers are spread out at different operations and are hard to reach. This makes it difficult to give and to get the information needed for good leadership.

The quality of communication with the volunteers is important because it forms the basis of confidence and trust in leadership. One volunteer leader stated the following concerning the role of communication in building confidence:

“...for me to communicate so that everybody think ‘The team leader knows’.”

4.2.3 Need for management

Volunteers working in different projects spread out in different places generate management difficulties. The volunteer leaders coordinate work and tasks in different projects. They describe the difficulties coordinating different projects at the same time, especially when there is no system of knowing where the volunteers are and who is working. This is especially hard when an unexpected incident happens that requires mobilization and action. The lack of transport makes the mobilization more difficult. One of the volunteer leaders formulates the difficulties connected to the leader’s responsibility of management like this:

“As a team leader you don’t know how many people are around, who is within, who is not within. But we would like if we could have this kind of information.”

4.2.4 Motivational work and support

The dimension of leadership concerning motivation, encouragement and support stands out as an important theme in data from interviews with volunteer leaders. There are different strategies and factors that motivate the volunteers. The volunteer leaders have no theoretical knowledge or guidelines to use in their motivational work but are making up strategies as they go along. They describe the sometimes difficult task of gathering the volunteers when they are needed.

Strategies of motivating volunteers are made up as they go along. One volunteer leader describes his strategy like this:

“I am now using my own policies to motivate the volunteers. If there is a call direct from the office the volunteer will not come because the management is not good like I said before. I use a different policy now for how to bring the volunteers together.”

The volunteer leaders support the volunteers by talking about problems that they have which motivates them to keep on working. One volunteer leader formulates the motivational work and support like this:

“When some of our members go away from us we always call them together to share our own problems. We find the solutions and remain as volunteers.”

Volunteer leaders interviews describe how the leader plays an important role in group cohesion - how the group of volunteers works as a team. One volunteer leader describes the importance of group cohesion like this:

“He is motivating the volunteers when there is a task to do so they join together, include the volunteers – they do the task together. So that’s how he motivates the volunteers, to work together.”

Another motivational factor connected to leadership has to do with what the volunteer leader and the group do to support a volunteer if something happens to a member of his or her family.

“Yeah like maybe one of the volunteers, maybe if I’m a volunteer then I lost someone in my family then they will come together and think what they can do to for that person, so that together they help that family of that person, so that together help that citizen. That way volunteers will be motivated, will be happy.”

Volunteer leaders wish for activities to keep the volunteers active that work as a motivating factor. The volunteer leaders describe how they support the volunteers through encouragement and advice when there is nothing else to give them as motivation. Volunteer leaders express frustration about how little support they get when they need help in the field. One volunteer leaders frustration is formulated like this:

“But what will happen during the occasion like when they go to the field or to the public riots so if there is water given to them? This is the only thing that they will get but like in a case maybe a volunteer has some problem and needs to ask for help and there is no support.”

4.2.5 Strategic work

In the material from interviews with the volunteer leaders some elements described are categorized under the theme “doing strategic work”. Volunteer leaders describe things that they need that have some strategic impact on the volunteer work. Examples are linked to an increased knowledge of leadership and the development of money-generating activities to keep volunteers active. Coming up with money-generating activities to keep the volunteers active, which the volunteer leaders propose, also belongs in the category of strategic work because the volunteer leaders can have the resources ready when they are needed. At the same time the volunteers are motivated by generating money that can be used in their work in the field. The idea of money-generating activities as a motivational factor is expressed by one of the volunteer leaders like this:

“One of the strategies that I am thinking about to happen is like to start a farm... If they sell out, the money will be in the volunteers account where they can use it for volunteer activities. Like now they have a practice twice a week, so this thing they can use it for volunteers, so any activity the volunteers are carrying out that money can be used for that program. And in case maybe if a volunteer, one of the volunteers maybe dies, they can make a contribution for that money going to help that situation. So this kind of motivation he thinks to happen.”

4.2.6 “Consensus leadership” and cooperation

The term “consensus leadership” was used by the volunteers to describe how everyone in the group gets to voice an opinion and is listened to before the leader makes a decision. In the material from interviews with the volunteer leaders dimensions are found of leadership like good listening and good cooperation. This is how it is described by one of the volunteer leaders:

“The good thing I have seen in my leadership is that there is good cooperation, they understand themselves the volunteers, there is always cooperation, good cooperation.”

