

AN EXPLORATION OF THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the factors that influence the creation and maintenance of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). Semi-structured interviews were conducted and data was analyzed following the principles of Grounded Theory as outlined by Charmaz (2006). Seventeen individuals were selected based on their involvement in five LVOADs within FEMA's Region VIII. It was found that creation factors held a high degree of consistency LVOAD-to-LVOAD, but the maintenance factors suffered from a limited number of available LVOADs that progressed to the maintenance stage. Findings suggest communities require multiple hazard events, strong leadership, and a formal organizational structure to develop LVOADs and they are difficult to maintain. Throughout creation, LVOADs face a number of barriers including burnout, turnover, and turf issues. During maintenance, LVOADs attempted to counteract barriers by offering value with membership. This study concludes with implications for emergency management practice and the academic discipline.

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DEDICATION

To those who dedicate their lives to the advancement of a sustainable society

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community-Based Organization
COAD	Community Organization Active in Disaster
CPI	Consumer Price Index
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IA	Individual Assistance
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LTPC	Long-Term Planning Committee
LTRC	Long-Term Recovery Committee
LVOAD	Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster
NPO	Nonprofit Organization
NVOAD	National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDSU	North Dakota State University
PDD	Presidential Disaster Declaration
PA	Public Assistance
SVOAD	State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
UNC	Unmet Needs Committee
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
VOLAG	Volunteer Agency

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study will explore how local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOAD(s)) are created and maintained. A LVOAD is an organization that provides both a form and forum for communication, collaboration, and cooperation amongst organizations involved in the response to and recovery from disasters within a given community (National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster, n.d.). The members of these organizations are primarily nonprofit organizations (NPOs). This research will explore the following specific questions related to LVOADs:

1. What facilitates the creation of LVOADs?
2. What facilitates and hinders the maintenance of LVOADs?

The goal of this research is to develop an understanding of how these organizations are developed and maintained.

This chapter provides a brief background related to NPO roles in disasters and the conditions and events that led to the development of the LVOAD concept. In light of this background, the potential significance of this study for emergency management theory and practice are discussed.

Background

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) are the primary members of LVOADs. There are a variety of terms used to describe NPOs including voluntary agencies (VOLAGs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs), to name a few (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). Regardless of the term used to describe them, there are characteristics germane to these types of organizations. For instance, an organization must be incorporated under law to be considered a tax-exempt not-for-profit

(Sylves, 2008; Wolf, 1999). And, to achieve such status under the law, organizations must be self-governing, agree not to profit from the services they offer, and have an organizational mission directed at serving the public good in some way (Ott, 2001; Sylves, 2008; Wolf, 1999). NPOs are similar in that fulfillment of their mission involves one or more constituency groups (e.g., a board of directors, service recipients, volunteers, the public in the communities they serve) and all NPOs strive to meet their needs and interests (Ott, 2001; Wolf, 1999). NPO involvement in disasters is often grounded in their organizational mission and constituencies such as they define them.

NPOs have played a prominent role in the aftermath of disasters throughout the history of the United States. Early in the twentieth century, before government at any level accepted responsibility for addressing disaster-related needs, NPOs were providing valuable services to impacted communities (Kreps, 1990; Pipa, 2006; Rubin, 2007). Among the services that NPOs provide to individuals and households are basic necessities (e.g., food, water, clothing), temporary shelter, financial assistance, childcare, case management, mental health services, medical care, reunification services, donations management, volunteer coordination, debris removal, and rebuilding/reconstruction (ASPE, 2008; Fagnoni, 2006; Phillips & Jenkins, 2008; Smith, 2012). Thus, NPOs have been, and remain today, an integral and necessary component of disaster assistance in the United States (Smith, 2012).

Yet, throughout most of the history of their involvement in the aftermath of disasters, NPOs have operated independent of one another as they offer services after disaster (Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). And, for all the assistance they provide, NPO efforts to assist impacted communities after disaster have been stymied time and again by

problems stemming from a lack of coordination. As Smith (2012) stated, “when [NPOs] act alone, then, their contributions may be underused or may even have unintended consequences” (p. 145). Some of the issues associated with a failure to coordinate NPO efforts in the aftermath of disasters have included duplication of efforts, wasted resources, individuals and households left with unmet needs, and continued or exacerbated exposure of vulnerable populations to natural hazards (Smith, 2012). One or more mechanisms to coordinate the provision of NPO services in disaster-impacted communities has been needed for a long time, but relative to the history of their involvement in disasters, it is only recently that these organizations have begun to develop formal mechanisms to coordinate their efforts.

The Development of VOADs

Issues stemming from a lack of coordination amongst nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have for a long time limited NPO contributions in the aftermath of disasters (see for instance Lester’s (2000) review of the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, Barry’s (1997) discussion of the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, and McCullough’s (1968) discussion of the Johnstown Flood). Yet, while frustration had built within the NPO community over time, it was not until Hurricane Camille that the NPO community began to seriously pursue a means to coordinate their efforts. Hurricane Camille was a powerful and destructive hurricane that impacted a densely populated area along the Gulf Coast in 1969 (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d., Simpson, 1998). NPOs that responded to the disaster observed that their desire to help impacted communities was not realized to the extent it could have been due to coordination problems (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). Representatives from those

NPOs began to regularly meet to discuss their “respective activities, concerns, and frustrations so that duplication of effort could be minimized and [their efforts] made more efficient (sic)” (Sylves, 2008, p. 4). These meetings led to the creation of an organization known as National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Smith, 2011). NVOAD officially formed in 1970. The organization’s mission is to “serve as the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle - preparation, response, and recovery - to help disaster survivors and their communities” (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). NVOAD rallies around the goals of communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination, termed “the 4cs”, as the primary means, when achieved, of increasing efficiency and eliminating duplication of resources in times of disaster (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). It is important to note that, while the NVOAD website regularly references the “4cs,” they never provide a definition for any of the four words (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). To be clear, NVOAD does not manage disaster response and recovery efforts as an organization or on behalf of its member organizations; rather, it provides a forum pre-, during, and post-disaster for member organizations to work together so that their individual contributions to impacted communities can be maximized (Sylves, 2008). Additional benefits of membership in NVOAD include participation in joint planning through NVOAD committees and task forces, access to information (e.g., newsletters, research), leadership development opportunities, conferences, seminars, and training programs (Sylves, 2008).

It stands to reason that if all NPOs were able to work effectively through one national level organization, the potential for improved coordination would be high; however, all NPOs are not, and cannot be NVOAD members. NVOAD originally consisted of only seven national level NPO disaster relief organizations (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Haddow, Bullock, & Coppola, 2011; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). Since its inception, it has grown to include more than 50 national level member organizations (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). Yet, NPOs have to meet criteria related to their pre- and post-disaster involvement and capacity to be a member; and, due to these criteria, relatively few organizations qualify for membership. See Table 1 for criteria related to NVOAD membership as described on the NVOAD website (n.d.).

Table 1. Criteria for NVOAD membership (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.).

Tier One Member Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 separate responses within 3 years and • Active participation in 10 state VOADS and • Active participation in at least one National VOAD committee <p style="margin-left: 40px;">In addition, Tier One members must meet one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total organizational budget in excess of \$15 million Or • A total number of staff and volunteers in excess of 2,500 Or • Proven disaster experience of at least 15 years
Tier Two Member Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 separate responses within 3 years and • Active involvement in 5 state VOAD's and • Active participation in at least one National VOAD committee <p style="margin-left: 40px;">In addition, Tier Two members must meet one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total organizational budget of at least \$1 million or • A total number of staff and volunteers in excess of 300

In addition to the membership options stated in Table 1, NVOAD also has associate positions available for organizations that do not have disaster specific missions, as well as partnerships with private and governmental organizations (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). NVOAD actions are guided by their by-laws and decisions are made through a democratic majority voting process restricted to the directors (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, 2013). This voting process is carried out by the NVOAD leadership, which consists of four elected officers (chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer) and a board of directors (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, 2013). The officers and board members are either representatives of state/territorial VOAD or NVOAD member organizations (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). While the creation of NVOAD represented an advance in the coordination of NPO efforts after a disaster, one or more accessible coordination mechanisms were still needed.

In addition to the need for accessible coordination mechanisms, coordination was needed at other levels. The scope of NVOAD is national, as the name suggests; and, its members must, to some extent, have a national reach. While coordination of national level NPO efforts is certainly important, it is not adequate. Disasters are largely localized events that are handled primarily at the community level (Hy & Waugh, 1990; Sylves, 2008; Waugh, 2000). Within local contexts, small community-based NPOs or local chapters of larger regional or national NPOs have much to offer, but are also prone to some of the problems associated with a lack of coordination referred to previously (Pipa, 2006; Smith, 2012).

When the NVOAD model was adapted to and implemented at the local, regional and state levels beginning in the 1980s, the coordination gap for NPOs began to be addressed. Where implemented, the newly formed organizations mimicked NVOAD's mission, values, and structure (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). Currently, in addition to NVOAD, each of the states and territories in the United States has a State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SVOAD) (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). There is no data to suggest how many Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) exist to date. Both SVOAD and LVOAD are new and under-researched. As Gazley (2013) explains, this lack of research is perhaps due to "the youth of many statewide [VOADs], but also their decentralized and unregulated nature" (p. 4). Although the response and recovery literature sometimes mentions SVOADs and LVOADs when discussing NPO involvement in disaster (see for example: Haddow, Bullock, & Coppola, 2011; Phillips, 2009), these organizations are most often ignored entirely.

Conclusion

A basic assumption of emergency management is that the responsibility for managing disasters lies primarily at the local level. Effectively meeting this responsibility requires local resources to be coordinated pre-, during, and post-disaster. Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) provide a range of important resources to disaster impacted communities; and, Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) are intended to coordinate NPO efforts. Yet, despite their potentially important role, little is known about how LVOADs are created and maintained. This study addressed this gap and the following chapters explain how it did so.

Chapter Two reviews the literature that sensitize the researcher to the context in which LVOADs are needed and emerge; and, Chapter Three presents the research methods that were employed in this study. Chapter Four explores the factors that influence the creation of LVOADs and the barriers that stand in the way of LVOAD creation. Chapter Five presents the barriers LVOADs face once maintenance begins and the ways the LVOADs attempt to counteract these barriers. Chapter Six discusses the findings and implications for the creation and maintenance of future LVOADs, as well as a discussion of this study's limitations. Chapter Seven concludes this study with a discussion of the importance of this topic and the implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

No empirical research has explicitly examined the creation and maintenance of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). Thus, the following literature review is not intended to explain how this study relates to an existing body of work or to present an empirical foundation for this study's research design (Maxwell, 2005). Instead, consistent with the grounded theory methodological approach that this study will employ (Charmaz, 2006), this chapter reviews literature that sensitize the researcher to the context within which LVOADs are needed and emerge. The chapter begins with a discussion of the need for, and challenges associated with, a wide range of organizational involvement in the aftermath of disasters including nonprofit organizations (NPOs). The second section examines the disaster assistance framework in the United States and the critical role that NPOs play within it. The third section discusses how the nature of NPOs both necessitates coordination amongst them in the aftermath of disaster while at the same time making such coordination difficult.

A Brief Overview of Disaster Response

Scholars do not agree on all of the specific characteristics that define a disaster (see for example: Alexander, 2005; Britton, 2005; Cutter, 2005; Dombrowsky, 2005; Jigyasu, 2005; Perry, 2005; Quarantelli, 1998). Yet, they do agree on the notion that disasters are nonroutine, disruptive events (see for example: Auf der Heide, 1989; Fritz, 1961, Quarantelli, 1998); and, further, that due to their nonroutine, disruptive nature, the efforts of the organizations that are typically involved in the response to everyday emergencies and the typical response structures and processes they use are not sufficient to meeting disaster-related needs (see for example: Auf der Heide, 1989, Kreps &

Bosworth, 1994; Perry, 1991; Stallings, 2005). Although emergencies are also disruptive, the needs and impacts associated with these events allow first responder organizations, such as police, fire, and emergency medical service personnel, to manage the event in keeping with their previous training and experience, as tradition or local ordinance dictate, with little need for coordination among them, and with the help of little or no outside resources (Auf der Heide, 1989; Hoetmer, 1991). However, when faced with an increase in routine tasks and activities combined with the introduction of new, non-routine tasks and activities after disasters, outside help is required to meet disaster-related needs (Auf der Heide, 1989; Hoetmer, 1991). Outside help is intended to address the gap between what the impacted jurisdiction can do and what is needed; however, the extent to which outside help effectively and efficiently fills the gap varies with the ability of the impacted jurisdiction and assistance rendering entities to coordinate their efforts (Auf der Heide, 1989; Smith, 2011).

While coordination of inter-organizational efforts is needed, it is difficult to bring about in practice due to the variation amongst the entities that may be involved in any given disaster and their organizational differences. Help responding to a disaster may arrive at the request of impacted jurisdictions or converge unrequested on site (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980). Help can come in the form of information, material resources, money, volunteers, subject matter expertise, and/or of a range of services (Smith, 2011). And, the help may be provided by individuals, nonprofit organizations (NPOs), businesses, other local level governments, any number of domestic state and/or federal government agencies, and, sometimes, international governmental and/or nongovernmental organizations (Smith, 2011).

The entities that become involved in the aftermath of disasters have varying degrees of disaster experience (Auf der Heide, 1989; Brudney & Gazley, 2009; Drabek, 1985, 1987; Majchrzak, Jarenpaa, & Hollingshead, 2007; Stallings, 1978). Some of the entities may have been involved in the impacted community's preparedness efforts (e.g., response plans, exercises, training) prior to a disaster and some may not have been (see for example: Brudney & Gazley, 2009; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Gillespie, 1991; Gillespie & Banerjee, 1994; Gillespie & Streeter, 1987). The organizations tend to vary drastically in size and scope ranging from local organizations staffed by only a few individuals to national or international organizations with staff that range from hundreds to thousands (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). The organizations may rely wholly on professional staff, part professional staff and part volunteer, or entirely upon volunteers to provide assistance after disasters (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). They also have varying organizational missions, structures, cultures, values, ways of doing things, and types and levels of resources available to them in rendering assistance (see for example: Drabek, 1983; 1985; 1987; Drabek et al., 1981; Dynes, 1970; Kennedy et al., 1969; Quarantelli, Dynes, & Haas, 1966; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings, 1978). And, the exact mix of the entities involved in meeting needs after disasters varies over time. Some organizations are involved in the immediate hours and days after a disaster and then end their involvement, some begin only once immediate needs have been met, and some begin right away and continue providing assistance in the months and/or years after the event (Moore, 2006; Rubin, 2009; Smith, 2011).

The entities that become involved in the aftermath of disaster provide needed resources that otherwise would not have been available to impacted communities (Dynes

& Quarantelli, 1980); yet, there is often difficulty in ensuring that the help they offer translates to effectively and efficiently meeting the range of needs that result from a given disaster (Alexander, 2010; Neal, 1994; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). All of the aforementioned differences across the entities involved at any given time in any given response and recovery process make coordination of their efforts both highly desirable and incredibly difficult (Auf der Heide, 1989; Smith, 2011). As a consequence, disaster response and recovery is often relatively piecemeal and uncoordinated (National Research Council, 2006; Tierney, Lindell, & Perry, 2001). The lack of coordination commonly manifests in duplication of services, unnecessary waste, and unmet individual and community needs (ASPE, 2008; Chandra & Acosta, 2009; Klindt, 2010; Pipa, 2006; Smith, 2012).

The federal government has initiated a number of efforts to address the coordination problem over time. For instance, the federal government has provided preparedness grants to state and local governments, training for those involved in response to and recovery from disasters, national frameworks and plans depicting how a coordinated intergovernmental efforts should work, and national incident management systems dictating structures and processes that all responding entities at all levels of government should use to coordinate their efforts (Rubin, 2009; Sylves, 2009). The federal government also created the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in large part, to help address intergovernmental coordination issues (Kreps, 1990; Miller, 2009; Rubin, 2009). Yet, federal efforts have met with limited success (Comfort, 1988; Drabek, 1985; Schroeder, Wamsley, & Ward, 2001).

There are a number of reasons the federal government's efforts have not been more successful, but there are three that are particularly important to address. First, the success of federal efforts relies on state and local buy-in and participation. Where state and local governments (and the emergency management relevant organizations within them) do not buy-in or participate, or do not do so fully, the coordination mechanisms put forth by the federal government fail to result in actual coordination in response and recovery (see for example: Comfort, 1988; Drabek, 1985; Sylves, 2009; Waugh and Strieb, 2006). The buy-in of state and local government is critical because our federalist form of government in the United States does not allow any level of government to force any other level of government to participate even though incentives and sanctions may be leveraged in an attempt to coerce them (Drabek, 1985; May, 1985; May & Williams, 1986; Sylves, 1991; 2008; Waugh, 1988; 1993). The ability of state and local jurisdictions to coordinate their efforts does not depend solely on their buy-in into, or participation in, federal coordination mechanisms, but also the extent to which they prioritize emergency management, their risk perception, their disaster experience, the resources they have available, and the extent to which they engage in cross-jurisdictional preparedness activities, among other factors (see for example: Kettle, 2003; Labadie, 1984; Mileti, 1980; 1999; Neal & Webb 2006; Patton et al., 2010; Petak, 1985; Schafer, Carroll, Haynes, & Abrams, 2008; Wolensky & Wolensky, 1990). Thus, regardless of any federal efforts to bring about coordination, any actual coordination that is evidenced in response and recovery is primarily the result of what is going on at the local and state levels.

Second, federal efforts have historically excluded NPOs from the process of developing coordination mechanisms (Sylves, 2009). As a result, the mechanisms developed have not been conducive to the integration of NPO efforts during response and recovery activities (Rubin, 2009); and have, in fact, failed to successfully integrate these organizations when put into practice during response and recovery efforts such as those related to Hurricane Katrina (see for example: Boris & Steuerle, 2006; Canclini et al., 2009; De Vita & Kramer, 2008; Pipa, 2006; Simo & Bies, 2007). The federal coordination mechanisms themselves conflict with how NPO stakeholder organizations are structured, how they work, and what they value (Waugh & Tierney, 2007, p. 329).

Third, the federal government's coordinating mechanisms are designed to facilitate coordination across the entire response and recovery enterprise for any given disaster (e.g., across levels of government, businesses, and NPOs) as opposed to facilitating the coordination among specific kinds of groups who may be offering the same or similar kinds of disaster assistance (e.g., NPOs who become involved to provide basic necessities for individuals and households) (see for example: FEMA, 2008a; b; 2011). Thus, the federal mechanisms are not even designed to comprehensively address coordination issues related to disasters.