The role of leadership involves listening to what everyone in the group has to say and passing on the information about the will of the group. It is important to make sure that there is cohesion and good cooperation in the group of volunteers. One volunteer leader formulates it like this:

“... all the plans the group feels like to do will first be discussed then the leader will present it to the higher authority.”

4.3 Volunteer leaders’ need for leadership from the organization

Five themes defining needs of leadership from the organization were identified from the volunteers and the volunteer leaders’ point of view: 1) basic and nurturing needs, 2) strategic work from the organization, 3) support from the organization, 4) communication, 5) confidence in and sense of belonging to the mother organization.

4.3.1 Basic and nurturing needs

Some of the themes from data collected during the interviews with the volunteer leaders are repeated under this heading where things connected to leadership that are needed from the organization are described. One of these themes is called basic and nurturing needs. These have to do with transport of volunteers, care for wounded volunteers and rescue of volunteers when needed. The

question of transport is repeated in data from interviews with both volunteers and volunteer leaders and seems to be an important subject and something that has been asked for earlier. Need for transport for the volunteers is the thing that stands out the most in data connected to the needs of leadership from the organization. One of the volunteer leaders describes this need:

“The volunteers, they need their own transport. They pay for their own transport. This is affecting them emotionally.”

When it comes to matters of security it the organization needs to take action when a volunteer is wounded and the organization makes sure that the volunteers are secure when there has been an accident. Quotes from the volunteer leaders describe this:

“There was one that was hit by a car that becomes paralyzed but no proper care for her from the management. Nothing was done for that person.”

“Like in terms of an accident happens to a volunteer it’s good enough for the staff of Red Cross to struggle for that case because maybe two minutes after the accident happens so maybe that person should be secured and take care of that person.”

4.3.2 Strategic work from the organization

Strategic work under this heading includes areas that the volunteer leaders find would be strategically good for the leadership of the volunteers. A theme that is repeated in this area concerns creating activities to keep the volunteers active. One volunteer leader says:

“We have a hope that one day the Red Cross will create for us activities that will keep us around, maybe give us some small project to keep us volunteers active.”

Another concern is creating a system that makes it easy to keep track of the volunteers, to know who is working and who is not, and where they are. This would make the management of volunteers much easier for the volunteer

leaders. There is also a need for a coordination system where there are some volunteers on standby, always ready to work. These requests are formulated like this:

“...if we would have a meeting updating where everybody is, we have this number of people active, you can call people. But we don’t have this kind of information. As a team leader you don’t know how many people are around, who is within, who is not within. But we would like if we could have this kind of information.”

“We prefer there should be a coordination where there should be a lot of people standby so you as a team leader know who is not going to be there.”

The volunteers and the volunteer leaders need increased knowledge. Volunteer leaders express the need for leadership skills; how to lead, how to motivate, how to talk to a group and how to handle a situation. Volunteer leaders also need administrative skills such as how to write a report. The need for leadership skills is described like this:

“Handle the situation properly with some knowledge. Need the management to give them knowledge on how to communicate, how to lead the group.”

For the volunteers, as well as for themselves, the volunteer leaders feel a need for knowledge related to field work coming up in the future. There are also ideas of exchange programs with volunteers from other parts of the country or other countries that both volunteers and volunteer leaders express and are enthusiastic about.

“There should be also like some volunteers in other places so they should go and analyze what is the challenge the volunteers are facing there.”

4.3.3 Support from the organization

Leadership need support from the organization, especially in difficult situations. They want support and encouragement for the volunteers from the management

of the organization, for example when a volunteer has been wounded, and also guide lines for the volunteer leaders if a volunteer dies. The need of support from the organization in difficult situations is described like this:

“But they should take time to go to hospital and to call a meeting with the volunteers to give encouragement so this is some of the things they expect to happen.”

4.3.4 Communication

Leadership needs communication from the organization. Communication has to do with the management listening to the volunteers. The quotes reflects a desire from the volunteers to be listened to and to have the management care about what they say. This wish is demonstrated in the following quote:

“Management don't listen to volunteers so there is no good response to their complaints so maybe they don't care.”

4.3.5 Confidence in, and a sense of belonging to, the mother organization

This theme is specific for the need for leadership from the organization and concerns areas that have to do with a feeling of respect for the volunteers, transparency of leadership/the organization and the volunteers sense of belonging to the organization. The words “there is no respect for the volunteers” stand out in the material from the interviews both with volunteers and volunteer leaders, they are many times associated with lack of the means for transport. There perhaps the volunteers have been given a vehicle for transport which has later been taken away, used by the staff of the organization. This provokes a feeling of lack of respect for the volunteers and the volunteers work.

“You know from 2010 there is always an empty promise to them that the volunteers should have a bicycle, I mean motorcycle, but this thing has not happened so there is always empty promises so this thing of transportation is really a great challenge.”

This lack of respect is expressed in relation to the actions of the organization when a volunteer dies. The volunteer leaders believe that the organization should notify them when a volunteer dies, to proclaim what that volunteer has done for the organization and to do something to remember him or her by. The frustration over the things that makes the volunteers and the volunteer leaders feel a lack of respect from the management is expressed in the following quotes:

The volunteer leaders spoke of transparency of leadership from the organization, an issue connected to confidence and trust. The volunteer leaders emphasize the importance of transparency of the organizations leadership and of their own leadership, and express the sometimes occurring embarrassment for lack of transparency in the organization. One volunteer leader formulates the importance of transparency like this:

“But if there is transparency, you say ‘Now we are called for duty, the duty is in this place. This is our budget, how are we going to spend it?’ Then all people come together. But when you use your own ideas, without consulting the team, it makes people lose their hope because there is no transparency.”

A subject that has to do with both transparency and a sense of belonging to the organization concerns volunteers’ or volunteer leaders’ desire to visit the office every once in a while to be updated and to give them a sense of cohesion.

“The communication channel is not good, what they are expecting is for the volunteers or the volunteer leader to come to the office to see what is going on.”

4.4 The need for leadership gathered from all of the material

Finally the following five themes defining needs of leadership were identified from all the material as important in leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. They are presented here to answer to the higher purpose of the study: 1) the importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs, 2) the complexity of being a volunteer and a leader, 3) the need for a working

communication tree, 4) the importance of belonging and 5) the need for motivational work.

4.4.1 The importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs

The theme of the importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs recurs because it stands out as a dominant area throughout the whole material. Protection in dangerous situations and water supply stand out as the most important factors to be provided by leadership.

“...the volunteers need from the volunteer leader for them to go to depart for the refreshments.”

4.4.2 The complexity of being a volunteer and a leader

This theme highlights the complexity of the volunteer leader's role of being a member of the group of volunteers and at the same time leader of the group. The volunteers define the volunteer leader's status as “one of them” as a strength in volunteer leadership.

“The volunteer leader is good in his leadership because he is also like us.”

At the same time the expectations of the volunteer leader - to make all the decisions, to communicate information to the media and between the volunteers and the organization, to coordinate work and look after the volunteers - create a demanding complexity in the role.

“It is the person responsible, who is responsible and in control of the group. Because everyone cannot make decisions.”

“The person from the media, when they come to us we have to extend this information to the team leader so that this person can give the right information to the media.”

4.4.3 The need for a working communication tree

The importance of working communication that functions well is a theme of importance throughout the whole material. The volunteer leader has an important job in the communication tree, passing on information about the volunteers, planning work programs and communicating them to management of the organization after discussing them in the group of volunteers. The importance of communication coming from the volunteer leader that functions well towards the volunteers makes for clear and explicit guidance during missions: what the volunteers are supposed to be doing, when and how. A dimension of communication as a means of leadership is also pointed out in the material when it becomes clear that the quality of communication with the volunteers is important as it forms the basis of confidence and trust in leadership. One volunteer leader empathized the role of communication in building confidence:

“...for me to communicate so that everybody thinks ‘The team leader knows’.”

The volunteer leaders express the need for increased knowledge, for skills in how to communicate with a group and for knowledge in how to write a report.

The analysis of data shows difficulties in communicating with the volunteers when the volunteers are spread out at different operations and are hard to reach. This makes it difficult to give and to get information needed for good leadership. The volunteer leaders function as a communication “pipeline” to the media. The volunteer leader is the only one who can talk to the media, who knows what to say and which information to give. This need is formulated by one of the volunteers:

“The person from the media, when they come to us we have to extend this information to the team leader so that this person can give the right information to the media.”