Review of the literature suggests that disasters require the help of entities from within and outside an impacted jurisdiction and that the differences among the entities makes coordination of their efforts both necessary and difficult. While a variety of efforts to address this issue have been initiated by the federal government, they have never comprehensively addressed the problem, have not been designed with NPO input, and depend on local level conditions and participation (Palttala et al., 2012). It is within this

context that NPOs are involved in disasters and the potential of LVOADs becomes apparent. LVOADs are locally-based and designed to facilitate coordination both among NPOs and between NPOs and wider jurisdictional response and recovery efforts. The creation and maintenance of LVOADs in local jurisdictions may lessen the coordination problem that has historically thwarted the effectiveness and efficiency with which disaster-related needs are met.

Disaster Assistance in the United States and the Role of Nonprofits

Depending on the disaster, any number and range of impacts related to the social, political, economic, natural, and/or built system as well as any number and range of needs on the part of individuals and households, businesses, nonprofits (NPOs), and local government may need to be met (Alesch, Arendt, & Holly, 2008; Berke et al., 1993; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). Primary responsibility for dealing with the impacts and needs related to a disaster lies at the local level. At the local level, local governments are responsible for addressing many of these impacts and needs (Alesch, Arendt, & Holly, 2008; Klindt, 2010; Ward & Wamsley, 2007).

Only when a local government jurisdiction becomes overwhelmed and unable to address the situation alone may it request assistance from the state (Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). In these situations, state government provides the resources it has available to local jurisdictions. If state resources are also overwhelmed, the state may request an emergency or disaster declaration from the President of the United States (Sylves, 2008). The President can decide to turn down the application for assistance or approve an emergency or disaster declaration (Sylves, 2008). Relative to the number of requests for presidential emergency and disaster declarations, very few are approved (Phillips, 2009;

Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). After the vast majority of disasters, local communities must address disaster-related needs as best they can with the help of their state government and any willing and able outside NPOs and businesses (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011).

Receipt of an emergency or disaster declaration does not allow state and local governments to access unlimited assistance. Declarations are granted to states and the impacted local governments may or may not be included (Sylves, 2008). Thus, while declarations are sometimes made, one or more impacted jurisdictions within the state may not be eligible for the assistance that comes with the declaration (Sylves, 2008). Additionally, when a declaration is granted, it stipulates the kind and amount of assistance that state and eligible local government jurisdictions may access (Sylves, 2008).

There are two categories of assistance the federal government provides—Public Assistance and Individual Assistance—and one or both may be available depending on the declaration (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). The few disaster declarations that are granted typically make only Public Assistance available (Freemont-Smith, Boris, & Steuerle, 2006; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). The majority of declarations allow state and eligible local governments to access financial support only for debris removal, emergency protective measures, repairs to roads and bridges, repairs to water control facilities, repairs to government buildings and equipment, repairs to government-owned/operated utilities, *and/or* government parks and recreational facilities (FEMA, 2012). Thus, most federal assistance is geared toward addressing the political and built systems as opposed to the environmental, social, and

economic systems and meeting the needs of government (or the community as a whole), as opposed to the needs of impacted individuals and households, businesses, or NPOs.

When Individual Assistance is made available, eligible individuals and households in impacted jurisdictions can apply for, and may receive, low interest loans from the Small Business Administration, unemployment assistance, crisis counseling services, legal services, and financial assistance for home repair, temporary housing/rental assistance, and replacement of essential personal property (FEMA, 2013). Yet, even when individuals and households are able to access these types of federal assistance, there are limits to the amount of assistance actually provided. For instance, temporary housing assistance is limited to only 18 months; and, the maximum amount available for repair, replacement, and construction of primary residences usually hovers around \$30,000 (FEMA, 2013). Furthermore, a range of immediate needs that individuals and households commonly have after disaster are not addressed by Individual Assistance including clothing, food, sanitary items, pet supplies, and emergency shelter (FEMA, 2013). A host of long range needs are also not addressed through Individual Assistance (Cherry & Cheery, 1997; McDonnell et al. 1995; Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003).

When Individual Assistance is made available, the range and amount of assistance available to individuals and households is often grossly inadequate to meeting the needs of most individuals and households (Cherry & Cheery, 1997; McDonnell et al., 1995; Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003). Moreover, the aid available is often not accessible to those individuals and households who need it most for a variety of reasons (e.g., they cannot find the paperwork that proves they are eligible, they do not

speak/read/write in English, they are not citizens, they are not aware that aid is available, etc.) (Bolin & Stanford, 1991, 1998; Cherry & Cherry, 1997; Finch, Emrich, & Cutter, 2010; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2004). And, Individual Assistance has been criticized for being fragmented, inflexible, and poorly timed (see for example: Cherry & Cherry, 1997; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2004; Liu, 2010; Norris-Tirrell & Clay, 2006; Smith, 2011; Waugh & Hy, 1990).

Although there is certainly room for improvement in Individual Assistance, some of the federal government's apparent neglect can be explained. First, federal assistance is not designed to make disaster-impacted communities whole again. The aid available is supposed to be supplementary to state and local resources and private assistance (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). Second, government takes a utilitarian, populations-based approach to disaster assistance (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). It focusses its resources on addressing those impacts and needs that will benefit communities as a whole as opposed to the needs of specific individuals and households within impacted communities. Third, the type and amount of aid that is available and the process by which it is accessed and distributed is dictated by a complex network of law, regulation, and policy (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). For these reasons, the federal government may be able to incrementally improve Individual Assistance, but under current law, it will not be able to meet all of the needs of impacted individual and households after disasters.

Thus, there is a significant need for help from NPOs given the context of disaster assistance in the United States particularly as relates to individuals and households. NPOs are needed in the immediate aftermath of disasters to provide individuals and households

food, shelter, clothing, and other basic necessities because these needs are not commonly addressed by local governments and are not addressed by the federal government even when a disaster declaration is granted. Because disaster declarations are relatively rare, NPOs are often the only providers of assistance to individuals and households for their longer term needs (e.g., financial support, temporary housing, replacement of personal property, psychological support services, manpower and expertise for debris removal, repair, and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed homes, etc.). And, when disaster declarations are provided that include Individual Assistance, many individuals and households are still reliant on NPO services because they are not able to access assistance, or, if they are able to, they may not be able to access enough to meet their needs (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Kapucu, 2003, 2007; Pipa, 2006). NPOs are increasingly counted on by government to address the needs of individuals and households after disaster (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Kapucu, 2003, 2007, Kapucu, Yuldashev, & Feldheim, 2011).

In addition to meeting individual and household needs directly, NPOs often coordinate donations management, volunteer management, and engage in advocacy related to meeting the needs of vulnerable populations (Chandra & Acosta, 2006; Phillips & Jenkins, 2008; Phillips, 2009; Pipa, 2006). NPOs also address another gap that tends to be left by government after disasters—a gap related to natural, historical, and cultural resources. NPOs often engage in advocacy related to protecting and/or restoring environmental, historical, and/or cultural resources after disaster and/or promote projects to help these kinds of resources recover (Al Nammari, 2008; Phillips, 2009; Spenneman & Graham, 2007).

NPOs are needed for many reasons after disaster; and, historically many NPOs are willing to assist communities after disasters strike. Yet, NPO efforts are often uncoordinated and result in untimely assistance, duplication of services, and wasted resources. It would be beneficial for these organizations to coordinate amongst themselves and with local government given the important role that they play in community response and recovery. LVOADs are a potential way for NPOs to coordinate at the local level; and, thus, it is important that we learn more about these organizations and how they are created and maintained.

The Nature of Nonprofits and Coordination Challenges

The need for nonprofit (NPO) involvement after disasters is great as is the need for coordination amongst them. Creation and maintenance of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) in local communities may increase the likelihood that the assistance that nonprofits render after disasters meets the needs of impacted communities effectively and efficiently. Yet, due to the nature of NPOs, coordination will always be difficult whether or not an LVOAD exists. Specific aspects of NPOs that make coordination amongst them difficult include NPO mission, constituencies, organizational structure, and capacity.

Organizational missions are important structural features of NPOs. NPO missions identify for whom or what cause the organization exists to serve (Wolf, 1999). NPOs may have missions oriented to broad issues such as education, physical fitness, or mental health (Eisner, 2010; Spillan & Crandall, 2002); and/or their missions may be oriented to specific groups such as children, single mothers, low income individuals, prisoners, elderly, the mentally ill, physically disabled, or others (Eisner, 2010; Klindt, 2010; Pipa,

2006; Smith, 2012). Organizational missions also drive what NPOs do, that is, their programs, services, and activities (Wolf, 1999).

During disasters, NPO involvement is often an extension of their organizational mission. Thus, many NPOs want to, and become, involved after disasters, but they want their involvement to serve their organizational mission. Many NPO missions differ significantly one to the next; and, as a result, so do their reasons for being involved. This situation makes coordination among them difficult. And, among those organizations that have similar missions (i.e., are involved in the same issue area or target the same group/issue), there is sometimes competition to provide services. After disaster, this may result in overlap or redundancy in the services each provides (Sylves, 2009). Thus, while the variation in NPO missions makes coordination desirable it also makes it challenging.

NPOs are also concerned about the constituencies their organization serves and those with whom their organization interacts (Wolf, 1999). NPOs strive constantly to demonstrate their commitment to their various constituencies and meet their needs and interests (Ott, 2001; Wolf, 1999). These constituencies include the organization's board of directors, service recipients, any affiliated volunteers, donors and grantors, and the public in the communities they serve (Wolf, 1999). Due to the intimate and responsive relationship NPOs have with their constituencies, one can expect that NPO involvement in disasters will be heavily influenced by constituents and what they think/want at any given time including when the NPO becomes involved, how long it stays involved, what organizations it interacts with when it is involved, and what it does when it is involved. Constituency influence can make NPOs somewhat unpredictable in the aftermath of disasters and pose a challenge to coordination.

The varying structure of NPOs poses yet another challenge to coordination in the aftermath of disasters. There are a variety of types of NPOs including local, community-based organizations, so-called voluntary agencies whose staff are primarily volunteers, faith-based organizations (e.g., churches), and regional or national NPOs with local chapters spread across the country (Eisner, 2010; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). Each of these types of NPOs has a different organizational structure and there are differences in structure among NPOs of each type. Yet, while they are different in organizational structure they are similar in their leadership structure. NPO leadership structure tends to be decentralized and egalitarian (Coppola, 2007; Ott, 2001). Unlike other kinds of organizations, nonprofits lack “neat, hierarchical positions or slots” (Ott, 2001, p. 24). Coordination requires some level of familiarity with the structures of the organizations involved, but when the structures vary so significantly from organization-to-organization this familiarity is difficult to achieve.

The capacity of nonprofits to assist impacted communities after disaster varies significantly. Nonprofits vary in the size of their staff—some have only one or a few employees and some have hundreds (Eisner, 2010; Klindt, 2010; Spillan, & Crandall, 2002). They also vary in the source of their staff—some rely primarily on paid professional staff and some rely primarily on volunteers to fulfill their mission (ASPE, 2008; Block, 2001; Klindt, 2010; Phillips, 2009; Salamon, 2001; Smith, 2011). Within those organizations that depend on volunteers, there exists variation in the volunteers themselves with respect to their involvement in the organization (e.g., daily basis, periodic, infrequent) as well as their skills, abilities, and experience (Block, 2001; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011). All of this variation in nonprofit capacity that exists on a

day-to-day basis carries over into disaster times and makes coordination hard to accomplish.

While the aforementioned aspects of capacity are important to understanding coordination challenges among nonprofits, variation in funding is perhaps the most significant barrier to coordination. NPOs do not make an economic profit and the goods and services they provide are typically free or associated with only a minimal charge to cover expenses (Boris & Steuerle, 2006; Eisner, 2010; Ott, 2001; Popkin, 1978; Salamon, 2001; Sylves, 2008). Most nonprofits rely upon a combination of sources of funding including donations, grants, contracts, and fee-for-services to fulfill their mission; and, the sources of funding and the amounts received fluctuate (Block, 2001; Coppola, 2007; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). As the amount of funding available to an organization varies so too does the quality and number of facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources available to them to fulfill their mission. As a consequence, nonprofits have both unstable financial and resource foundations (Coppola, 2007) and have to spend considerable time, day-to-day, trying to attract funding through generating positive publicity and fundraising (Coppola, 2007). Unfortunately, nonprofits often compete with one another in routine times for both publicity and funding (Coppola, 2007).

During disaster relief efforts, funding continues to be a fundamental concern for nonprofits (Chandra & Acosta, 2009; Egan & Tischler, 2010; Fremont-Smith, Boris, & Steuerle, 2006; Pipa, 2006). They need funding to continue to provide their normal services as well as additional funding to help meet disaster-related needs and they depend on publicity and engaged donors to be able to generate the necessary funds (Chandra &

Acosta, 2009; Egan & Tischler, 2010; Fremont-Smith, Boris, & Steuerle, 2006; Pipa, 2006). Nonprofits often perceive collective, coordinated efforts to limit their ability to get funding (Sylves, 2008).

LVOADs provide a valuable resource for NPOs, as they can act as a central hub for coordinating, and, hence, maximizing, their efforts. Yet, due to their nature, such coordination is difficult. Review of the literature would suggest that when and where LVOADs are created and maintained, it is against all odds. Given LVOADs potential, it is important that we understand the factors that drive the creation and maintenance of these organizations so that we can overcome the challenges inherent in attempts to bring about coordination among these organizations after disaster.

Conclusion

All of the issues discussed thus far point to the need for coordination of all groups involved in disaster operations, yet, it is only recently that groups such as LVOAD have begun to surface and establish themselves within their respective communities. They have the potential to help nonprofit organizations (NPOs) maximize their contributions after disasters. This study begins to address the lack of research on these organizations by exploring how they are created and how they are maintained between disasters. The chapter to follow discusses the methods this study employed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Chapter Three is comprised of five sections. The first section describes the methodological approach for this study. The second section discusses the population and sampling procedures. The third section explains the process of data collection. The fourth section discusses data analysis. The fifth section discusses the limitations involved with this study and the measures that were taken to minimize the impact of the limitations on the value of this study.

Methodological Approach

There has not been any empirical research related specifically to Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) that informed this study. Moreover, there is a general lack of empirical research on nonprofit organization (NPO) engagement in disasters. Since no appropriate theoretical foundation existed upon which to build a quantitative approach to this research topic, it was necessary to take a qualitative approach (Charmaz, 2006; Maxwell, 2005; Snape & Spencer, 2003). In searching for a methodological approach to anchor this study, grounded theory was chosen because it provided the tools to best explore the research questions for this study, while ensuring that the standards expected of scholarly research were met (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978).

Grounded theory was founded by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has been added to and expanded upon in several works since its establishment (Glaser, 1978, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). Building upon the aforementioned works, Charmaz (2006) offers a definition of grounded theory when she states, “grounded theory is a method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual

frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Hence, the analytic categories are directly ‘grounded’ in the data” (p. 187). Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain grounded theory as, “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process” (p. 12). This idea is supported by Charmaz (2006) who states, “the method favors analysis over description, fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories, and systematically focused sequential data collection over large initial samples” (p. 187). The grounded theory approach makes many analytical tools available to researchers to explore their data. Concious use of these tools ensures that analysis is rigorous and that the findings of the research are grounded in the data. The grounded theory approach was ideal for studying LVOADs since there is so little known about how they are created or maintained.

Grounded theorists recognize that the researcher is part of the research process, and therefore, that the researcher should be aware of their part in the research process (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This recognition is a strength of the method because it forces the researcher to recognize their biases throughout data collection and analysis. This aspect of grounded theory encourages the researcher to proceed with an open mind and recognize those instances where preconceived thoughts and ideas may be influencing their research. This was of particular importance for this study, since the purpose was exploration and the introduction of fresh categories.

Perhaps the most important influence that led to the decision to pursue grounded theory was the basic premise that theory needs to be grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Straus & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Straus, 1967; Glaser, 1978). The research is of no

value if it is not grounded in the data, and worse yet, misinterpreted or skewed data can actually be dangerous if it is contributing unfounded concepts or theory. Therefore, grounded theory was ideal for studying LVOADs since they had not previously been empirically researched; it met the rigorous standards of scholarly research; and could lead to fresh categories that are grounded in the data. Further discussion of the grounded methodology employed in this study follows in the data collection and data analysis sections.

Data Collection

Data was conducted through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Potential participants were asked to complete a face-to-face interview at a date, time, and location that were convenient for them. Participants were given the option to do a telephone interview if it was more convenient. Follow-up phone calls or emails were used for verification or clarification of lingering questions or issues discovered during the transcription and analytic processes.

The interviews were conducted in keeping with Charmaz's (2006) guidelines for "intensive interviewing". Charmaz (2006) views interviews as "directed conversations" where interviewers guide conversation related to their topic by asking only a few main questions and supplement the main questions they ask with the use of probes and follow-up questions (p. 25-27). During the interviews, participants were asked open-ended questions about their history with their organization, how the LVOAD developed, and how the Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOAD) is maintained. See Appendix A for a list of the initial open-ended questions and Appendix B for a list of potential follow-up questions and probes. Questions were not designed to lead

participants to disclose personal information. Other than the name and organization the participant represents, personal information was not collected nor was such information part of data analysis. Names and organizational information was collected for tracking purposes only. During transcription and coding, codes were used in place of identifying information to protect the confidentiality of participants. Data analysis focused on the responses themselves, rather than on the individuals and organizations providing the remarks.

This study employed precautionary measures to ensure the confidentiality of the interview participants. For instance, while the interviews were voice recorded, the voice recordings were deleted upon transcription and the only personal information that was collected and maintained for the duration of the study is the name of the participant and the organization he/she represented. While utilized to link the interview to a participant, the names and organizations were not used in any reports of the study's findings and the records and transcripts were destroyed upon conclusion of the research. The information obtained for this study was not of a personal nature or intended to explore research questions related to the participants themselves, but rather organizations in the form of LVOADs. Nevertheless, there should not be any negative consequence to participants should their participation in this study be discovered. Thus, the risk associated with this study is no greater than one would encounter in any number of situations in daily life.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of representatives from nonprofit and governmental organizations within communities developing a Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD) within FEMA's Region VIII (i.e. CO, MT,

ND, SD, UT, WY). Convenience sampling was used to narrow the population for the study to a reasonable sample frame. Convenience sampling involves targeting individuals for participation based on the researchers ability to “access and easily collect data” from them (Creswell, 2007). Convenience sampling was appropriate for this study for two primary reasons. First, there is no centralized directory with contact information for the various LVOAD members from which to develop a sample. A simple Internet search using “LVOAD,” “Local VOAD,” and “COAD” as keywords does not yield any useful information or contact information for any actual LVOADs. Second, the desire to conduct face-to-face interviews required that the researcher be located in close proximity to research participants. Since the researcher knew from his involvement in the Department of Emergency Management at North Dakota State University (NDSU) that there were LVOADs located in the Midwest, it was convenient to narrow the sample frame to individuals associated with these organizations.