4.4.4 The importance of belonging

This theme connects to confidence and trust in leadership related to a sense of belonging to the mother organization. The words “respect for the volunteers”

recur and are often connected to lack of means of transport and empty promises of a vehicle.

“The volunteers they need their own transport. They pay for their own transport. This is affecting them emotionally.”

A lack of acknowledgment is reflected in the desire for support and encouragement for the volunteers and the volunteer leaders when someone is wounded and goes to hospital or even dies.

“But they should take time to go to hospital and to call a meeting with the volunteers to give encouragement so this is some of the things they expect to happen.”

“...after the accident happens so maybe that person should be secured and take care of that person. If that person dies it also a memory so that they can remember that person.”

Another recurring word is “transparency” which symbolizes the need for a sense of belonging to the mother organization. A wish for transparency regarding what is going on in the organization and a need to be listened to are expressed.

“The communication channel is not good, what they are expecting is for the volunteers or the volunteer leader to come to the office to see what is going on.”

4.4.5 The need for motivational work

The importance of work that motivates the workers stands out as an important theme in data from all the material. There are different strategies and factors that motivate the volunteers in their work. It is sometimes difficult to gather the volunteers when they are needed in a situation. Volunteer leaders devise strategies to motivate volunteers that make this easier. The volunteer leaders express the need for increased knowledge in the area of motivational work.

The volunteer leaders support the volunteers by talking about problems they have and motivating them to keep on working as volunteers. One volunteer leader formulates the motivational work and support like this:

“When some of our members go away from us we always call them together to share our own problems. We find the solutions and remain as volunteers.”

A subject that stands out clearly as a motivational factor is the idea of keeping volunteers active and ready to work when needed. Another way of increasing knowledge and motivation is through the exchange of volunteers expressed in the following quote:

“There should be also like some volunteers in other places so they should go and analyze what is the challenge the volunteers are facing there.”

5 Discussion

The aim of the study was to describe and add to the knowledge of need for leadership during crises, catastrophe and conflict from the point of view of volunteers and volunteer leaders working with the Red Cross in South Sudan. This study started out with the purpose of looking at the need of leadership from the view of motivation and support, which from the researcher's point of view were likely to be important factors in leadership of crises, catastrophe and conflict. The analysis shows that these factors are important. Other, more unexpected factors included basic nurturing needs - for example the need of water and protection - and also need for an administrative function.

The analysis also shows that a successful parameter of leadership under these circumstances is that the volunteer leaders themselves are volunteers. The volunteer leader is part of the group that he/she is leading, which the volunteers and the volunteer leaders see as a strength.

The main things needed from the organization are acknowledgement of the volunteers and their work and a greater feeling of cohesion with the Red Cross

organization, as well as basic needs like means of transport and activities to keep the volunteers active.

Throughout the analysis five important factors of leadership were identified in the voluntary work: the importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs, the complexity of being a volunteer and a leader, the need for a working communication tree, the importance of belonging and the need for motivational work.

The theme of the importance of fulfilling basic and nurturing needs is about survival in a hard environment and what is needed from the leader to fulfill these needs. The results show that needs belonging to the lower part of Maslow's pyramid of the hierarchy of needs are highly relevant for volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict because they concern physiological needs and needs related to safety (Myers, 2013). The need for water, food and protection are important issues identified in the data, and leadership has a role of filling these needs. This means that leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict should focus not only on the higher levels of the pyramid, as Burns suggests, but also address their leadership to basic needs on the lower part of this hierarchy (Bolman & Deal, 2012).

The importance of belonging is a theme that concerns the volunteers' need to feel respected, acknowledged and appreciated so they can be confident about the management of the organization. Confidence and a sense of transparency contribute to an important sense of belonging to the mother organization. The volunteer workers are the backbone of the Red Cross organization, and the humanitarian relief work is based on their commitment and work effort. Data from this study show, however, that the volunteers and the volunteer leaders perceive a lack of respect and appreciation from the management of the SSRRC organization. One expression of this is the great disappointment concerning the lack of a means of transport and the perceived but absent promise of a vehicle. The volunteer leaders also request that the management visit volunteers in the hospital if they are wounded and to acknowledge the death of a volunteer to show the importance of what this person did for the Red Cross. A feeling of

appreciation among the volunteers could also create motivation and inspiration at work and a greater number of volunteer initiatives (Bolman & Deal, 2012). This could increase the sense of belonging to the mother organization.

Transparency is an important ingredient creating confidence in leadership, which was expressed on all levels in the data. Regular visits from the volunteer leaders in headquarters could increase the sense of volunteers belonging to the mother organization. A sense of belonging might also increase the feeling of pride in being a member of the organization, and a proud co-worker is a good ambassador for the organization.

The theme of “the complexity of being a volunteer and a leader” is about the balance the volunteer leader needs to strike between being one of the volunteers and being the leader of the group and the importance of integrating the two roles. Strength in this theme of leadership is defined as the volunteer leader’s participation and involvement in daily work. Decision making during crises, catastrophe and conflict needs to be built on recognition (Larsson, 2010); a volunteer leader working in the field along with the volunteers makes such recognition easier. At the same time, the expectations that the volunteer leader makes all the decisions and handles communication are high. This requires from the volunteer leader to move up and down on a vertical line when he/she alternately needs to be one of the volunteers and a leader with a helicopter perspective.

A balance for the volunteer leaders to take into account, which takes place on a more horizontal level, is related to structure and freedom in the leadership of volunteers. It is likely that a balance between structure and routines on one hand and freedom and space of action on the other is important for the delegation of work with maintenance of control (Larsson, 2010, Alvenius et al., 2010).

Transformational leadership shown to be successful in military leadership (Larsson et al. 2012) could also be assumed to be successful in leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. The volunteers and the volunteer leaders in this study possess a great responsibility in handling

situations and decision making. The Transformational leadership theory which focuses on making the individual grow and find confidence in decision making supported by the leader might be a model suitable for leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. Within this model the need for balance between being a volunteer and a leader on a vertical line and the need for balance between structure and freedom on a horizontal line could be fulfilled.

A volunteer leader is also a part of the “communication tree” in the organization. The part the volunteer leader plays in the communication tree is to pass on information between the volunteers and the management of the organization in a two-way direction. Today there is not a system in place for collecting information from the volunteers and passing it on to the organization, however convenient this could be. There is an urgent need for a structure and a system for communication with the volunteers working at a distance as continuous support through communication and information systems is an important factor in managing volunteers (Gay, 2001). The volunteer leader needs to be able to reach the volunteers, to get information about where they are and what is going on and to give them the information they need. There is also a need for a system for knowing which volunteers are active and which ones are working that specific day. A system for collecting information about communities - how many people live there, the current situation, how many pregnant women there are - would help the volunteer leader to quickly comprehend what is needed in a particular situation.

The volunteer leader needs to communicate with the volunteers, as a group and as individuals, in a way that is clear and understandable. Volunteer leaders wish for knowledge of how to communicate with a group. Another information need is knowledge of how to write a report. Writing reports is expected from management but is a task where volunteer leaders lack skills. Since factors identified to be important in leadership during high stress, besides personality resources, are to be educated and trained, these needs of knowledge and skills should be taken under consideration (Larsson, 2010).

The results of this study show the importance work that is motivating as important in the leadership of volunteers, a point that corresponds with previous studies (Gay, 2001). Motivating the volunteers in their work is a sometimes challenging part of the everyday life of a volunteer leader. Volunteer leaders express the need for increased knowledge of motivational factors. There are different strategies and important factors for motivating the volunteers in their work.

Many different aspects can function as motivational factors for volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. In line with earlier studies (IFRC-Report, 2007), data show that volunteers' participation in developing volunteer work is desirable and connected to motivation for the groups of volunteers studied. Two kinds of volunteer participation are examined in the Red Cross and the Red Crescent's report called "Taking Volunteers Seriously; Volunteer Participation in Programme Management and Decision-Making". The report shows that employed staff often manages national programs, whereas volunteers to a larger extent managed community programs. Involvement of volunteers in decision making is often low at a national level. However, many national societies report positive outcomes and effects on programs and volunteer encouragement from involving volunteers (IFRC-Report, 2007). Data also shows that group cohesion is a motivational factor that would most likely - given the right environment for volunteers' participation in developmental work - lead to increased development initiatives (Wheelan, 2012).