Snowball sampling was used to further develop this study’s sample. The snowball sampling technique involves the researcher identifying one or more individuals with knowledge relevant to a study for participation and asking them to refer the researcher to additional individuals who may have information integral to the study’s research question (Taylor & Bodgan, 1998). The researcher met several LVOAD members through his attendance of a LVOAD meeting in the Midwest and through an emergency management departmental presentation by the founder of a LVOAD. The individuals met through these events became the first potential participants for this study; and, it was anticipated that, once interviewed, they would be able to recommend other individuals who would be

able to provide insight into this study's research topic as well as the contact information for those individuals.

Potential participants were initially contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. Please see Appendix C for the invitation email for this study. An information sheet about the study was emailed to potential participants as an attachment to the invitation email. The email invitation referenced the information sheet and encouraged potential participants to review the information provided. The information sheet was also reviewed at the start of interviews with those who opted to participate. Please see Appendix D for the information sheet for this study.

It was anticipated that the use of convenience and snowball sampling would result in a sample of approximately twenty-four individuals. This number was merely an initial and somewhat arbitrary estimation. In qualitative research, it is more important that each individual who participates is able to provide rich, detailed data, specific to the topic under study, than it is that some total number of interviews are completed (Creswell, 2007). Ultimately, the sampling techniques resulted in the participation of 15 individuals. Approximately 15 other individuals were contacted, but for a variety of reasons, chose not to participate.

Because this study is using a grounded theory approach, the concept of theoretical saturation was very important in determining how many actual interviews were completed. Theoretical saturation is when the ongoing process of interviews and data analysis lead to the discovery of "no new properties, dimensions, or relationships" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143) or "the point where collecting additional data seems counterproductive; the 'new' that is uncovered does not add that much more to

explanation” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 136). As the 15 interviews were completed and analysis was undertaken, it was felt that theoretical saturation was not yet achieved, so the sample frame was widened to include other LVOADs. Since the first four LVOADs in this study operated largely within FEMA Region VIII, it seemed logical to recruit more participants within FEMA Region VIII in hopes that theoretical saturation would be realized.

A great deal of time and energy was expended contacting state VOAD representatives, state offices of emergency management, and several other government and nonprofit organizations within FEMA’s Region VIII inquiring into the existence of possible LVOADs within their states. Dozens of email messages, telephone conversations, and follow-up conversations uncovered only one additional LVOAD operating within FEMA’s Region VIII, beyond the four that were already involved in this study, which resulted in 2 more interviews. These two interviews did not reveal any new themes or add anything new to the preexisting data from the other four LVOADs, but they did serve to strengthen the categories surrounding the creation of an LVOAD that had been uncovered in the previous interviews. After all interviews were concluded, there were a total of (N=17) interviews. The four initial LVOADs were from one state and the fifth LVOAD was from a second state. The LVOADs represented in this study include all of the LVOADs operating within FEMA’s Region VIII. The participants included individuals from both government and nonprofit. There were six participants interviewed from governmental positions that were engaged with the LVOADs to varying degrees. There were eleven participants from the nonprofit community. Most of the individuals

from the nonprofit community assumed leadership positions at some point in time within their respective LVOADs.

There was consensus across the five communities that developing an organizational structure was the moment they became *official* LVOADs. This topic will be discussed in greater detail later on in Chapter 4 in the section titled LVOAD Organizational Structure. Of the five LVOAD entities that were involved in this study, two considered themselves to be *official* LVOADs, one was in the process of becoming *official*, and two did not consider themselves to have reached *official* status. Because only two of the LVOADs reached *official* status, there was limited data to explore the second research question – What facilitates and hinders the maintenance of LVOADs?. Although the data has limitations, the rigid process of data analysis involving line-by-line coding, focused coding, in vivo coding, memo writing, and concept mapping resulted in saturation of the data for both research questions.

The LVOADs that became *official* shared a similar composition and resembled the State and National VOADs. One LVOAD had a board that consisted of a chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer. In addition, it had 2 members-at-large representing each county. The only notable difference with the other *official* LVOAD was that they did not have a chair, but instead had two co-chairs sharing the leadership responsibilities. The LVOAD that was in the process of becoming official was adopting the same format of chair, vice-chair, and so forth. The two LVOAD groups that did not become *official* did not have a formal structure.

Data Analysis

Charmaz (2006) articulates 3 stages of coding using the grounded theory approach including 1) initial coding, 2) focused coding, and 3) theoretical coding. Upon completion of the transcription process, the initial four interviews were coded using line-by-line coding. In addition to the identification of gaps in the data, line-by-line coding also enables the researcher to break up the data into components and sub-components (Charmaz, 2006). In conjunction with initial coding, the data was coded *in vivo* to capture the special meanings and language used by the interviewees (Charmaz, 2006). Although a researcher may be familiar with the language and lingo of a given community, it was anticipated that Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) and related organizations have certain words and phrases that will require coding apart from the generic meanings of the word/phrases. After the initial coding process, focused coding was undertaken, which involved abstracting the most significant or frequent codes or categories identified in the initial coding process (Charmaz, 2006). Focused coding requires that each initial code be given weight or significance by categorizing them according to how they fit with the study's research questions (Charmaz, 2006).

At this point, a decision was made to continue into the next stage of theoretical coding, since the analysis uncovered results that were not evident in existing disaster theory. This finding was not surprising since there has not been any research into LVOADs and there are no other entities that function quite like a LVOAD. Theoretical coding follows focused coding and explores possible relationships between and across the categories uncovered in focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, theoretical coding can lead to the formation of hypotheses between and across relationships of

categories (Charmaz, 2006). The continual and cyclical nature of the coding process is one of the strengths of grounded theory.

In addition to coding, the grounded theory approach allows researchers to make use of a variety of other analytical tools including memos, diagrams, and concept maps (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). These tools facilitate greater depth of analysis throughout the data collection and data analysis processes (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, diagrams and concept maps may reveal connections or relationships between codes that would otherwise be missed and memos capture data and considerations that would otherwise be forgotten. The grounded theory approach to data analysis assumes that analysis takes place at each stage of data collection and analysis (i.e., during and after interviews, transcriptions, initial coding, theoretical coding, and again, in recoding, as new categories and themes emerge in subsequent interviews, transcriptions, and coding); thus, these tools were used before, during, and after the coding processes previously discussed (Charmaz, 2006). Memo's, diagrams, and concept maps proved to be an integral part of the analytical process and essential to understanding the data and how the factors fit together. At the conclusion of the study, nearly 13 hours of audio were transcribed, coded, and recoded. Interviews averaged just over forty-five minutes in length.

Limitations

The ultimate goal of this study is to offer findings grounded in rigorous and appropriate use of the grounded theory approach. Following in the footsteps of Glaser (1978), Charmaz (2006) suggests that the hallmarks of a high quality grounded theory study include credibility of the data collection and analysis process, originality of the

categories and concepts, resonance of the topic, and usefulness of the research (p. 182-183). These tenets of grounded theory were a continual guiding force throughout data collection and analysis and the results will show that original concepts and categories were uncovered that will be valuable to the academic discipline of emergency management, the profession, and all of those involved with the function of emergency management.

Nevertheless, this study, like any other, has limitations. There are four limitations that are particularly important to note. Firstly, the convenience and snowball sampling techniques used in data collection prohibit the generalization of the study's findings. Secondly, use of the snowball sampling technique, specifically, may result in data that is not only un-generalizable, but also biased due to the potential for study participants to refer the researcher to other potential study participants on the basis of their like-mindedness, as opposed to their general ability to contribute meaningfully to the study's research topic (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Thirdly, the lack of participation that has been previously noted adds to the previous limitation noted with snowball sampling. There were a number of participants that initially agreed to participate and later dropped out of the research prior to being interviewed for various reasons. These individuals undoubtedly offered an important perspective on the creation and maintenance of LVOADs that was never shared.

Lastly, the researcher's own experience may be a limitation to this study. The researcher has attended Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOAD) general meetings, attended LVOAD board meetings, and acted as an intern for a LVOAD. In the process, the researcher developed ideas related to the research questions.

It is possible that his experience could have led to a bias in how the data was analyzed. McCallin (2003) stated that the “researcher must be willing to put aside or to critically examine preconceived ideas, to try to understand actions and interactions in a particular context from the point of view of the people involved” (p. 204). The analytical tools associated with the grounded theory approach lead researchers to return to the data time and again questioning their findings and what those findings mean; and, through the conscientious use of these tools, the potential for this bias should be minimized. The principles of grounded theory were rigorously followed throughout the entire research process and a conscious effort was taken to recognize and acknowledge limitations every step of the way.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the theoretical principles of grounded theory and why it was chosen as the appropriate approach to study Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). The data collection and data analysis procedures were identified and explained in detail. Concerns related to the quality of the study and possible limitations were discussed. It is believed that by following the principles of and using the tools of grounded theory, throughout interviewing, transcribing, initial coding, coding, and recoding, this study has produced findings grounded in rich data. The results of this data are presented in the next two chapters. Chapter 4 discusses the factors that facilitated the creation of a LVOAD and Chapter 5 presents the factors that affected the maintenance of LVOADs. Chapter 6 interprets the significance of these findings.

CHAPTER 4: LVOAD CREATION

This chapter discusses the findings regarding the first research question: What facilitates the creation of a Local Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD)? The data uncovered a number of factors significant to the creation of a LVOAD. These factors cluster into three central categories. The three categories appeared to follow a progressive order of stages, although the factors within each category did not necessarily follow a specific sequence. The presence of one or more hazard events was the first major factor that facilitated the creation of a LVOAD as evidenced by all (N=17) of the interviews. Leadership was the second major factor to drive LVOAD creation and seemed to emerge post-hazard event(s). The third major factor is the development of an organizational structure. These factors are discussed in the first three sections of this chapter. In addition to the pressures that push VOADs to form, there are also counter pressures that threaten LVOAD creation. The final section in this chapter examines some of these barriers that originate as a LVOAD develops and carry on throughout the life of the organization.

Hazard Event/Hazard Events

Perhaps the most fundamental factor to influence the creation of a LVOAD in each of the five communities explored in this study was the presence of a hazard event(s). Specifically, flood-related hazard event(s) led to the creation of all five LVOADs represented in this study. This section discusses the three factors within the hazard event(s) category. These three factors are 1) hazard threat, 2) problems in organizational response, and 3) needs/unmet needs. Although there are any number of factors that pop

up in the aftermath of a hazard event, these three factors seemed to encompass those that led the LVOADs in this study to develop.

Hazard Threat

The first factor discussed is the threat of a hazard event. In each of the five cases, flooding appeared to be the initial factor that stimulated community discussions on starting a LVOAD. While flooding was the hazard in each case, flooding impacted each community differently. These differences can be attributed to characteristics of each community, as well as characteristics of the flooding itself. The five communities varied in geographic size, population, flood history, and composition (e.g. types of governmental and non-governmental organizations involved). Among the five communities, there were three different types of flooding observed including riverine, lake, and overland flooding. The impact of the flooding across the five communities also varied in size, magnitude, frequency, and speed of onset. Of the differences noted, the frequency of hazard impact appeared to have the greatest influence on the creation of a LVOAD. In two of the communities, a single hazard event impact was noted as the key factor that directly initiated community discussions on forming a LVOAD. One participant stated, “It prompted because of how the flooding started; basically it was just that we were flooding...” It was also noted that the flood event was essential to the creation of a LVOAD. The following statement provides evidence to support this claim: “Prior to that flood, to get them to any type of meeting, to get this group together was next to impossible. The minute the flood happened, that room was full.” This next statement provides further evidence and demonstrates how the flooding led to a group forming in the following statement: “When we were having all the flooding in [Year X],

it just became apparent that we needed coordination to make sure that we were best serving our public, so we put together a group.” This next statement underlines the significance of hazard event frequency on LVOAD creation:

[Community E] had not been hit in ages. This was the first big one that they needed help with and they needed to get help to individuals. So, having not been hit by a disaster before, they really didn’t know what they were going to be needing.

Although flooding served as the antecedent in each of the five communities and ultimately led to discussions of a LVOAD group forming, a single hazard event alone was not enough to nurture community interest in creating a LVOAD. The two communities that only experienced one hazard event did not go on to develop into *official* LVOADs. The two communities that eventually did become *official* LVOADs experienced multiple years of flooding. The community that was in the stages of making their LVOAD *official* had recently experienced a second season of flooding. This suggests hazard event frequency is a major factor with LVOAD creation. One participant stated, “It was the consistent flooding and also the previous year [referring to the flooding of the previous year]...” Another participant noted, “I don’t remember if we started in [Year X] or thereabouts, but, what happened is that we were in another spring of disaster and the State VOAD held a meeting here in [Community B].”

Although the conversation thus far suggests that higher frequency of flooding positively influences the creation of a LVOAD, there is also evidence to suggest the contrary. In one community the repetitive flooding had another effect altogether and actually impeded and delayed the formation of the LVOAD. The following quote

exemplifies the negative affect that multiple flood events had on the formation of the LVOAD in Community A:

...we went through this period of three years straight with major floods and just never had time to sit down and really do this. Until after [Year X]. And, then we said, you know it's time to do this. We just can't wait for a break to do it.

Although the presence of one or more hazard events was clearly a factor leading to LVOAD formation, there is also an element of forethought involved. In all of these communities, the hazard event(s) alone may have been enough to spur LVOAD discussions. However, the anticipation of a future hazard event also played a role in the decision to form a LVOAD. In the two communities that did not become *official* LVOADs, the participants did not seem overly concerned or threatened by the likelihood of future flooding. These two communities seemed to perceive the flood as a singular event. In the other three communities, more than one flood event occurred. The data suggests community members perceived a greater future threat of hazard events and their perceptions of flood risk were a factor in their decisions to pursue a LVOAD. This next quote describes how the LVOAD got started as a result of the combination of a series of hazard events and the threat of future hazard events:

And that was at the post flooding time of [Year X], where it became more active on 'well you know we've done this, it's looking like what the other people are telling us we're going to be doing this again down the way, so maybe we should be a little more settled as volunteers too.' And so there was a small group that got together.

It is clear a single hazard event has the power to spur interest in creating a LVOAD. The evidence uncovered in the five communities in this study suggests that a single event may not be enough to lead communities to adopt *official* LVOADs. This study shows that two or more hazard events were necessary for a LVOAD to become official. Therefore, hazard events may be a better determining factor for LVOAD creation. In the five communities, the flooding left communities with some degree of unmet needs, which are discussed in the following section.

Needs/Unmet Needs

As previously discussed, unmet needs are needs that emerge following a hazard event that the recovery system in the United States is not currently designed, or able, to address. There are two general types of needs that surface following a hazard event. These needs can be classified as either hazard-generated or response-generated needs (Quarentelli, 1988). It is imperative to note that it is not the LVOAD's role to directly address unmet needs. Although the individuals/households are being served by individual organizations that comprise the LVOAD, the LVOAD itself does not directly attend to the needs. As one participant put it, "[The LVOAD] is not an action group, it's a network group." Therefore, the LVOAD does not address the unmet needs, but coordinates services across the nonprofit and government organizations to best serve the community. This coordination and networking alludes to the other type of needs, which are response-generated needs.

Response-generated needs arise to address issues with communication, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation across the organizations involved with community response and recovery following a hazard event (Auf de Heide 1989). Both

types of needs were discussed as influential in the creation of a LVOAD. As one might expect, this study revealed a direct relationship between hazard-generated and response-generated needs. In the five communities examined, the communities that noted having more hazard-generated needs also reported greater demand for response-generated needs.

There were a number of needs revealed in the interviews. This study does not intend to compile an exhaustive list of all of the needs that surface in the aftermath of a disaster. Although there were some minor differences, the five communities shared very similar needs, which is not surprising given all five communities experienced flooding. The most often cited hazard-generated need in all five communities stemmed from damage to individual/household dwellings. Although there was a high degree of variance regarding the amount of damage to dwellings across the five communities, the needs presented by the damages remained similar.

Each of the five communities addressed the individual/household needs in a like manner. In response to the hazard event(s), various nonprofit and government organizations within the communities got together and reached out to individuals/households to identify what the needs were. There was a large degree of variance across the five communities as to what organizations were involved in the community meetings and the ratio between nonprofit and government organizations was different in each community. Nevertheless, the needs were assessed in a similar manner. The process of how these needs were initially identified is described in the following excerpt:

...people would come in, we would identify what their need was. I need food. I need food stamps. I need to replace my food stamps. I need cleanup supplies. I

need somebody to muck my house out. I need... Whatever their needs were. And we tried to then send them to the specific table for the organization or the agency/department that would be able to address their needs.

One participant described this process as identifying the “3 M’s – money, materials, and manpower.” As the quotation highlights, once the LVOAD identified the needs, it would “send them” to the specific organization that handles the need they are presenting. The process illustrated in this quote demonstrates the basic relationship between hazard-generated needs and response-generated needs. The food, food stamps, and cleanup supplies are the hazard-generated needs. The coordination between and across the organizations to meet those needs represents the response-generated needs. Understanding this basic relationship between hazard- and response-generated needs is essential to understanding how needs/unmet needs influenced the creation of the LVOADs in this study.

Although there are a number of needs that arise in the aftermath of a hazard event, the following discussion focuses on the needs that were most commonly referenced in the interviews. In all cases, the majority of the flood damages to dwellings were treated by a method referred to as “muck-out,” which is the process of tearing out flooring and walls that were exposed to flood waters and contain dangerous mold and mildew. The most common muck-out material that was referenced in the interviews was cleanup buckets. Cleanup buckets were filled with equipment such as protective gloves, masks, mops, bleach, garbage bags, and other cleanup supplies designed to safely and effectively “muck-out” a damaged dwelling. The following quote demonstrates the need for cleanup buckets:

We needed cleanup buckets. Little dumpster buckets that had everything you would need to clean up. We gave out a lot of those. I mean I don't know what the total numbers were, but there were a few going out the door every few minutes. And maybe that's what the need was. Maybe that need was served.

The cleanup buckets were the most popular hazard-generated need cited in all five communities. As previously discussed, the hazard-generated needs shared a direct relationship with response-generated needs. In each of the five communities, more than one organization possessed cleanup buckets, which is described in the following statement: "Cleaning supplies were just nuts at one point because they had all the same stuff coming in and feeding into three different groups." Since more than one organization were handling cleanup buckets it was beneficial for those organizations to coordinate efforts. In addition to offering cleanup supplies, these organizations were also responsible for several other tasks and activities, which only added to the need to coordinate efforts with other organizations. The following excerpt highlights how one organization may be involved in a number of different tasks and activities:

...we don't just give out funds, we also find people that can help them with other needs, such as mold and mildew, or providing them with furniture, or the voluntary types of things, or whatever. At that point in the disaster that's the types of needs that we had.

Thus far, only one element of needs has been discussed and the data suggests it is beneficial for organizations to consolidate their effort to best serve the community. As the last quote hinted, a coordinated effort becomes even more important as needs become more complex.

In many cases, cleanup buckets were not sufficient to meet the individual/household needs. In some cases, the homeowners were physically unable to do the work, which is discussed in the following quote:

They take care of the one piece, the sandbagging. There's a whole other piece, its the cleanup and the removing of the sandbags. And the elderly people who cannot do that. And the cleanup of basements and yards. Um, and there are a lot of people that can't do those kind of things.

In others, the individual/household may not possess the skills or training necessary to safely and effectively use the cleanup buckets.

One of the things that we found looking at disasters, especially with the flooding, is the cleanup effort. That was really major because the volume of volunteers goes down for cleanup. During the crisis, it'll be high and then cleanup the volume goes down because it takes some special training, it takes some abilities, you need some supplies.

In one community, they brought in experts to teach organizations how to effectively engage in “muck-out” a damaged house, which is described in the following excerpt:

They brought in some experts on mold and mildew and how do you do this? How do you clean it up? What exactly do you need? What works? What doesn't work? When is it time to start cutting walls out and get down to the framework of the house and all that?

Considering the muck-out process alone, there are a number of needs that have already been brought up including cleanup bucket materials, acquiring the knowledge and skill, and possessing the physical ability to do the work. In addition to these basic needs,

some individuals were forced to vacate their homes and find new or temporary housing while their dwellings were mucked-out. Individuals/households needed money for almost anything one can conceive from temporary housing and lost wages to everyday expenses such as groceries, gas, and food. Individuals needed a huge range of supplies ranging from toiletries to building materials. These are just a few of the needs that were mentioned by participants. Once the muck-out process was complete, some households had to wait before they could rebuild, if rebuilding was an option. Once the muck-out process was complete, a whole new series of needs arose with the rebuilding process. Similar to the needs reviewed during the muck-out process, individuals/households needed money, materials, and the proper workforce to rebuild their homes.

This example of the muck-out process should serve to highlight the challenges communities face in the aftermath of a hazard event. When one considers how much more difficult the situation becomes when communities are faced with so many challenges for a single task, compiled with all of the other tasks and activities involved with the response and recovery, it becomes clear that no one organization is sufficient to address all of the individual/household needs. One participant emphasized this point perfectly when they said, “It’s not just people on the ground doing the cleanup work, but also people bringing in supplies, people that manage those supplies, and donations that come in, and it’s people that help you with fund-raising and grants...”

Thus far, the discussion has been confined to the hazard- and response-generated needs and has only hinted at how these needs influence the creation of a LVOAD. The remainder of this section will display how these needs impacted each community’s decision to pursue a LVOAD. A number of problems concerning response-generated

needs were noted in the interviews including duplication of resources, wasted resources, inter-organizational disagreements, and funding problems, to name a few. This next excerpt highlights duplication of resources in one of the communities:

[Organization X] would bring in a bunch of cleaning buckets; thousands and thousands. Well, then you would have [Organization Y] doing the same thing. There are many things that are needed in a flood or any disaster, so if you're working together and if [Organization X] is going to bring that in. Then [Organization Y] can bring something else in.

The duplication of the cleaning buckets ultimately wasted community resources. The organizations that have an excess of cleanup supplies had to find a place to store the equipment; the money that was spent on the cleaning buckets could have been used elsewhere; and the manpower it took to move the cleaning buckets was wasted. Although duplication of services is a clear example of how important resources that could have better served individuals/households were going to waste, there were also situations where the opposite was acknowledged. This following quote highlights how coordinating cleanup buckets saved financial resources that could be used to help meet any number of unmet needs:

One of the reasons why I think it's great is because you know what everybody else is doing so you are not duplicating services. For instance we were giving out recently, just a ton of clean up kits and we were ordering them in, it's a huge expense shipping them and then we find out that there is a faith based organization that has 600 of them sitting in a warehouse here in the State, so then they pitched in and started giving out cleanup kits. So, it works really well for us

all to keep talking to each other because there are gaps that each of us can fill and our mission is pretty specific.

Duplication of resources was not the only problem acknowledged by participants. Another issue involved volunteer management. It has previously been established that volunteers are a valuable asset in the response and recovery from hazard events. Volunteers can be used for just about any task and activity given they have the skills to accomplish the task. However, not all volunteers have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the communities. This discrepancy was highlighted by one participant who said, "...there is a lot of focus on spiritual/emotional [needs] and she needs more physical aid, volunteers that can help with sheltering, volunteers that will help with feeding..." This quote underlines the importance of maximizing the skill of the volunteers. This next quote describes a situation where the beginnings of communication and coordination between community organizations began to make better use of the volunteer force:

I kept calling [Organization X] going, 'there's got to be some way for people who can't do sandbags to help. And finally she called... and she's like, 'I just don't know what to tell you,' and it's like, 'you can't tell me that you have enough food. You can't because I know how many people are out working.

The post disaster atmosphere is not always such a productive setting. The data suggests organizations with similar missions are competing for resources and recognition in a high stress environment. The following quote describes some organizational disagreements:

I guess I don't need to name organizations specifically but I think for a couple of them it was like, 'I thought we were doing that? Well that's our mission? Well, that's our mission too' [referring to another unnamed group]. Ok, we get it. It's not

about who does the most. Kinda like I said previously. Making sure we're not missing anybody, so let's knock off the playground games.

This quote provides further support for organizational competition:

Different faith based organizations, volunteer organizations, other agencies, and non-profits can get a little bit out of shape if they have their own idea of how things should go and it's not going that way. So, politics I guess. I've seen a little bit of it.

Although unmet needs were mentioned by all participants (N=17) in all five communities, only three of the communities considered their unmet needs to remain after the initial community response. The other two communities said the majority of their unmet needs were taken care of during the initial response and early recovery phase by their respective Unmet Needs Committees. An Unmet Needs Committee is a group of individuals representing local organizations that form to identify and meet the needs of individuals in the aftermath of a hazard event (Phillips, 2009). The two communities that stated their needs were being met by their Unmet Needs Committee were also the two communities that decided not to pursue becoming *official* LVOADs. Therefore, there is evidence to suggest needs/unmet needs play a role in the creation of a LVOAD.

All five communities developed an Unmet Needs Committee, which showed to be influential in the creation of a LVOAD. However, the connection is not quite as clear as the connection that has already been outlined. In some LVOADs, the Unmet Needs Committee spun off from the LVOAD as described in the following, "...we would have our VOAD meeting and then right immediately to follow we would have unmet needs." Although the Unmet Needs Committee worked in unison with the LVOAD in three of the

communities, in the other two communities, the Unmet Needs Committee actually took on a more competitive nature. One participant stated, "...at that point more of the actual response was over, and it was pretty much into recovery and so the coordination that needed to be done was basically done through the unmet needs committee." This next excerpt from another community supports this finding:

They really found no need to be formed into a [Community E] VOAD, so they were just sticking with the unmet needs [committee], but what we did do is we did meet a few times. We did talk. We did do some exchanges within the groups, the counties, the principals and found out there was just not that much need to set something up even though they wanted to set something up. And so they are leaving that as an option for the future.

These final quotations reiterate the primary reason that Community E decided not to continue with the LVOAD:

Our need was so small that it was hard to identify the need. Now we know that two large neighborhoods were affected with at least 6 inches to a foot of water in their house. Some of those were large Hispanic speaking population, so automatically it was hard for us to reach out to them and get them to want to come and say, hey, we have these resources for you. Just because historically they don't trust government and that's fine we know that. The others were people that were very proud, kinda older adults in this other neighborhood. They were like, 'we're self sufficient. We've been self sufficient for the last 50 years.' But I think there wasn't a large enough need for our VOAD to sustain itself.

Again I just don't think there was enough need to continue a VOAD really... either [needs were being met], or the needs weren't there, or the needs were being met by another way. And that's why we [were] very careful after a month or two [not] to call it a VOAD. Because a VOAD brings with it an organization, a committee, a structure.

It is clear that unmet needs play a role in the creation of LVOADs, but it is unclear just how big a role they play. The evidence presented above shows that all of the communities had some degree of unmet needs, but the two that chose not to progress with their LVOADs felt they had fulfilled their unmet needs early in recovery or were meeting the needs in other ways. They noted that the needs were being met and the tasks and activities dealing with these needs were already being undertaken, ultimately eliminating the need for a LVOAD in their communities. The reverse situation also provides support as evidenced by the two communities that did become *official* LVOADs and the one community in the process of becoming a *official* LVOAD. In these three communities, there were persistent hazard- and response-generated needs leading up to the creation of the LVOAD and for some time after LVOAD formation.

Leadership

The leadership category consists of three factors. The first factor is external support from an individual or organization. The second factor is the presence of a motivated individual, or advocate. The third factor is the development of a core group of committed individuals/ organizations. Each of the five communities had at least one factor within the leadership category. However, all three leadership factors were not present in all five of the communities in this study, but they were present in the two

communities with official LVOADs and the one community that was in the process of creating a LVOAD. This suggests leadership is a very important factor for LVOAD creation.

The three factors (i.e. external support, a motivated individual, and a core group or individuals/organizations) did not appear to arise in any particular chronological order in the creation of a LVOAD. In addition, the three factors appeared to be interdependent; meaning the manifestation and development of each factor was dependent upon the existence of the other factors. The factors and their connections will be discussed in the following sections.

External Support

External support for LVOAD development came from emergency managers, State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SVOAD) representatives, and Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The support provided by these entities showed to be a factor influencing the creation of the LVOADs in this study. External support was apparent in all five communities to varying degrees. In one community, the primary external support came from the State VOAD and a government entity, both of whom actively participated in the LVOAD. In another community, the external support was much less noticeable and consisted of a simple recommendation by a government official to pursue a LVOAD in their community. In the other three communities, the state VOAD acted in an advisory capacity and offered assistance and guidance upon request. External support from SVOAD representatives was referenced in all (N = 17) of the interviews. The degree to which the SVOAD representatives played a role in the formation of a LVOAD varied by

location. At one extreme, LVOAD representatives took a leadership role within the LVOAD and at another were merely offering support and guidance upon request.

One community had a SVOAD representative serving a leadership position in the LVOAD. However, in most cases, the SVOAD's role was confined to spurring interest in the LVOAD concept and providing information on how LVOADs could benefit their communities. In addition to the varying degrees of influence that the SVOAD had in each community, there was also variance as to the point at which SVOAD introduced the concept to the communities. As previously discussed, the two communities that did not pursue officially forming a LVOAD only had one hazard event. In these cases, the SVOAD used that one event as an opportunity to introduce the LVOAD concept. In another community, it appeared that a SVOAD representative contacted the community after the second consecutive year of a disaster. In the other two communities, it was not clear at which point SVOAD became involved. This timeline discrepancy may be attributed to participants simply forgetting dates and times. Some participants noted that the seasons of disaster "blurred together" and reported difficulty recollecting dates, and even years, from memory.

When one considers the SVOAD's motives behind starting a LVOAD, it appears to come down to common sense. Since the SVOAD representatives respond to disasters across the state, it would be advantageous to have partners in as many locations as possible, especially the communities that repeatedly deal with hazard events. Regardless of the SVOAD's motives, SVOADs provided external support for LVOAD creation in the five communities in this study. The following quote demonstrates how the SVOAD acted to instigate interest in LVOADs:

It was pretty much the State VOAD saying, ‘hey you guys need to get a group going together there locally.’ And usually somebody on the State VOAD helped to get it started because they understand that you kind of have to take these local partners and foundations, and banks, and county agents, and emergency managers, and get them together and start conversing and deciding.

As mentioned, SVOAD representatives served in an advisory capacity and offered support for communities that had an interest in forming a LVOAD. In some cases, there was already a SVOAD representative operating within the impacted community. In these cases, the representative would attend community meetings and bring up the LVOAD concept during the community meetings. In other cases, the SVOAD representative would be invited to attend a community meeting or would hold their own community meeting. This next excerpt is an example of the latter:

I don’t remember if we started in [Year X] or thereabouts, but, what happened is that we were in another spring of disaster and the State VOAD held a meeting here in [Community B]. And a couple of us locals were asked to present on stuff... And they did a nice job on that so they said if we wanted to organize something, if we wanted to put together a [LVOAD], if we wanted to organize some training sessions, if we wanted to bring in some representatives on resiliency, we can do that. And we did.”

In other cases, the SVOAD representative lived and worked in the impacted community and wore multiple “hats.” In addition to having responsibilities to the SVOAD, they also had responsibilities to their organization as they were attempting to start up a LVOAD.

This concept of wearing multiple hats was frequently cited by participants as a factor that

influenced LVOAD creation. This consideration will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. This next quote discusses the concept of wearing “multiple hats” and how complex and difficult the role could become:

She [Referring to a SVOAD member] was the initial person that worked to get those set up and running. They worked through the [SVOAD] and then that [LVOAD] also... Those groups also spun off into the unmet need[s]. So, it was kinda a crossover. The VOAD had separate committees, but a lot of members from the VOAD were on both. It was just a case where, you wear those hats.

Another means of support was to suggest the LVOAD adopt a structure similar to that of the SVOAD. The SVOAD Board is comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. It has voting members and associate members that act in advisory roles, but do not have official voting status. The SVOAD also has by-laws, which drive the mission and provides rules and guidelines on how the SVOAD operates. One participant with the SVOAD highlighted this support role when they stated, “I had the conference call with [a LVOAD] this morning and I sent them our State VOAD by-laws. As a guideline so they don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

Although the SVOAD has a lot to gain from forming LVOADs in communities across their respective states, this should not suggest that it does not have benefits for the communities interested in forming LVOADs. This next excerpt shows how SVOAD support benefits the LVOAD by offering technical advice:

...we had almost technical assistance with some things, ‘here’s how we have done it in the past, you guys can do it this way, you don’t have to, but here’s an idea,’ which was wonderful because we were out middle of nowhere. ‘We know we

want to do this but how do we set it all up?’ So having a framework from other people [SVOAD representatives] was very nice.

As the above demonstrate, SVOADs serve an important role in the creation of a LVOAD. In four of the five communities, the SVOAD representative inspired LVOAD interest and acted in an advisory capacity aiding with activities such as providing examples of by-laws, offering technical assistance, and proposing a structure and framework. In the other LVOAD, the SVOAD representative was directly responsible for the creation of the LVOAD and served in a leadership position after the LVOAD formed. However, even in this last case, there was external support from government entities as well.

Although VOADs are traditionally comprised of nonprofits, government also played a role in the creation of the LVOADs in this study. Government organizations include offices of emergency management, human service agencies, departments of public health, social service agencies, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to name a few. Government played a role in all five of the communities in this study. In most cases, the government organizations served in an advisory capacity as associate members, meaning they did not have voting privileges. Although all government organizations involved in response or recovery operations may stand to gain from having a LVOAD in their community, emergency managers may benefit uniquely. Emergency managers are responsible for getting information to organizations involved with response and recovery. The emergency managers provided information to the LVOADs on response and recovery operations. In communities with LVOADs, the emergency manager has a channel to reach several of these organizations at one time, saving them

time and effort. A government representative discusses the role they had in the creation of the LVOAD in the following excerpt:

And so, I kinda gave her [LVOAD Advocate] the go ahead and said this really needs to be a kinda a groundswell effort and a commitment by these organizations to be part of this, because if I drive it, you know, then it seems like I have to be there every step of the way to keep this thing going, keep members involved, and keep meeting, you know, happening, and that kind of stuff. So, she agreed and we gathered some of the key folks that have been active in disasters from some of these local organizations together and kinda laid the thought, the idea, the proposal out. We got a lot of buy-in from folks because they had been doing this all along and they saw the value as well. To put some real good structure behind what we were trying to do.

In addition to the benefits provided by an efficient communication channel, emergency managers also have the opportunity to make LVOADs a permanent part of their operations by writing them into their plans. This next quote describes how an emergency manager incorporated LVOADs into the emergency planning process and how the LVOAD can be utilized for volunteer management:

You know, we've built [LVOADs] into our plans. You know, our volunteer annex. [LVOAD] is an important part of that. You identify the different kinds of groups that come. You know, the spontaneous volunteers, the volunteer organizations, the professional volunteers organizations. But they're a key part of what we do and I'm very pleased we were finally able to get that organized and get it going.

The above citations serve another purpose beyond underlining the benefits behind supporting LVOAD development. The emergency managers were limited in their ability to assume leadership positions within the LVOAD. In three of the communities, the emergency managers assumed an advisory role providing pertinent information in regards to the city or county. This next quotation highlights this point:

I have not taken a big role in on the VOAD, just because of my standpoint and my position here as the EM for the county. That's kind of why I will participate in the meetings, and be a [associate] member of the VOAD, but I don't step out and take any leadership roles in it.

In addition to SVOAD and emergency manager involvement, the other government entities also played a role in two of the communities in this study. Although the role of government was limited in regards to leadership roles, government agencies served as associate members offering expertise and resources. In some cases government organizations served as information sources on how to get VOADs up and running, as described in the following quote:

We then basically go out as community organizers and let people know we're here and let the VOAD especially know that we are here. Then we work with them on helping get something organized in the way of long term recovery groups, unmet need groups, and if there is no VOAD, we also try to get one set up for the future.

This sentiment was supported by a member of another community who said, "I guess the idea was started by the [government representative], who was there because of the potential disaster." This final excerpt was by a government employee who attempted to

spearhead the LVOAD and inspire a nonprofit to take the lead, only to table the idea when nobody stepped forward:

So, I knew that VOADs existed and you could start your own local VOAD and I had a lot of assistance from the state and FEMA in thinking through that process. How do you create one? How do you organize the groups? And we gave it a shot. Like I said, no one came to the table, so then I was like, let's rename it instead. Instead of trying to organize a formal committee with a president and trying to address that, we'll just make it a network and we'll leave it as this network of organizations to which they can all bring something to the table, but we need to still send the person into the network.