Several ideas about developmental work that come from volunteers and volunteer leaders include exchange programs for volunteers and money-generating activities to keep the volunteers active. Exchange of volunteers between different branches in South Sudan and between countries is suggested as an activity to develop knowledge and achieve inspiration from among the volunteers. Including income-generating activities in the voluntary work was an idea identified in the interviews with volunteers and volunteer leaders and described as a possible way of increasing motivation among the volunteers. It is suggested that it would keep the volunteers active and give the volunteer leaders

the resources of volunteers ready to work when needed. It would also keep the volunteers motivated by generating money that could be used in their field work.

Psychological support is a theme expected to have a stronger representation in data, because volunteers working in emergencies work long hours under stressful conditions and sometimes themselves become victims of disasters and may become emotionally affected (IFRC-Report, 2011). Mental health and psychological strain seem to be subjects not spoken of often in South Sudan. During the interviews, volunteers mentioned that the work can be emotionally difficult but that these feelings are put aside with an attitude of “work has to be done”. It can be assumed that the fact that mental health and psychological strain are not subjects spoken of is based on a cultural foundation, an assumption that is strengthened by the fact that there is a maximum of one psychiatrist working in the country. Some volunteer leaders have strategies for sharing thoughts and problems when a volunteer wants to quit the assignment, however, as shown in the material from interviews with the volunteer leaders.

According to the practical guidelines for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to manage volunteers in emergency situations, the volunteer leaders have a responsibility for “ensuring maintenance of volunteers’ well-being, in particular volunteer mental health” (IFRC-Report, 2012). This responsibility seems to be hard for the volunteer leaders in SSRC to achieve today; to be able to support the volunteers to ensure good mental health, the volunteer leaders will need to achieve some knowledge in this area. The volunteer leaders also request information and knowledge of what to do and how to support the volunteers if someone dies.

5.1 Methodological considerations

SSRC is a relatively new organization in a relatively new country. The organization was developing their voluntary work and managing documents at the time of the study. The time of the study may have affected the results in the way that the willingness of and interest in developing leadership of volunteers may have been strong. A disadvantage with interviews as a method of data collection is that the time-consuming method for the participants in the study

may have resulted in fewer participants. This may have caused a lower number of participants. The participants were volunteers and volunteer leaders who wanted to participate in the study, but it is also possible that some of the volunteers were told to come by their volunteer leaders. The interest in developing the leadership of volunteers was strong among the participants, however, and it is possible that the interest is not as strong among the volunteers and the volunteer leaders that did not choose to participate in the study. Spontaneous feedback from the participants after the interviews was that they were glad to have the possibility to participate in the study.

An interesting discovery when starting the interviews was the expectation among the participants that they were going to learn and to be told what is important in leadership. A possible explanation for these expectations is connected to the cultural context. The volunteers and the volunteer leaders are possibly used to being told what to do and not used to being asked what they think. Another possibility is that they had not received the letter with information about the study or had misunderstood/not understood the information as it was in English and not Arabic, and therefore were not correctly informed.

More experience in working with focus group interviews and working with an interpreter would have been desirable and a pilot study would have been good as preparation for the study. No observer was used during the interviews, which could have added interesting information about the dynamics in the room. Focus group interview was used as data collecting method so that the participants could discuss the subject as freely as possible without much influence from the interviewer. An interpreter was used during the interviews, which is a complicating factor. The researcher cannot be sure that the questions and answers are translated with an accurate meaning. The participants who spoke English also chose to do so; not speaking their mother tongue might have affected their ways of expression. It is also likely that cultural differences and the vocabulary used had an impact on the understanding of the questions asked (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). One example is the word “support” which seemed to be difficult to understand the way the researcher asked about it. This is

understandable because questions about support were often asked in a context where the meaning of the word was “psychological support”, a concept not spoken of in the cultural context of South Sudan. There is also a risk of interpretations made by the researcher based on a western preunderstanding. The main understanding of the questions asked and the answers seems to be sufficient because the material aligned well with the purpose of the study. The interview guides were also somewhat developed in the process as the understanding of the phenomena being studied increased. One strength of the data collection is that the author of the study was present during the interviews and could ask follow-up questions and adjust the interview guides.

The profound method of analysis reduces the risk of overlooking themes of importance in the data. The themes were repeated in the interviews and it is not likely that different themes would have occurred with more interviews. All the themes in the results are grounded in quotes and discussed with instructors and experts and within the study group. The researcher has a background about leadership in a western cultural context. An assumption from the researcher was that factors of support and motivational work were supposedly the main areas of importance in leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. The material shows, however, that different areas are highly important, and it also shows that the perception of support can have meanings different from those assumed by the researcher.

The results can be assumed to be transferable to leadership of volunteers working in other parts of South Sudan because the results from data collected in the two different branches were similar. The results from this study are highly relevant for SSRC because they indicate what is important in the leadership of volunteers from the volunteers’ and the volunteer leaders’ point of view. The results can be used for development of leadership of volunteers and for further research.

5.2 Practical relevance

The results show that the needs of leadership identified in this study move from the base to the top of Maslow’s pyramid describing the hierarchy of human

needs. Needs identified as belonging in the base of the pyramid have to do with physiological and safety needs and can be categorized as needs specific for leadership in crises, catastrophe and conflict. Needs identified as belonging to the higher levels of the pyramid have to do with a sense of development in the role of a volunteer and a feeling of being recognized and appreciated. These are more general needs for leaders to fulfill, not specific for situations of crises, catastrophe and conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2012).

Collected in the material are some concrete suggestions for developmental work that would make the volunteers feel active and motivated. A concrete structure and plan of action from the management is needed to bring these ideas to reality. One suggestion is an exchange with volunteers from different branches with similar programs to share experiences. Today different branches seem to be like isolated islands, and a helicopter view is needed to make connections between the branches. Exchange programs could result in more initiative from the volunteers concerning development of volunteer work in their own branches. Other ideas mentioned several times are those of income-generating activities to keep the volunteers active and ready to work at the same time as they generate money to use in the volunteer programs. To acknowledge the volunteers' ideas more possibly would contribute to their sense of belonging and appreciation.

The results also show that the volunteer leaders need knowledge about leadership in the areas of communication and administrative tasks connected to communication, motivational work and psychological support.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

The results from this study create a base of a hypothesis about what can be important in leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict. A suggestion for future research is to test these hypotheses of parameters of importance on other groups of volunteers in other countries working under similar circumstances. Future research could also test the results on leadership of volunteers not working in crises, catastrophe and conflict within the Red Cross to see which needs of leadership are transferable.

5.4 Afterword

Finally a few words need to be said about knowledge gained and pitfalls experienced from this study. Although being aware of great cultural differences, and preparing for it, it is of great importance for the interviewer to be responsive to misunderstandings caused by these differences. It is necessary for the researcher to do the interviews him/herself to be able to moderate the interview guide and adding clarifying questions if needed. This to make sure that the participants are answering the questions of purpose and that the vocabulary is not misunderstood. Focus group interview is not an easy method, especially not when an interpreter is used. Still it is a method that enables the participants to discuss a subject freely without much influence from the interviewer, which makes it suitable for discussing leadership of volunteers working in crises, catastrophe and conflict under circumstances like the ones in South Sudan.

Lastly I would like to thank the Red Cross for financing travel expenses for the researcher and the volunteers and making this study possible!

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Appendix 1

Invitation to participate in a focus group interview about volunteer leadership

My name is Malin Idar Wallin and I study Leadership and Organizational development at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. Leadership in crises, catastrophe and conflict is a territory that interests me and a few months ago I contacted The Red cross to discuss this subject. Now I am doing a study on leadership under these circumstances.

As a part of this study I will make focus group interviews with volunteers and volunteer leaders about the subject of leadership and what is important for leadership under circumstances of crises, catastrophe and conflict. Hopefully this study will help The Red cross organization develop structures and better conditions for leadership and create better support for volunteer leaders.

If you chose to participate in the focus group interview you will be a part of a group of 4 to 6 people who will discuss what is important about leadership and support needed in volunteer work. The interview will take about an hour and will be led by me as a moderator. The conversations will be recorded on tape so that I will be able to remember what has been said. Data will only be available to me and will be treated confidential. The material will be presented on a group level and no individual will be possible to identify. Your participation is voluntary and you can chose to withdraw from the study at any time.