Interestingly enough, the two communities that cited a government representative as one of the initial LVOAD proponents in their communities, did not go on to become *official* LVOADs. The citations illustrate the varying roles of government in relation to the creation of a LVOAD across the five communities. The evidence presented in this section suggests that those within governmental organizations are better served acting in an informational/advisory role, rather than a leadership role. Although government did fulfill leadership positions in three of the five communities at one point in time, it proved problematic due to the inherent limitations of government. It is clear that some degree of external support was necessary to inspire the LVOAD premise, but it was unclear which type of external support was most beneficial to LVOAD creation.

Motivated Individual

A motivated individual was pointed to time and time again when asked what the keys to the success in LVOAD creation were. In each case, a motivated individual was

advocating for its creation. A motivated individual was a factor in all five communities and was brought up in all of the interviews (N=17). It was the most explicitly stated factor of all of the aspects discussed in this study, apart from possibly the hazard event(s) itself. In each of the five communities, the motivated individual was a local community member who took it upon themselves to take the necessary steps in getting a LVOAD generated in their communities.

In addition to being motivated and advocating for LVOADs, a key characteristic of the motivated individual seemed to be that they needed to be a member of the nonprofit community, as opposed to a government organization. It may seem intuitive that the motivated individual would be a member of the nonprofit community, but in two of the communities, members of government organizations were the primary advocates for the LVOAD. In one community where the motivated individual was in a governmental role, the individual recognized the need for nonprofit leadership and sought out a motivated individual within the local nonprofit community. The individual was unsuccessful in finding a motivated individual in the nonprofit community, which ultimately led to the group deciding not to pursue an official LVOAD. In the other community where the motivated individual was in a governmental role, there was some discrepancy among the community members that felt the LVOAD group was not an *official* LVOAD since an individual in a governmental role was leading it. In this community, members of the nonprofit community stepped forward and assumed the role of the motivated individual and the individual within government stepped down. At the time this research was conducted, this community was in the process of making their LVOAD *official*. These two communities lend support for the importance of the

motivated individual being a member of a nonprofit organization versus a government organization since the other three communities did not have the same problems when the motivated individual was a member of the nonprofit community. The following quotations provide further support for the importance of having the LVOAD advocate come from the nonprofit community:

The main person who was trying to get it organized was the Community E Emergency Manager. And that's usually not the case. It's usually someone from a voluntary agency. His intentions were good. His intentions were one hundred percent good. He did the right thing. He asked us for help. He asked other agencies. He knew it wasn't a government thing that should be done. He was able to bring in the faith-based and voluntary organizations whose charters work in disasters. He realized counties really don't take the lead on this. Government doesn't really take the lead on it.

...we all agreed as emergency managers, we can't hold up this [LVOAD] if we don't have someone from the community come and take this on. So, in agreement, we all were like, "maybe this isn't the right time." maybe we need to go back and look at what we have in our communities, build those networks, and then come back together and maybe try again in the future.

One role that the motivated individual had was to motivate individuals from other nonprofit and government organizations involved with response and recovery activities. This first quote describes the motivated individual seeking support from a member of a government organization:

And one of the persons who was actively involved in this [response and recovery] group, and a little bit frustrated with how it was going, came to me and said, ‘You know [Name X], here's how it works in reality.’ And she kinda said, ‘You know, you really need to understand what we can do for you.’ And so, I started listening and thinking and she and I started talking together and saying, ‘you know, there's this concept called COAD, where we take the VOAD, which is a state asset, and we replicate it at the local level.’

This next quote provides further support for the importance of a motivated individual. It also highlights the importance of having that leader be a part of the nonprofit community:

[Individual X] was really, you know, she was the unofficial driver of this whole thing and really had been prior to that. I described the director of [Organization Y] and the director of [Organization Z] were the governmental kinda leaders, but [Individual X] was always there in the background. She was the leader for the non-profits side. You know, that really kinda kept the idea alive and that I communicated with over a period of a few years to kinda get to the point where we really got an organization started.

This next quote points to the importance of the leader being energetic and motivated:

So you just have to watch out and make sure that who you have in your leadership positions are energetic and keep everybody motivated to keep it going because when that doesn't happen, the energy isn't apparent, it starts to wane a bit.

Thus far, the conversation has been on the motivated individual spurring interest and garnering support for a LVOAD. However, there is also an important element of time involved. This next quote shows the importance of having sustained motivation.

It's going to be up to the leadership. Basically, if they can keep it going. My personal feelings, from what I'm seeing, I see them doing that. That they will keep interest in it. And it is hard to keep interest during peacetime. So, it's really important that they come up with something...

Since creating a LVOAD is a time consuming process that can take years in some cases, it is important that the leader possess motivation that is consistent and lasting. This next quote provides further support:

[Individual X] was, you know, she was energetic, and positive, and encouraging, and, you know, [Individual X] is one of those folks that ah... she gets an idea and she won't let go. But she understood. She had to be patient with us because of what was going on. We just couldn't say, ok, we're gonna do it and just do it. We had to get a little bit of time to take a breath and let things happen.

Each of the communities that succeeded in creating a LVOAD offered examples of the need for motivated leadership. More support can be derived from the communities that did not become official LVOADs. One participant stated it very simply when they said, "One thing you got to have is an in charge person. You know, somebody that can really get the group going, kind of a key person." Further support was given by another participant who stated, "And basically, the key to having a group like that is having someone who is going to spearhead it; keep it going; to do the work associated with it so

that the other people can just come.” This next quote illustrates a common problem potential leaders face when trying to garner community support for a LVOAD:

So I think that our biggest problem in [Community C] is having that main person who rodeos everybody together. I always think, ‘it should be me, it should be me, you should do it, you should do it.’ I just don’t have the time in the day.

It has been established that a motivated leader is a key factor in the creation of a LVOAD, but there is another element that has already been touched upon. The individual needs to be a part of the nonprofit community, otherwise there are likely to be some problems:

It was not a VOAD and we were calling it a VOAD and it was purposed to be a VOAD. Initially there were volunteer agencies, then at one point the county was asked to run the meetings, to be in charge, and discussion on that was they are not a volunteer organization. There were some groups that said they were not going to continue as long as there is a government entity in charge, which is not a volunteer organization.

The final factor regarding the motivated leader deals once again with time.

Although there was a large degree of variance regarding the length of time the motivated individual stayed involved with the LVOAD group, the original motivated individual in each community eventually stepped down or stepped away from the LVOAD group they were largely responsible for creating. In the two communities that did not become official LVOADs, they lacked a motivated individual from the nonprofit community. In the other three communities, the length of time the motivated individual stayed involved in the LVOAD ranged from years in two of the communities, to only weeks in the other

community. It has been suggested that possessing sustained motivation is an important element of the motivated individual, but recognizing that one cannot remain the leader forever is also an important quality of the motivated individual. Perhaps the following statement by one of the participants best captures the essence of this premise:

[Individual A] and I won't be the leaders forever; there will have to be other people....Who's going to lead this? And that's going to be a challenge too, because again I won't be the president or chairman forever, so who is going to do that after me? So, you have to find people who are committed and willing to do that.

So, the leader needs to be prepared to pass the responsibility to others who are motivated and committed to continuing the LVOAD once their time as a leader is up. The leader needs to be capable of sparking interest in the LVOAD, sustaining interest in the LVOAD, and stepping back to allow others to pick up the leadership role. The following is an example of how this process looked in one of the communities, which was generally perceived as a successful passing of responsibility of the original motivated individual to the new motivated individuals:

[Individual X], once you know, the official [LVOAD] group got organized, she kinda started stepping back... And so, she kinda walked away, not really walked away, but she kinda slowly backed away a little bit and gave leadership responsibilities to a few other people.

Not all leadership changes were met with the same success. The following quote describes a situation in one of the communities where the leadership changes were not preplanned or predetermined:

So, there's been nobody to show up and take over everything, so I took over the interim part because somebody had to do it, you know, and I didn't know what else to do. And then, there was [Individual X] with me at the time and [they] withdrew... So, that's how I got involved with that. I was just told to go to these meetings...

As the evidence suggests, leadership is not complete if it is not coming from the nonprofit community. In one community, the individual was motivated and advocating for a LVOAD, but was from a government entity and, therefore, unable to effectively lead the LVOAD. In addition to being a member of the nonprofit community, the motivated individual advocates for an LVOAD in their community, possesses sustained motivation, and is prepared to vacate the leadership position and pass the responsibility to new leadership once they have instilled the necessary structure to keep the LVOAD going. This responsibility can be difficult for any one individual, which leads into the next factor – a core group of dedicated individuals.

Core Group

The motivated individual and external support are both key factors when considering LVOAD creation, but alone insufficient without the third factor – the formation of a core group of dedicated individuals. The definition of a core group very closely parallels that of the motivated leader. The major difference being that the core group consists of a group of three or four individuals that share common characteristics with the motivated individual. Therefore, it is a group of dedicated individuals within nonprofit organizations sharing sustained motivation who also advocate for the creation of LVOADs in their communities. Of the five communities, two LVOADs possessed a

core group of dedicated individuals. These two had motivated individuals prior to the formation of a core group and went on to become *official* LVOADs. Another community started showed some signs of possessing a core group, but because this LVOAD was still forming, there was not much information to be gathered regarding the core group. The other two communities lacked a core group and did not progress to *official* LVOADs.

Because two of the communities lacked the core group altogether and the third was still in the process of developing a core group, this factor had the least amount of supporting evidence. However, there is some valuable data derived from the participants in the two communities with the core groups, as well as statements referring to lack of a core group in the two communities. Because of the close relationship with the motivated individual, the excerpts discussed in this section closely correspond with those within the motivated leader section. The core groups in the two communities shared common characteristics. The core groups were made up of individuals from both nonprofit and government organizations. Whereas the motivated individual was largely responsible for spurring interest and advocating for the LVOADs, they also acted as members of the core groups in the two communities that possessed both a motivated individual and a core group, rather than as leaders delegating tasks and activities to the core group. Therefore, the motivated individual was a member of the core group and shared tasks and activities amongst the group.

The tasks and activities of the core group were very similar in the two communities. The core groups were the laborers who got the LVOAD up and running. Core group members discussed, developed, organized, and implemented ideas for how to improve community response and recovery. Examples of tasks included networking and

recruiting individuals from other response and recovery organizations, keeping track of contact information, setting up community meetings, and taking notes at meetings to name a few. In each case, the core group took the LVOAD concept and assisted in educating the community on what a LVOAD is and what it can do for the community. Participants regularly brought up the importance of having a group of committed individuals, which suggests an element of time and participation. The core group members were active participants in the LVOAD group and regularly attended community meetings and shared decision-making responsibilities.

Participants described the formation of a core group as an “organic process” that occurred naturally when the same individuals from the same organizations were attending the same community meetings on community response and recovery following a disaster. One participant put it simply when they stated, “...we ended up getting a core group of people that represented [Community B].” This first quote describes the process in greater detail:

And it was about that time that the [Organization X], it was [Individual X], with the [Organization X], myself, [Individual X] at [Organization Y], and [Individual Z] at [Organization Z]. We all got together and kinda, really under [Individual Y's] direction, said, we need to make a formal process for this because if were gonna keep doing this, let's just have it.

One recurring concern that arose when discussing the core group was when participants were asked when the core group formed. In both communities, the members who would eventually become part of the core groups knew each other very well before they decided to pursue a LVOAD. They regularly talked about seeing each other at

conferences and various community meetings. Therefore, timelines were fuzzy when asked when the core group formed and decided to pursue a LVOAD. Whereas some participants cited a lengthy process taking years to become *official* LVOADs, others described the process more simply. One participant stated, “There was a small group of us in [Year X] who met over the summer, wrote the by-laws and then in the fall of [Year X], we held elections.” This discrepancy is likely due to a number of factors. The participants’ memories likely played a factor and participants described the same event based on their own subjective experiences. Also, although the core group remained fairly consistent in both communities, there was some turnover of the core groups over time. Although there was some noted variance regarding time, both communities cited core groups as important to LVOAD creation.

As mentioned, although the other communities did not possess a core group, they did have some valuable insight to share regarding the perceived importance of a core group. This next excerpt serves as an example of how lacking a core group negatively impacted the formation of the LVOAD:

...for the longest time, it just felt like it was just me and [Individual X], we were pretty much the only people. And there are a few others like the [Organization Y], we do have a [Organization Y] office here in [Community C], and sometimes they come, most often not. We just don’t get the turn-out or the participation that it just, kind of fell the way-side.

The core group served an important role in the creation of an LVOAD by completing tasks and activities that were necessary to advocate for the LVOAD concept. However, the tasks and activates changed as the LVOAD progressed towards creation and new

roles and responsibilities developed. This brings up a very important aspect of a core group. When the core group first started meeting, it was very informal and was very team oriented with no one individual taking official leadership of the organization. However, as the LVOADs became more *official*, the core groups in both communities eventually adopted formal leadership roles and responsibilities. This becomes important when the core group faces turnover within the core group. In both communities, the formal leaders were members of the core groups. This next quote discusses the successful leadership transference from the original leader to an individual in the core group. “So, there were three kinda folks who stepped up to the plate and said, we'll accept leadership positions within this [LVOAD] organization.”

Of the five communities, two developed a core group of dedicated individuals that were willing to serve in leadership positions, regularly attend meetings, and develop by-laws and organizational structures. Of the other three communities, one was in the process of developing a LVOAD organizational structure and did not yet have a core group of dedicated individuals identified, one was not able to maintain a core group of more than two individuals, and the other had a core group of individuals in governmental positions, but lacked the committed members in the nonprofit community. Neither of these aforementioned communities progressed to *officially* creating a LVOAD. It seemed that those groups that possessed a motivated leader also possessed a strong core group. Therefore, evidence points to having a core group as an important factor in the development of a LVOAD. The two communities that possessed external support, a motivated individual, and a core group were the two communities that also developed an organizational structure, which is discussed in the next section. Of the two communities

that did not become *official* LVOADs, one lacked all three factors and the other community received some external support and showed signs of a motivated leader, but lacked a core group.

LVOAD Organizational Structure

The general consensus among participants was that the development of an organizational structure was the point at which the LVOAD became *official*. There are three factors within this section. The first section discusses by-law formation. The second section discusses the role of elections, and the third section discusses recruitment. Participants viewed the formation of by-laws and the election of formal roles as the moments the LVOAD became *real*, *actual*, or *official*. However, participants often discussed by-law formation and elections as going hand-in-hand and rarely discussed the two as independent processes. In the two communities that produced *official* LVOADs, it was clear that the by-laws were obtained prior to elections. In the community that was in the process of creating an organizational structure, the elections were held before the by-laws were written. However, participants often discussed by-law formation occurring concurrently with elections. This finding can be at least partially explained by the nature of by-law formation, which is a time consuming process that happened over the course of weeks or months. Some participants cited recruitment as happening prior to the LVOAD forming. Other participants mentioned recruitment occurring after the LVOAD was created. Although this discrepancy could be due to a number of factors, evidence suggests that both were true in both communities. It appeared recruitment was occurring at both points.

Two of the five communities researched in this study progressed to the point where they developed an organizational structure to guide the Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD), which dictates the leadership, mission, and overall function of the LVOAD. As evidenced in the previous section, the two groups that progressed to this stage of development had external support from the state VOAD, which is where each of them obtained information on how they could set up their respective by-laws. The fifth community was in the process of developing an organizational structure at the time this study was being conducted, so the organizational structure conversations are limited to the two that achieved LVOAD creation. The community that was in the process of LVOAD creation was seeking by-laws from the state and there is evidence to suggest the LVOAD organizational structure will be similar to that of the two LVOADs that reached creation.

By-Law Formation

As previously mentioned, by-law formation and elections are two separate things, but participants generally discussed them as going hand-in-hand. Participants described by-laws as a living, working document that regulated how the LVOAD conducted their business. Tasks and activities denoted in the by-laws included financial management, membership dues, membership composition, election procedures, leadership restrictions, meeting schedules, etc. In both communities that progressed to this stage of LVOAD development, a generic by-law document was “borrowed” from the State Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (SVOAD) as a reference so the communities did not have to “start from scratch” or “reinvent the wheel,” as some of the participants put it.

The SVOAD by-laws mirrored the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) by-laws (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, 2013).

Both communities obtained and began working on the by-laws before they held elections. This may be partly due to the fact that the by-laws themselves contain rules and procedures for how to conduct elections. Most participants gave more weight to the significance of the by-laws. One participant put it bluntly when they said, “I would say it [the LVOAD] started with the small group of us that wrote the by-laws.” Another participant said, “I think the by-laws have really helped make it official that we are a group that does meet and will meet. Um, at least on a regular basis.” This statement reinforces the idea that the by-laws are necessary for the LVOAD to be considered *official*. There was a general consensus among participants that the by-laws were extremely important to help guide the LVOAD. This next statement illustrates this belief:

We've got a system in place. And so, [Individual W] and [Individual X] and [Individual Y] and I and somebody else, I think it was [Individual Z], met over the summer to develop some by-laws, and about if this is gonna be an actual organization. And we're gonna be led by the community. What are our actual laws? I mean, are we going to have officers? Things like that.

This next statement discusses how the LVOAD reworked the by-law format to help fit with their specific needs:

And we actually borrowed some by-laws from the state VOAD. And we really just tweaked them a little bit about board membership and things like that and officers and rotations and who can be a member and who can't be a member.

Things like that. But after, it was the [Time X] we officially launched kinda that we're a [LVOAD].

In both communities, the by-law process was time a consuming process that lasted several weeks or months. This devotion of time and attention shows the significance that both communities gave to the bylaws. In one case the community made a separate committee within the LVOAD to work specifically on the by-laws. These next two excerpts capture the time element:

We tried to use the bylaws as best as we could. It took us forever, well not forever but about 3 or 4 or 5 months to finally get a final copy of our bylaws and we started off using [Community A] as an example. We set up a special bylaws committee to bring it back to the entire VOAD to try to work it out that way.

...they started working on some by-laws. And then, we knew we were going to gather again in the fall, so that we could be talking a little bit. And so they got a preliminary by-laws set up. And then in November of [Year X] we met again. And started to form what was then called the [Community A LVOAD] So, that's how it first came to be was in [Month X of Year X]. And then we met again in [Month Y of Year Y]. They gave the paperwork on the by-laws. There was discussion and what did anybody want? Were there other groups that people felt should be active and be called in? And so those invitations happened just from individuals who were present at the time. And then in [Month Y] we gathered and had an election of officers.

Although both groups spent a great deal of time and energy in developing by-laws, both communities noted that the by-laws were a “living document” that needed to

be revisited and revised as necessary. This next excerpt describes how the by-laws were revisited and revised to meet the needs of the community and how important it is to start with a strong foundation to build upon:

I think that at first I thought ‘ok, this is good,’ but as the issues came up and things happened through the years I found that it was really good because we could just go back and look at the by-laws, what they said. And that turned out to be really important, so I think it is smart if you are going to start a [LVOAD] is take your time to develop the by-laws you want, that have the rules that you want that will make you effective. So, it was really important.

In addition to guiding the regular activities of the LVOAD, the by-laws served another purpose. Since the by-laws were obtained from the SVOAD, they followed the same basic format with the same basic rules and regulations governing them. Although there were some changes to the original by-laws supplied by the state, participants cited conforming with the state VOAD as an important element to becoming a “legitimate” LVOAD, as evidenced by the following excerpt:

[By-laws are] very important so that we have some structure in place and also so we can be a part of State and National VOAD. We want to be a part of this. We want to have legitimacy with the by-laws and we will have partner members and associate members. The associate members would be government agencies, would be the city, the county maybe even the university. That way, it legitimizes us. We are a local VOAD not just a loose group. We do have a purpose and gives us structure, so I think it would be very important.”

Thus far, all evidence has been limited to participants from the two communities that become *official* LVOADs. There is much to be gained from taking a look at the two communities that never progressed to developing an organizational structure. One participant stated, “We don’t have By-Laws, we don’t have an organization set up like they do in [Community A].” When asked if they felt like an official LVOAD, another participant said, “It never got that far. No, it did not get that far. No.” These quotes further demonstrate the importance of by-laws as they show how participants felt that by-laws were necessary in order to be *official* and that an organizational structure was the next logical step towards LVOAD creation. The next section discusses the counterpart to by-laws – elections.

Elections

The elections involved the LVOAD group members holding a democratic hearing to determine who would fulfill leadership positions on the board and who qualifies for membership and associate membership within the LVOAD. As mentioned, the procedures and guidelines for how to conduct elections were derived from the by-laws that the two *official* LVOADs borrowed from the SVOAD, which also mirrored the National VOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, 2013). The generic by-law document obtained from the state listed three different membership statuses. The board members consisted of a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer. According to the by-laws, the board members each have responsibilities related specifically to their positions that dictate how to undertake the tasks and activities of the LVOAD. The board members are from nonprofit organizations and are voting members. Next are the member organizations comprised of individuals largely from the nonprofit

community, who also have voting rights within the LVOAD. Lastly, there are associate members, who are made up of members of government and private sector organizations who do not retain voting rights. The associate members serve largely an advisory and informational role according to the SVOAD.

Regarding elections, one LVOAD followed the SVOAD by-laws fairly closely and maintained the board member, member, and associate member status with similar voting privileges. They also only included membership dues of \$25.00 for the board members and regular members. The other LVOAD had some notable differences. Instead of a chair and vice-chair, they had two co-chairs who shared leadership responsibilities. In addition, they had members of government organizations serving on the board and in regular member status. Although there were differences between the two LVOADs regarding composition, the elections were held in a similar fashion. One participant outlines the general process of elections when they said, “There was a small group of us in [Year X] who met over the summer, wrote the by-laws and then in the fall of [Year X] we held elections.”

As mentioned, by-laws and elections were happening concurrently in both communities, as evidenced by the following excerpts:

And then in [Month X] we gathered and had an election of officers. We had a presentation from [Individual Y] on what we could be expecting coming up. The authorization for the bylaws happened, so we kinda ...It was, and I don't know if incorporated is the right word, but that's what ended up happening is we got the organization formed and it became real in [Time X].

They did an election last week and have 2 co-chairs up in [Community D] and they are indeed working on their by-laws now and we'll have another meeting in [Month X], towards the end of [Month X] to formalize some of their functions. This last excerpt was taken from a participant in the community that was in the process of developing a LVOAD in their community. This community deviated from the other two in that they held their elections prior to by-law formation.

I was elected President and she was like the vice-president. ... We were elected at that meeting and we're working on this together. She is going to do the by-laws and I am working on agendas for the next meetings that we will send out to everyone...

The by-law process and elections seem to be one of the defining factors on whether or not a LVOAD becomes *official*, as evidenced by both being present in the two communities that became official LVOAD and absent from the two communities that did not make it to this stage of LVOAD creation. In addition, the community that was in the process of LVOAD development at the time of this research was in the process of elections and by-law formation. Although the beginnings of by-law formation seemed to be the first step towards creating an organizational structure, it appeared that elections were largely perceived as something that was happening concurrently. The next section in this chapter discusses recruitment, which was also happening at the same time as by-law formation and elections.

Recruitment

Organizational recruitment was a factor that appeared to occur in conjunction with the by-law and electoral processes. Recruitment involved sending out invitations to

attend the initial LVOAD meetings. These invitations were happening through word-of-mouth, email, telephone calls, letters, brochures, and newsletters. The recruitment in the communities targeted organizations that the LVOAD members believed might have had a part to play during times of disaster. Neither community mentioned a specific target population. Both mentioned reaching out to organizational members with disaster specific missions, government agencies that may provide resources in times of disaster, organizations from neighboring counties and communities, technical experts, hospitals, and hazard specific experts.

Recruiting was important for a couple of reasons. First, LVOAD members regularly cited the need for current up-to-date information. Second, participants regularly mentioned instances where they were unable to reach individuals in need because they did not have a relationship with crucial individuals and organizations. These organizations included local government officials and nonprofit groups with important abilities and resources. Recruiting these individuals would potentially increase the valuable resources they offer and, ultimately, to better serve individuals with needs. Three communities mentioned engaging in recruitment. These same three communities were also the ones that made it to the organizational structure stage of LVOAD development.

The means of recruitment varied between LVOADs and for each LVOAD over time. The following quote touches upon the selection process for recruitment and was limited to word-of-mouth at the time of the community's first discussions of recruitment:

There was discussion and what did anybody want? Were there other groups that people felt should be active and be called in? And so those invitations happened just from individuals who were present at the time.

These next excerpts compare how recruitment looked at different points in time for the same LVOAD:

In the very beginning we sent out letters introducing the [LVOAD] and what it was, what its purpose was, and how they could play a role and be useful to them. And we just, we thought as a group that with all the different organizations maybe even ones that we never involved, we thought this would be great to have them involved. So the beginning was letters, then it was followed up with some phone calls if we knew, called like pastor organizations and different things. And then once we had the first meeting, then we got email address, and it's pretty much has been email after that.

...it kind of ended up being a word of mouth thing. We didn't do any active recruiting. It was pretty much 'Hey! Here's what we're doing. We are out here. If you want to be here, wonderful, if you don't that's ok, too. We're just going to try to do what we can with whoever wants to be involved.'

Although recruitment was mentioned as a factor present in this stage of the creation process, it was somewhat of a murky subject. It was difficult to discern how successful recruitment practices were. At this stage of LVOAD development, it did not appear as though any of the LVOADs had a designated person to engage in recruitment. The telephone calls, emails, and word-of-mouth conversations were being undertaken by multiple members of the LVOAD on an ad-hoc basis. This led to duplication of

recruitment practices within the LVOADs and problems with record keeping regarding what organizations had already been recruited. It was also unclear how many people and organizations were contacted by each LVOAD. The entire recruitment process seemed to be very loose and unorganized.

Barriers

The factors within the hazard event and leadership category serve as motivators or pressures that push the Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOAD) forward towards creation. However, there are also counter pressures, which are forces that are constantly pushing on the LVOADs in the opposite direction. These counter pressures act to hinder or ultimately to prevent the LVOADs from reaching creation. The categories discussed thus far that facilitated the creation of a LVOAD followed a rather progressive order starting with the hazard event and ending with the *official* creation of a LVOAD. These factors were ever-present forces throughout the creation stages and often occurred simultaneously, resulting in interconnected, and compounding barriers. The following three barriers are discussed in this section: burnout, meeting fatigue, and disaster competition.

Burnout

Burnout was listed as a factor in four of the five communities researched in this study as revealed by (N=15) participants who cited it as a barrier to the creation of LVOADs in their communities. In the interviews, burnout commonly referred to individuals' physical and mental stress caused by dealing with hazard events while attempting to maintain personal and professional lives. It is important to reiterate that individuals that make up a LVOAD are voluntarily donating their time in an effort to get

the LVOAD up and off the ground. These LVOAD members are juggling their own personal and professional duties not to mention dealing with the newfound pressures caused by the hazard event(s). These stressors accumulate over time and should serve as an ever-present reminder of the pressure that these individuals are constantly under. One participant explained how burnout affects an individual if they are experiencing repetitive hazard events when they said, "...if we have too many disasters, I also see that people will get really burned out. And, 'I'm just sick of doing this.' And even a sense of complacency in that, 'We're gonna go sandbag. OK, great [sarcastically].'" The concept of burnout was echoed by another participant who stated, "When I first went there, it always seemed very easy going and whatever and it just felt like everybody just kinda hit their wall, just like mentally and physically just done." The following excerpts further highlight how burnout affected LVOAD members:

...why is nobody coming? Why won't nobody vote? Why won't anybody anything? And what they found out is because Community B is constantly in this flooding thing and the mentality is that you never know what the [flood] is going to do. People are just over it. So even now when I sent out an email, I think two weeks ago, saying, 'Does anybody have anything they'd like to meet; discuss?' And not an answer. I didn't get one answer from anybody up in that region. You know there's probably some compassion fatigue. You know, you get so many people in these different professions and... you get these calls from people and you're constantly getting these calls and it wears on you after a while... you know after constant, constant, constant [calls], eventually you are gonna burn out.

Whereas the above statements serve as examples of how burnout due to repetitive hazard events negatively impacted the LVOADs in their respective communities, these next quotes emphasize how burnout was partially relieved in these same communities when they experienced a recess from disaster:

It's been tough and I think people are tired, so I'm really grateful that everybody's truly getting a break from this flood season. People are very, very worn out from those that are at risk of losing their homes, that have lost their homes, to the many man-hours of work, the volunteer work. It's just, I'm really grateful that everybody's getting a break. And I'm giving, it's also giving us an opportunity to get more organized and know that there's a lot more out there than just flooding. Right now, you know, we're managing. We're pretty new. It takes time to grow and be in place. And actually not have a disaster, so you can grow and get some stability underneath you. Cause when you're always in crisis, it's not good. It's not good on the body, or the organizations, or anything.

This next quote describes how burnout has affected their LVOAD and looks at burnout with optimism and view it a hurdle for their LVOAD to overcome:

You've probably heard this before, you know, it's a marathon, not a sprint. But people want to sprint and be done. So yeah, you do see that and that is probably why some of these agencies and groups have dropped out. Not all of them, but maybe some. Some have decided, 'we've had enough. We helped for 6 or 8 months, we did our part.' And that's ok and the thing about the VOAD is you have people who have done it for 8 months and need a break. Then someone else can say, 'we'll pick up from there and go on. We'll get the baton and move on.'

In each of the examples provided, burnout affected the LVOAD members by adding pressure onto individuals who are already in stressful situations balancing their personal and professional lives on top of their responsibilities to the LVOAD. Participants repeatedly hinted that if they had to choose between their personal lives, professional lives, and the LVOAD, they chose the LVOAD as the only expendable option. The above excerpts suggest that burnout had a significant impact on the creation of LVOADs in four of the communities. The fifth community did not progress far enough into the development stages of a LVOAD to experience burnout. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, burnout was often compounded on top of other barriers, which only adds to the overall influence of burnout on the creation of LVOADs.

Meeting Fatigue

Meeting fatigue was a factor observed in all (N=17) of the interviews to varying degrees. This barrier encompasses situations where LVOADs were competing with other various meetings the LVOAD members were obligated to participate in for their respective organizations. Examples of other meetings include Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) meetings, Unmet Needs Committee meetings, State Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (SVOAD) meetings, city, county, and community meetings, and individual LVOAD member's organizational meetings. Numerous meetings can take their toll on the LVOAD members, who may be stretched thin across all of the potential meetings they may be required to attend. In many cases, the only meeting that they have a choice in attending were the LVOAD meetings, since it was entirely a voluntary position, whereas many of the others were mandatory or strongly recommended by their leadership. This dilemma highlights the relationship between meeting fatigue and

burnout, as making it to LVOAD meetings was regularly referenced as a factor of burnout. This first quote underlines how closely related the LVOAD meetings were with their community's Unmet Needs Committee: "...they coincide so closely, that we would have our [LVOAD] meeting and then right immediately to follow we would have unmet needs."

It should come as no surprise that some LVOADs did not survive to creation when they are having meetings that coincide so closely with other meetings that they may be deemed somewhat impractical if they are discussing the same or similar issues in their LVOAD meetings. In addition to discussing similar material in meetings, other times meeting fatigue can be a simple case of too many meetings as illustrated by one participant who stated, "I think everybody has so many meetings that they just don't come." The following excerpts discuss this predicament and how difficult it can be on individuals:

Often times it's tough, when there's a regional disaster, to send the same person to two different meetings. Especially, when they are happening on the same day.

You have to go from [City X] to [City Y]... I mean there were a few people that were like, 'Yeah, I just hurried down here from [City X] and I have to go back to [City Y] tonight.'

Since there was only a small collective group, those members that... you know, have key things they do in their own professions, other commitments that I think a person commits themselves to so many things that it just kind of.. there's a lot of... timing was off, as far as trying to fit in 14 meetings in one day, you know what I mean, it was kind of like that.

In some cases, meeting fatigue was one of the primary influences on the decision to stop meeting as a LVOAD. The following dialogue with Community C members shows how meeting fatigue contributed to their decision not pursue becoming an *official* LVOAD:

So, that's where we've just kind of dropped it and left it be because the five or six of us that are semi-involved in Community C, we all attend the State VOAD ones, so we are on their conference calls and attend their meetings. So we just kind of use that as our source of networking and information.

...the reason we stopped meeting wasn't really like a conscious thing, it was the Long-Term Recovery Committee formed to take care of the unmet needs. And so, most of the people were on both groups, and so we started to coordinate through the Long-Term recovery and Unmet Needs Committee after that.”

We decided that since the same people were involved, we would basically do that business as part of the Long-Term Recovery Committee. That was decided in the meeting, because obviously during the disaster, people don't have a lot of spare time. So that's the best way of coordinating.

Meeting fatigue was also a factor in Community E's decision not to proceed with an official LVOAD as evidenced by the following excerpt:

So, why would the state VOAD have a meeting and then the same players go to another meeting down the road, when again, you're always worrying about time. How much time do you have to do your projects, things you want to work on, and then meet as well.

Meeting fatigue was one of the primary reasons given for the demise of the two LVOADs that did not develop into an *official* LVOAD. It was also referenced as a major

issue in the other three communities and clearly influenced the creation of the LVOADs. The two LVOADs that developed an organizational structure had written in their by-laws that regular meetings would be held quarterly and as often as weekly in times of disaster. These time demands resulted in a considerable amount of time that members were expected to give up in order to get the LVOAD up and running. As evidenced by the excerpt and quotes provided in this section, many LVOAD members felt it was simply impractical to continue to meet when the information discussed in the LVOAD meetings was exactly the same as what is discussed in other mandatory meetings. At some point, individuals had to decide if duplicated information is worth the time it takes to go out of their way to attend a purely voluntary LVOAD meeting. In many cases, they simply chose to skip or postpone the meetings

Disaster Competition

Disaster competition refers to situations when larger or more salient disasters occur in nearby communities, which divert attention away from the smaller hazard events. In effect, supplies, volunteers, disaster organizations, and public attention are diverted from the smaller scale disaster to a bigger disaster in the nearby region or state. Disaster competition was a barrier to LVOAD creation in two of the five communities in this study. In the other three communities, the communities that made it to creation either did not experience disaster competition, because they did not have any other disasters to compete with in their regions or they had the largest or most salient disasters in their region. The most notable affect that disaster competition had on LVOADs was temporary absence of LVOAD core member organizations and LVOAD core members. An example

of this notion was provided when one participant remarked, "...you'd see the same organizations represented. Often times it's tough when there's a regional disaster..."

This next excerpt displays how a large-scale disaster within the same state pulled important LVOAD organizations from the respective communities:

Um, so I see it growing. It's really a time thing. It kind of faltered a bit last year because of the flooding in [City X and City Y]. Because so many of our main organizations were out there fighting the floods.

This next quote describes how the larger disaster in the region soaked up the state disaster organizations that would have been active with their LVOAD group, leaving them without organizations they considered to be key organizations to run a LVOAD:

Unfortunately we don't have a lot of the agencies located regionally in Community C, so like state work VOAD, our State VOAD, we need to staff our state EOC, and we don't even have a VOAD person that can do that.

This next quote describes how the majority of the public attention and resources were directed to the larger disaster in the region:

Ninety percent of our resources are up north. And there's obviously a visible need. It's on TV, it's on the radio. You can walk down the street and you can see the house that is affected, where for us you could walk down the street and you couldn't tell. You couldn't tell which house was affected and what house wasn't. I think they definitely came to the table. A lot of the national VOADs came to the table."

When considering disaster competition, one cannot do so without recognizing the other barriers and how the collective effect of all three of the factors can cumulatively prevent

a LVOAD from developing. In one of the communities that did not officially form, the LVOAD was already facing pressures from burnout and meeting fatigue when along comes this huge disaster in the region and pulls organizations and resources from their community. Suddenly, burnout and meeting fatigue were compounded and enhanced. It is unsurprising that the counter pressures outweighed the pressures to create a LVOAD in this community.

Conclusion

This chapter explored answers to this study's first research question: What factors influence the creation of a Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD)? This study identified hazard event/hazard events, leadership, and the formation of a LVOAD organizational structure as factors that seem to have influenced the creation or failure to create the LVOADs in this study. This study also found that just as there are factors pushing LVOADs towards creation, there are other factors (i.e. burnout, meeting fatigue, and disaster competition) that hinder creation. These factors remain significant as a LVOAD moves into maintenance as will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: LVOAD MAINTENANCE

This chapter reports results related to this study's second research question: What factors facilitate and hinder the maintenance of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs)? Maintenance refers to the activities that are undertaken after the LVOAD becomes *official* that enable the organization to continue functioning. Although there were five communities involved in this research, only two communities progressed to LVOAD maintenance. Therefore, the data presented in this chapter only reflects data from two LVOADs. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section picks up where Chapter 4 left off and continues the discussion of counter pressures and introduces three additional barriers that arose during LVOAD maintenance. General housekeeping issues comprise the second section and include financial management, updated information, and regular meetings. The next section is LVOAD evolution and discusses the shift to an all hazards approach. The final section is value of membership and includes membership recognition and the inclusion of education and training.