The focus group interview will take place in February. Results from the study will be presented in a master thesis in June 2013.

If you have any questions about the study or group interviews don't hesitate to contact me!

Best regards
Malin Idar Wallin
mail address: wallinidar@gmail.com

Appendix 2

Interview guide for focus group interviews with volunteers

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to increase the knowledge about what is important in leadership of volunteers working with crises, catastrophe and conflict. We will spend the next hour talking about this subject.

The interview will be recorded to help me remember what is being said. My role is to introduce the subject and I want you to discuss the subject as freely as possible. It is okay to have different opinions. There is no right or wrong, I am interested in hearing your personal opinion.

We will be talking for about 1-1 ½ hour. Everything that is being said during the interview will be treated with secrecy and will only be available to me and my instructor at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden where I go to school. The results will be presented at a group level, unidentified at an individual level. Your participation is voluntary and you can end your participation at any time.

Is this ok with you? Ok, then we can start.

Opening question:

- Can you say your first name and tell me a little about why you wanted to participate in this study/what did you think when you heard you were coming here?

First I would like to know a little bit more about your work:

- What is the most common thing that you do at work?
- Is your volunteer leader with you when you do that? Do you have the same tasks or different?
- What is the reason you want to work as a volunteer for the Red cross?
- Do you know anyone working as a volunteer that has been killed, injured or experienced traumatic stress?
- What dangerous situations could you imagine working as a volunteer?
- What support do you get to handle this?
- When do you think your work is hard?
- Are you effected emotionally by this kind of job, is it hard emotionally? How?
- What can be done to make that part easier? Does your volunteer leader play a part in that?
- What does your leader do? What is the leaders task?

Key questions:

- What does the word “leadership” mean to you?
- In what way do you think the leader important in your work?
- When is it important that your leader is with you?

- What kind of support do you need in your work?
- Do you think a leader can support you at work? How?
- What do you think is working well when you think about leadership and your leader and what could be better?

More specific question if I think they are trying to answer socially desirable.

- An example – if it is not clear what to do - who makes the decisions?
- Tell me about a situation when you needed your leader, when was the leader a help for you?

Rounding up questions:

- What do you think is the most Important thing we have discussed today?
- Is there anything else you would like to ad?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 3

Interview guide for focus group interviews with volunteer leaders

Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to increase the knowledge about what is important in leadership of volunteers working with crises, catastrophe and conflict. We will spend the next hour talking about this subject.

The interview will be recorded to help me remember what is being said. My role is to introduce the subject and I want you to discuss the subject as freely as possible. It is okay to have different opinions. There is no right or wrong, I am interested in hearing your personal opinion.

We will be talking for about 1-1 ½ hour. Everything that is being said during the interview will be treated with secrecy and will only be available for me and my instructor at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden where I go to school. The results will be presented at a group level, unidentified at an individual level. Your participation is voluntary and you can terminate your participation at any time.

Is this ok with you? Ok, then we can start.

Opening question:

- Can you say your name and tell me a little about why you wanted to participate in this study/what did you think when you heard you were coming here?

First I would like to know a little bit more about your work:

- What is the most common thing that you do at work?
- Do you have the same tasks as the volunteers that you lead or different? How?
- Are you and your volunteers affected emotionally by this kind of job, is it hard emotionally? How?
- What can be done to make that part easier? Do you think that you as a leader play a part in that? How?

Key questions:

- What does the word “leadership” mean to you?
- In what way do you think that you as a leader is important?
- What do you think motivates volunteers working here?
- Can your leadership be a motivating factor in their work?
- In what way do you think people get the support they need in their work?
- Do you think that you as a leader support the people working as volunteers? How?
- What do you think is working well when you think about leadership and what do you find difficult?

More specific question if I think they are trying to answer socially desirable.

- An example – if it is not clear what to do - who makes the decisions?

The Red Cross organization

- When do you think that your work as a leader is hard?
- What do you need from The Red Cross to be able to strengthen the things that work well in your leadership and to minimize the difficulties
- Are there qualifications and support that you need from the organization to meet the needs from the volunteers? Which ones?

Rounding up questions:

- What do you think is the most Important thing we have discussed today?
- Is there anything else you would like to ad?

Thank you for your participation