Counter Pressures/Barriers

The two communities that adopted *official* LVOADs had each dealt with repetitive flooding over consecutive years prior to forming a LVOAD and for multiple years after *officially* forming. Therefore, the previous three barriers (i.e. burnout, meeting fatigue, and disaster competition, discussed in Chapter 4) continue to exert pressures on the LVOAD even after it became *official*. Adding to these factors and further compounding the post-creation environments are three additional barriers: turnover, turf issues, and complacency. Although these latter three maintenance barriers were present in the pre-creation environment to some extent, participants noted they had greater influence

in the post-creation environment. Therefore, all six barriers compounded over time to exert significant counter pressures to the maintenance and the continued existence of the LVOADs.

Turnover

Turnover simply refers to instances where individuals vacate their positions within an organization. In this section, turnover is discussed as it pertains to turnover within the LVOAD leadership and across all of the member organizations and associate members that comprise the LVOAD. There are a number of factors referenced by participants that resulted in turnover. Some individuals willingly vacated their position to pursue a different position within their organization. Some left their positions to pursue other jobs outside of their organizations. Some individuals left for personal reasons and some left due to retirement. Regardless of the reasons, turnover affected LVOAD maintenance in a number of ways. Many participants cited turnover as a major problem with LVOAD maintenance. One participant exemplified this belief when they said, "...another cause of problem(s) is constant turnover of staff." In general, turnover amongst the nonprofit community was commonly cited as a factor with LVOAD maintenance. However, not all participants looked at turnover as such a big problem, as evidenced by the following excerpt: One participant stated, "...and you still have people moving in and out usually from different churches, or hospitals and schools. Those people change frequently, but most of the others are regular." The following excerpt further evidenced this belief:

And one of the things I've learned about non-profits and volunteer organizations is, there's a lot of turnover and change in those groups often times. And so, we've

lost at least one of those key people, but somebody will always step up to the plate and keep that group going.

Turnover within the LVOAD leadership seemed to have a greater negative impact on maintenance than turnover amongst the members and associate members. Both LVOADs retained some of the original core group members from the inception of the LVOADs in their communities. However, in one of the two communities, the LVOAD went through drastic changes in leadership. This first excerpt highlights the impact that turnover in leadership had on one LVOAD from the perspective of those replacing leadership:

I kind of took over going to the meetings up there. Well then, what had happened is the two people, the [two leadership positions], decided one day it was no longer. They just got up and quit. So they needed someone to step in and take over as an interim.

Although the overall impact of turnover was not universally agreed upon, it was a big enough concern that one community decided to address turnover in their plans. The following excerpt discusses the system one community has in place to combat turnover according to their by-laws and how that looks in reality:

“The way the system is set up, especially with the chair and vice chair, the positions are 3-year terms. So you serve as vice chair and you work with the chair to learn everything, then you work as the chair and then you are doing 2 things, the former chair moves forward to be the past chair and they’re still on the board and they’re there to offer historical advice and then you are there to be the president and then you have a new vice chair that you are basically training. So, in

a perfect world, you are there for 3 years, you get mentored, do the work and then you provide historical context and then you are also mentoring in that second step. So, there should always be that consistency. What throws us off is when people leave their terms early. If they commit to something and then they leave that's the kind of turnover that really interferes with the way the mechanism is supposed to work. And we've had a lot of turnover... It's a challenge. In reality, it's a challenge, but in theory, the system is designed to try to protect it. But there's always somebody around willing to help, so it seems to work out."

As the above statement highlights, the system they have developed to combat turnover is reliant on leaders fulfilling their terms, which can be problematic in the ever changing world of nonprofits. Although most participants remained optimistic that someone would always be there to take the place of vacated positions, turnover was definitely a factor with the two LVOADs in maintenance. It seems that LVOADs were less troubled with turnover amongst the member and associate members and more concerned with turnover among those in leadership positions. This finding parallels the previous chapter's reporting of the importance of strong leadership in the creation of LVOADs.

Turf Issues

Competition among LVOAD member organizations was mentioned as a barrier to the maintenance of a LVOAD in two LVOADs. Turf issues should come as no surprise given the survivalist nature of nonprofits and their competition for funding and resources (Wolf, 1999). In both communities, multiple LVOAD member organizations had similar missions and completed similar tasks and activities related to their role in situations involving hazard events. Turf issues arose when some organizations struggled with

sharing tasks, responsibilities, or recognition with fellow organizations. The following excerpts emphasize some of the challenges turf issues had on LVOAD maintenance:

There [are] little turf battles back and forth, but I don't think they have undone the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. There [are] always some people who don't like how things are being done and wish they were being done differently... People want to be recognized and they want their agency to be recognized and that is understandable, but you have to look at what is the intent and what is the purpose of this group, of these meetings, of these volunteer organizations working together? So yeah, people want to be top dog. That can be a challenge. You try to make everybody happy if you can, but it's a challenge.

You know, um, it's interesting when you are working with different organizations that want to.. are used to being.. Oh, how do I put that tactfully? They would like to be the center. So, to bring them in the fold... takes work and we're not completely done with that. Because they would like the community and when you know your looking for dollars and those kinds of things. If they can...kinda stick out, or rise above the group, that is and you've got a lot of personalities and a lot of turf... people's turf. And people want to protect their turf. And when you're looking for dollars...um, to bring them in and for everybody to be lifted up. You know, it's better, but we've got a long ways to go in that. And that's kinda why we moved to a neutral place.

I guess I don't need to name organizations specifically but I think for a couple of them it was like, 'I thought we were doing that? Well that's our mission?' 'Well, that's our mission too' [referring to another unnamed group]. Ok, we get it. It's not

about who does the most. Kinda like I said previously; making sure we're not missing anybody, so let's knock off the playground games... I think as long as you define the roles pretty early on and stick to them, or be open enough to say, ok, I really don't need to do this; Maybe I can change and do something else. So, I think that really helps as long as they don't have sorta a 'founders syndrome' or the territory piece where it's like, 'this is only mine' and you're like, 'ok, whatever.'" It's just dealing with people. It's kinda a challenge.

There [are] a lot of organizations that have been around for a long time, but people, organizations, want to be the ones known. We never go it alone. We never do. I'm a big believer in teamwork, and collaboration, and working together. But people, organizations are looking out for the interests of their organizations. So, to break that down and put it into a bigger mix is hard for some. It's not taking anything away from one organization, it's just lifting everybody up and not having one come out and say, 'ok, we did all of this.'

Although turf issues certainly had some negative impacts on the LVOADs, in some cases the relationships that were developed after overcoming the turf issues resulted in stronger personal and professional relationships. The following excerpts demonstrate the effectiveness of confronting turf battles and how overcoming these issues can result in stronger relationships in the long run:

You know, once we break down that turf stuff, I think we're gonna be in really good shape. I do. I think, you know, fortunately we are in the good community, a community that works together. And I'm already seeing improvements in that.

The first round, the first year there was a little reluctance to share that, what they were doing, but then as we got to know each other and work together and saw that then it was pretty free, it was a lot better. So it took a year, a year and a half to get comfortable, and now I think most of us know each other really well, we're pretty good friends...

Although turf issues were mentioned as barriers to LVOAD maintenance, it did not appear that they had lasting effects on the communities as evidenced by the above excerpts. However, because of the limited number of LVOADs that made it to the maintenance phase, there is not enough data to be certain. Turf issues could be a much bigger problem than is presented here, which is why it would be remiss not to include it as a barrier, even though it did not seem to carry much weight in the communities researched in this study.

Disaster Salience

Disaster salience was another issue within maintenance that was present in both LVOADs that made it to *official* status. In regards to LVOADs, disaster salience refers to the overall visibility and attention that a disaster is receiving from potential disaster response agencies, financial donors, and resource providers. Disaster salience can be assessed at any point, from the moment a disaster first impacts a community to when a community concludes final recovery activities. As previously stated, the two communities that formed *official* LVOADs were both impacted by repetitive flooding. Both communities experienced years of consecutive flooding but also experienced years where they had a reprieve from flooding. Both communities were actually experiencing a reprieve from flooding at the time of the interviews. This study showed that as the two

communities went long amounts of time between hazard events, the disaster salience in the communities decreased and continued to decrease over time. Inversely, as a community faced the prospect of impending flooding, the salience increased. Although disaster salience was not a barrier in and of itself, participants regularly cited complacency, due to low disaster salience, as a routine problem the LVOADs faced with maintenance.

Two terms that came out of the interviews that dealt with complacency were “blue sky” and “gray sky” scenarios, which one participant described as, “...the new terminology that everybody uses now is in blue-sky situations. Blue-sky is when there is no disaster and gray-sky [is when] there is a disaster event.” Disaster salience did not seem to be a concern during the gray sky situations since complacency was not mentioned as a problem while the flooding was occurring. However, blue-sky situations proved to be a very difficult obstacle for the LVOADs to overcome. One participant described the connection between blue-sky situations and complacency when they said, “We actually went a spring without something really bad, you know, in terms of incoming [flooding] again, but... I think there was, perhaps, a lackadaisicalness.”

One of the common ways that participants discussed complacency was in regards to LVOAD meeting attendance. LVOAD leadership felt that LVOAD meeting attendance declined when disaster salience was low. The following quote was from a LVOAD board member discussing the drop in meeting attendance and how that affected how they offered trainings:

Actually, we were looking at offering the training once a year, but as we've met, um, and when you're not in disaster it's like our [last] meeting, there were a lot of

people that just didn't come. Because we're not on top of a crisis... A lot of times people won't show up until you're on top of the disaster.

This next excerpt was by a member of a governmental organization within the same community discussing how blue-sky situations have affected their communication with the LVOAD:

So, of course now this year with no flood, I haven't heard anything from them, which is probably just fine with them and probably just fine with me [laughs]. So, it's, you know, I get the sense right now that they're not meeting and they're not being active because there's really not a mission right now. They have their own business to take care of just like I do when there's not a disaster. I have other things to do.

The next quote describes a situation where the community was experiencing a period of inactivity and the forecast was predicting possible flooding. The participant described the community as preparing for the flooding until the forecast changed and the community reverted back to a sense of complacency. This quote also highlights how burnout and complacency go hand-in-hand:

It was right when they thought the [water] was going to be really, really high again. And then after the forecast changed that said nothing was going to happen, then everybody just decided, 'ok, guess what, that didn't happen again. I'm tired of trying to be emotionally ready for this, and then it's not, and then they just left.

This next quote describes complacency setting in and becoming a problem after a full year without a hazard event to motivate people to act:

Let's see, we actually ran pretty good for about two years and then last summer we had a really dry summer. We had a dry spring and a dry fall. A lot of the urgency for help... Everyone was like, 'hey everyone, we're doing ok.' So, we've actually kind of backed off on our [L]VOAD and haven't done a lot in a while and now we are getting a lot of rain again. The [waters] coming up again.

This next quote sums up the basic problem with disaster complacency and how low disaster salience over long periods of time can negatively impact the LVOAD maintenance:

I think it's tough for people to stay engaged and to stay ready. I mean, I think there's a sense of complacency that just inevitably will kick in if it hasn't happened for a long time. And especially with non-profits when you have people that are changing jobs. I mean the average time I would say is probably about three to five years and you could go ten years without a flood or a major disaster to where you'd need a [LVOAD]. And so, you could have completely new people in there that have never experienced a disaster. So, yeah, I think the complacency part would be a big potential for danger. I mean, even just the enthusiasm of like, 'why are we meeting? I don't really care, I've got other stuff to do' [spoken as an example, not a personal opinion]. But, you know, it's always interesting when it's fresh in your mind.

The conversation thus far has been limited to situations describing a season without a hazard event and a year without a hazard event. One participant discussed potential future problems for their LVOAD if their community experienced multiple years without a disaster:

The only problem I see coming up is if you had two to three years in a row where there wasn't really a call. Then you might see where you have to re-ignite the troops to come back because they are not really doing much in between.

The excerpts discussed in this section highlight just how big an influence disaster salience has on the maintenance of a LVOAD. Even members of LVOADs, whose basic purpose is to deal specifically with disasters, can succumb to complacency produced by persistent blue-sky conditions. The two LVOADs that became *official* did so during periods of disaster. Disaster complacency set in when the LVOADs experienced periods of sustained “blue-sky” conditions. At the time these words are being written, the evidence provided by the two LVOADs that are currently in the maintenance phase suggest that after going consecutive years without a hazard event, they are facing significant challenges maintaining membership, participation in meetings, contact information, updated social media, and overall motivation and interest in LVOAD activities. This statement is not meant to discredit the attempts by leadership to maintain interest and participation. Evidence also suggests that these LVOADs have attempted a number of activities to counteract these obstacles. These attempts fall into three categories including general housekeeping activities, which are actions intended to keep the LVOADs operational; LVOAD evolution, which are actions designed to grow or enhance the LVOAD; and finding value of membership, which gives members a reason to participate. The discussion begins with general housekeeping.

General Housekeeping

This category includes the factors that contribute to the general day-to-day maintenance of a LVOAD. General housekeeping issues include by-law revisions,

financial management, updating information, and maintaining regular meetings. Housekeeping activities were undertaken by members of the board including the chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, members-at-large, and interns. Housekeeping activities were a very important aspect of maintenance that should not be overlooked. It has already been stated previously that LVOAD membership is entirely voluntary and, therefore, all housekeeping activities are being undertaken voluntarily as well. This means that individuals are expected to complete VOAD tasks and activities on top of their duties to their organizations. As discussed within the various sections on barriers, these individuals face many obstacles that stand in their way. However, housekeeping activities are not designed to address these barriers. Housekeeping activities are undertaken simply to keep the LVOAD operational.

By-Law Revisions

Since both *official* LVOADs specifically referenced their importance with maintaining, it is fitting that the first housekeeping factor discussed is by-law revisions. The by-laws were created and enacted to serve as a guideline for how the LVOAD should operate. Both communities had similar by-laws, which were derived from the same generic format borrowed from the SVOAD. However, each community had different needs, which demanded some changes to the bylaws over time. Both LVOADs reported handling revisions in a similar manner. Both mentioned that they held votes to determine if and how changes were to be made. Participants stated that revisiting and revising the by-laws proved to be an important element of housekeeping. One participant captured the general attitude of the process surrounding by-law revisions when they said, “So, it was definitely a working document as we went on.” In addition to making the necessary

changes as they arose, one community decided to make by-law updates a regular function as described in the following statement: "...we needed to redo our by-laws. We needed to get them ready for a vote in May. So, looking at the by-laws once a year. Updating them once a year..." This last example is perhaps the perfect illustration of how important the LVOADs viewed by-law revisions since they wrote by-law revisions into the by-laws. Although neither LVOAD gave a definitive number of times they revisited their by-laws, both mentioned that they returned to them several times.

The reason for starting the housekeeping conversation with by-law revisions is because they are also the foundation for some of the other housekeeping factors. To varying degrees, the by-laws outline rules and guidelines on how to conduct LVOAD activities including deciding who manages finances; when to hold meetings in both blue-sky and gray-sky situations, how to differentiate between the different types of members, how to handle contact information, and who is responsible for what. One of the communities even had rules dictating what would happen if the LVOAD decided to disband. In some cases, the by-laws were the determining factor when leadership had to make decisions that did not require a full member vote. One of the main activities outlined in the by-laws was financial management, which is discussed in the next section.

Financial Management

Financial management was a factor in both of the LVOADs that reached the maintenance phase of LVOAD development. Both of the LVOADs had membership dues, which were fees charged to the board members, members-at-large, and regular organizational members. The only members that were not expected to pay membership dues were the associate members, who were made up of members of government

organizations. They used the membership dues for various activities such as professional speakers, office supplies, and in one case, to meet an unmet need in the community. The membership dues were \$25.00 annually for one LVOAD and \$20.00 annually for the other.

Dealing with finances brings with it some issues. Decisions needed to be made on who would handle the money, who would be able to access the money, and how the money would be spent. Both LVOADs addressed this issue in a similar fashion. Both LVOADs voted on how money would be spent and the money was kept in a third party financial institution. When the money was dispersed, it took the signatures of two board members to withdraw the money. The following quote is from one of the communities and discusses how the membership dues were used for in their LVOAD: “Membership dues are twenty-five dollars a year. Which is fairly inexpensive. And what that's paying for is speakers, training. I know we're working on a website, brochures, that type of thing as well.”

Because of the sensitive nature that dealing with finances entails, one community developed a plan if the LVOAD were to disband. This next excerpt discusses one community's contingency plan:

We have an account through [Funding Agency]. And so, the funds go in directly to them. They hold it and then when we need it, two officers sign off on a request to it and then they will generate so that we can make payment to a speaker. It was already voted on and decided on by the group because we talked about it at one of the first meetings. Was what do we do if this bunch decides to disband. You know, if there's not a need or what do we do. And so, they put that in the bylaws.

That if it closes out then the money, because most of these organizations all have people that support the [Funding Agency]. So, what will happen is that the [Funding Agency] would then get whatever was leftover. They will just assume that. And it will be used in some way in the community.

The other community had a very similar system in place with one major difference. The other LVOAD applied for and received a government grant related to disaster recovery. The grant brought much more money to the LVOAD than regular membership dues, but it also came with some restrictions from the government on how the grant was to be used. After much thought, the LVOAD voted to use the grant money on some unmet needs within the community. This money was handled separately from the membership dues. The following excerpt discusses how this community handled the grant money:

We also had to branch off a little bit and we used the [Funding Agency] fund as our 501C3 for all of our grant stuff. So, they still have our money, so they cut the checks whenever we need them. It's just a matter of bringing an invoice to them. And that way it was kind of nice because they took the money control, or at least the money responsibility, out of our hands and we have a third party doing that for us, which worked nice and we're really glad the [Funding Agency] fund was willing to do that for us.

Although both LVOADs handled their finances in a similar way, there really is not enough evidence to suggest the effectiveness of other options other than using a funding agency. The last excerpt did suggest another possibility, which is to become an official 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The general consensus among the participants was that their current financial systems were functioning well. However, neither LVOAD

had a system in place to strictly enforce gathering membership dues from the members. Although both LVOADs had secretaries to handle the money once it was received, neither had a system to ensure that all members were making annual payments. This lack of payment enforcement was due in large part to problems with up-to-date contact information for members and member organizations, which is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Updated Information

An LVOAD is founded on communication, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. In order to achieve these four values, LVOADs rely heavily on maintaining updated information. The primary information that needed to be routinely updated was contact information for members and associate members. The contact information was regularly used to update members and associate members on general LVOAD activity including when the meetings were to be held, what topics were going to be discussed, who would be presenting or speaking, meeting minutes after meetings, updates on nonprofit activities, and updates on government activities. If the information is outdated then members and associate members are not getting the information on LVOAD activities, which can lead to loss of membership.

The main reason information was outdated was turnover of members. All participants (N=17) listed the primary means of communicating across all of the organizations in this study was email, with secondary being telephone. When individuals departed from their organizations, the LVOAD was often not informed, which resulted in the loss of both that member's contact information as well as the contact information within the member's organization. In addition, members who move laterally within their

organizations often changed their contact information when they assumed their new positions. Some individuals and organizations change their emails or phone numbers entirely for various personal or professional reasons.

Regardless of the cause, both LVOADs had major difficulties maintaining updated contact information. The following quote highlights a fundamental maintenance problem concerning updated information:

When I came in, our membership list was really kind of... It hadn't been taken care of. I almost say that our membership has decreased, only because until the last four months we hadn't been keeping up with, who were the right contacts and who were the people that we should be talking to. And what we discovered was that some of those contacts no longer worked in the right places or we had bad information for them. So I think we are doing a better job and moving forward and hopefully that local involvement will increase... So, hopefully our attendance and our membership will increase, but I think the reality is that it has decreased because we did such a poor job managing the membership roster, over the last year and a half.

Having served in an internship capacity within a LVOAD, this researcher can attest to the difficulty with updating and maintaining contact information. Several hours can be spent entirely on updating contact information. In addition, individuals varied as to how often they would check and respond to their emails. Of course, there were also individuals who simply do not answer phone calls or emails from people they do not know, which was a problem when leadership changed within the LVOAD and a new individual was tasked with contacting these individuals.

In addition to maintaining updated contact information, other forms of communication were also attempted by the two LVOADs. A website and a Facebook page were two attempts that the LVOADs made at trying their hands in social media. Both LVOADs attempted a Facebook page and one created a website, although the Facebook page and website would seemingly be valuable forms of communication in today's technological times. However, technology is just another form of information that needs to be routinely updated and maintained in order to be useful, an issue with which both LVOADs struggled. This next quote discusses attempts of the LVOAD at maintaining an updated website and how important it is to have updated information:

And then, I'm sure you're aware, it was after a year or so and then we had the website, that kind of died a little bit, and that's reviving back. And that, you know, using a website or Facebook, that is so dependent on do you have fresh information to put on there, and when you don't, and it's kind of hard to keep that useful.

These next two excerpts discuss problems with their respective Facebook pages:

There's not a lot on there. We were hoping that we could use that and people that were already a part of the VOAD would go and make sure they "Liked" that page and we would use that for updates but I think that we got only like 4 likes on it, an one of them was me, one was [the chair]. So, that didn't really work out so we went and we set up an email account through Gmail.

Right now it's pretty informal. We have an email list. We're trying to come up with a list serve or something more formal. There is a Facebook page, but it got 5 likes on it. So I think it will build, but right now, it's just email. That seems to be

the way that we communicate with everybody and like I mentioned we use quarterly meetings so we do get a bunch of people who show up and we do communicate then.

This next quote reiterates the problems associated with email and websites and the importance of maintaining new and fresh information to keep people interested in the LVOAD:

You just need your Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, and such to be willing to keep the energy going, to keep people excited, to keep it fresh. Even if you just put something new every month up on the website or an email, just to keep fresh ideas there. So, that we remember to stay in contact. That helps!

It is clear that giving and receiving updated information for member and associate members is a real concern, but it is less clear how large of an impact that outdated information has on a LVOAD. The data suggests that leadership considers it a important issue, but the LVOADs also reported that some forms of communication were largely unsuccessful as evidenced by the attempts to maintain a Facebook page. Both LVOADs mentioned that they only had “4” and “5” “Likes” respectively. Likewise, although fresh and updated information was referenced as important, it was a difficult factor to measure. Although neither LVOAD appeared to successfully maintain either a Facebook page or a website, it is not clear that they would have met with more success had they contained more current or up-to-date information. One community had an intern to update information and create a marketing plan, which included creating a temporary logo, Facebook page, and updated website. However, the creation of a temporary logo, an updated website, and Facebook page did not appear to receive any more attention.

In addition to updated contact information and social media, one LVOAD also made attempts to gather information on the resources of members and associate members. Members were asked to fill out a sheet of paper asking about what types of resources they might have to offer in times of disaster. This information was used by the LVOAD to get an understanding of who to call for specific needs should a disaster occur. Some examples of these types of resources were hygiene items, shelter, clothing, food, water, first aid supplies, cleanup kits, case management, and spiritual support, to name a few. This information was compiled into a resource binder, which displayed the resources of all member organizations. This allowed the LVOAD to better coordinate between member organizations in times of disaster. None of the member organizations were in any way obligated to use their resources on behalf of the LVOAD or to act in any way on behalf of the LVOAD. The resource list was simply used to help the LVOAD if they were trying to put organizations in touch with each other to expedite the process in the event of a disaster. It is unclear if the resource list will be helpful for the LVOAD long-term, but it was another source of information that needed to be updated. With all of this updating, it should be apparent that there is a lot of time involved with keeping information up-to-date. One way that LVOADs dealt with the issue of time was with a student intern, which is discussed in the next section.

Interns

It is clear that maintaining updated information was a serious problem, but the LVOADs were not without tools. One of these tools involved utilizing interns from local universities. The two communities that became *official* LVOADs reported having interns that were able to devote their time to issues that they may not have had time to address on

their own time. In one community, the intern took on duties including updating contact information, maintaining a resource inventory, and developing a social media plan. In an organization made up entirely of people donating their time and energy on top of their other duties within their organizations, they have limited time to engage in these types of activities. So, an intern can be helpful with completing some of those time consuming tasks, which is discussed in the following excerpts:

One of the challenges is that, at least right now, when you look at the folks who are managing the VOAD, we all have critical roles to play in disasters response so that internship position is really nice because it allows somebody who can focus just on the VOAD while I'm doing my duties with the [Organization X] and [Name A] is doing her duty as [Organization Y]. Plus this is a volunteer position and as passionate as I may be about this I still have a finite amount of time that I can devote to this and having someone that has 20 or 30 or 40 hours depending on their internship program that can focus on this really allows for a lot of headway to be done. And the other thing that an intern has the capacity to do is spend time thinking about the cool things we could do. I'll use an example here at the [Organization X], we had an intern, because they have the time and the skills and the expertise, we are developing a Google Earth program that itemizes where all of our resources are, where our shelters are, where our logistical materials are, so in a glance we can open up Google Earth and look at these balloons that pop up with contact information, that is a pretty swift system. But I certainly don't have the time to do all that data entry by myself because I have day-to-day responsibilities, so in a [L]VOAD situation that's exactly the type of value that an

intern brings in. They have the unburdened time that they can commit to the organization, so I think that interns, those folks are incredibly important and I'd love to keep them around.

...but that's the kind of capacity that an intern brings to us, because, in theory, an intern is a college student who is younger, has more experience in whatever the new technology is that's out today, and hopefully has the excitement and the drive to really dive in into something that maybe some of us are jaded and we are just worried about doing the day to day stuff. It's a breath of fresh air that comes in with some of these folks.

The intern working with the other community had a much narrower job and dealt specifically with issues surrounding their by-laws, which is discussed in the following quote: "When we started everything we had a [Student] here that was working on her [University Education]. And she really took on the by-laws as her priority and really ran with it and she did a wonderful job." As evidenced by the above citations, having an intern with "unburdened time" was beneficial and both LVOADs were able to use interns their advantage.

Meetings/Participation

When it comes to meetings, evidence suggests that meetings have a tremendous impact on the success of the LVOAD. The two LVOADs had similar meeting schedules, which were written into their by-laws dictating quarterly meetings during "blue-sky" scenarios and more frequent meetings during "grey-sky" scenarios. At the time this research was conducted, both LVOADs were experiencing "blue-sky" conditions. However, one LVOAD had not met for several months and had no plan to meet and the

other was attempting to maintain the scheduled quarterly meetings outlined in their by-laws, but was having problems maintaining attendance from members and associate members. One participant described the issue of declining membership when they said, "...the first meeting there was probably twenty people that showed up. The second meeting three, and then by the last meeting two. So, there's been nobody to show up..." The following quote describes the lack of participation by members and associate members:

One of the things we often see after a large disaster is you have a large pool of people who attend the meetings and then as time goes on individuals step back because they don't have a response anymore. They don't have an active role. Or they're tired of it and they want to move on in life.

Although participation by regular members is certainly an important factor with LVOAD maintenance, associate members play a slightly different role. Members from the nonprofit community join a LVOAD to enhance communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration with each other. Associate members from government organizations supply information to the LVOAD. Examples of the type of information that may come from government include where the needs are, what government services are available to individuals, what money is available for individuals, and how to enroll in government assistance programs to name a few. This next excerpt describes the impact that government absence can have on the LVOAD:

This year is going to be interesting because we have set up so we will have quarterly meetings. And that was how they first set it up with the by-laws so that people would still stay connected and it wouldn't just be one main crisis and then

they wouldn't see one another again. They wanted to facilitate that communication to keep happening. And so, this is really the first year now where we're actively going to be doing the quarterly meetings. And so, we're still on that learning curve with it. I've noticed that with the first one, that [emergency managers weren't] around at all and their presence was missed. Their presence was missed. What we did actually with the board before January is we looked at the calendar and we have set this years meetings already so that people could get it on their calendar. And hopefully that will help to facilitate a little bit. So the next one now will be coming up in May. And so, we'll see what happens. We'll see what happens.

In some cases, the meetings themselves can impact the maintenance of the LVOAD.

When one considers barriers such as burnout and meeting fatigue, it is easy to see how having meetings too frequently could negatively impact participation. This next quote discusses the decision to move to quarterly meetings:

I usually knew about it 3 weeks in advance, and then they tried to have it, I think it was the fourth, either the second or the fourth Thursday of every month. They did it for a while and then they decided to make it every four months, because they were meeting awhile there every month and that was too much. So I know right when I started they were switching how often they were going to meet. But yes, it was usually scheduled pretty far in advance.

The focus thus far has been on participation in meetings and has not yet touched on the quality of the meetings. The quality of the meetings was discussed as an important factor in LVOAD maintenance. In regards to quality, one participant stated, "Don't meet

just to meet. Have a teachable moment.” Although having a “teachable moment” is undoubtedly good advice, it is certainly not the only consideration when it comes to participation. As has already been discussed with meeting fatigue, individuals go to several meetings and hear a lot of the same information regurgitated. If the information is stale and members are not learning anything at the meetings, it is more likely they will not continue to participate in meetings. Although much responsibility for participating in meetings lies in the individuals themselves, the LVOAD leadership is not without responsibility. This next quote touches upon how leadership fits into the participation equation:

...I think the participants who go will probably still continue to go. And I guess I should say that if they go, it’s going to be directly tied to how well the leadership is doing, because in a time of disaster everyone is really busy and if they are taking the time to come to this meeting daily or weekly, there has to be a value in being here. So if we, as leadership, aren’t creating a good conduit for information, or bringing the right speakers to provide the information that they need, or just don’t have a plan at all, you know either through social media or just electronic media or even print media in terms of newsletters to communicate what is available and when the meetings are and who is going to be there, I think people will stop coming.

Unfortunately, there is no quick and easy solution outlining how to maintain active participation in a LVOAD, but it is up to leadership to continue to present new and pertinent information to keep members interested in attending the meetings.

LVOAD Evolution

LVOAD evolution is somewhat different than the housekeeping factors previously discussed in that it focuses on factors that are seen as progressing and advancing the LVOAD, rather than simply maintaining it. There are a number of factors in this section that can be seen as expanding factors that are taking the LVOAD in directions beyond those that simply maintain the current state. Whereas the housekeeping factors are really designed just to keep the LVOAD functioning at a very basic level, evolving factors are an active attempt by the LVOAD to address problems dealing with some of the barriers, such as burnout and complacency. The first evolutionary factor discussed here is the movement from a focus on a single hazard, which was predominately flooding in these communities, to an all-hazard mindset.

All-Hazard Shift

As previously discussed, the only hazard that all five of the communities faced was flooding. Therefore, the act of shifting the focus from one hazard to an all-hazards approach can be viewed as an evolution of the original LVOAD idea. This shift is important for a couple reasons. By shifting focus to other hazards, it shifts the LVOAD members focus from reacting to flooding to preparing for other hazards such as tornadoes and wildfires, which are two other common hazards in FEMA Region VIII. Also, it opens opportunities for the LVOAD to expand and introduce fresh information in the meetings, which could potentially help combat issues such as burnout and complacency.

In both communities that became official LVOADs, there was a desire to become more organized and to grow and expand to include education and trainings for other hazards when not facing times of flooding. One participant highlighted this desire when they said, "It's also giving us an opportunity to get more organized and know that there's

a lot more out there than just flooding. And to be able to offer some of that other training to people.” This statement was echoed by another participant who said, “That was the desire was how do we bring all of the community to be vested the way that we have been in [Year X] and [Year Y]. Not just in flooding, but in other disasters too.” Another participant discussed the opportunity for growth when they said, “We are focusing on other disasters. We, um, the executive board set meeting(s) for the year. We have a good game plan. We’re growing.”

The general attitude of participants in both communities was that they had been dealing with flooding for a number of years and they were burned out with responding to flooding, highlighted in the burnout section in Chapter 4. Both communities mentioned using other hazards as a way to better prepare their communities for other hazard events as evidenced by the following statement: “So, it's an opportunity for all of us to get together to say, alright, how are we staying current if there's a tornado. How are we going to respond?” Another participant provided further support when they stated, “If it does become a dry year, one of the suggestions that came for August was doing stuff with fires. Brushfires, and field fires, and whatnot.” The all-hazard evolution was further supported in the following excerpt:

The pattern is a little different this year then what we've been seeing. And so, we know that to the south of us there's been a lot of tornado activity already. I mean, who thought of tornadoes in February? Really, for the northern area and the Midwest. But we've had a lot of them. So we have a strong potential for that. And so, we're going to be doing some tornado work at the next meeting.

One community went as far as to incorporate responding to other hazards into their plans, as evidenced by the following excerpt:

We are going to continue having regular quarterly meetings in Blue Sky scenarios and if a disaster strikes, in a Gray Sky scenario, we will have them as frequently as needed, so in the flood event, once a week seemed to be ok. In a tornado event, we may have them as frequently as every day, so it will depend on what the event is.

The quotes highlighted above show some of the reasons why the LVOADs were evolving to an all-hazards approach. The evidence suggests LVOADs made the all-hazards shift because they desired greater organization and wanted to be better prepared for scenarios other than flooding, which they felt they had a firm understanding. It is also worth mentioning that during the interview process, there was genuine excitement when the participants were talking about shifting focus to other hazards. It was clear that dealing with flooding year after year had caused some burnout within the LVOAD leadership and the all-hazard approach to disasters seemed to help alleviate some of that burnout. Participants also felt that incorporating other hazards into the plans and meetings was a way to deal with the complacency during blue-sky situations. One community also brought up a concept that addresses this issue more directly with what they referred to as providing value to membership, which is discussed in the next section.

Value of Membership

Another factor that was uncovered as important to the maintenance of a LVOAD is the value of membership. Value of membership is when the LVOAD leadership is seeking ways that the LVOAD can offer value for members to participate in LVOAD

meetings, trainings, and other activities. Although both LVOADs attempted to offer value in participation, it was a concept that was far more developed in one of the two LVOADs. One participant described value of membership in its simplest sense when they stated, “If we are going to take money from someone, but we are going to provide the same information to everybody regardless of whether or not they are a member; what is really the true value of membership?”

The annual dues for each LVOAD were \$25 and \$20 respectively for each of the LVOADs. The participant brings up a very valuable point. Although it is not a large sum of money, why would individuals pay for a free service? In order for the LVOAD to continue, and perhaps even thrive, one LVOAD felt it was imperative that members receive value for participation and attending meetings in both blue-sky and grey-sky situations. In addition to the monetary reasons, the LVOADs also noted that providing value with membership was a way to deal with barriers such as complacency, meeting fatigue, and turf issues. Recognizing member organizations and offering educational and training opportunities in the form of workshops and professional speakers were pointed to as the primary mechanisms for bringing value to membership.

Member Recognition

The first factor discussed in this section is member recognition. As previously discussed, if members are expected to pay money to be a part of the LVOAD, they need to be receiving something in return. One way the LVOADs addressed this issue was through recognition. As discussed in the section titled *turf issues*, a lack of recognition can be a major barrier to the maintenance of a LVOAD. Participants noted that receiving recognition provided LVOAD members with a sense of value. As one participant put it,

“So the nice thing about this VOAD, everybody is lifted up; everybody is recognized.”

The following excerpts provide further evidence of how recognition can contribute value to membership:

Um, once we started having these weekly meetings, people started talking. You know, you get in a bad enough crisis and you can only go so far and there's only so many people. So, that is something I've seen improved. They've only been doing that for a couple of years now. So, that's really awesome and that's working together and not being threatened by each other's organization. They both provide valuable services. Um, to people in need and that's what you lift them both up. Lift everybody up. And being a part of the VOAD, everybody's lifted up. You know volunteers come from all over in time of disaster. Our faith-based organizations come in and the things that they do for us. Unbelievable! I had no clue. I really believe in lifting those people up. I just do, because of the tremendous job that they're doing.

The recognition described in the above excerpts was not a part of a formal recognition process. The participants referred to the general recognition they received from other members of the nonprofit community, emergency managers, and other government officials, rather than being recognized by individuals within the community or by media outlets. Although recognition was noted as a maintenance factor in both *official* LVOADs, one appeared to make greater efforts to ensure that members were being recognized and given the opportunity to speak during the meetings. In addition to recognizing members, the next section discusses how education and training opportunities were another way that LVOADs provided value to membership.

Education and Training Opportunities

The most commonly referenced factor that provided value to its members was offering guest speakers, educational opportunities, and disaster workshops. These types of opportunities were a factor in both communities that became *official* LVOADs. The guest speakers ranged from local community partners to professional speakers. The educational and trainings ranged on topics from how to build a disaster kit to how to muck out a house. Participants generally noted that education and training opportunities were an excellent way to provide value for member organizations, but the quality of the training was noted as a concern in both communities. Participation seemed to be contingent on the salience of the subject matter presented in the training opportunities and workshops. The training event described in the following quote is indicative of those generally perceived as valuable to the participants:

They, [Professional Disaster Response and Recovery Organization] came and provided a nice training for us last year... What they did was they offered training on how to do [mucking houses]; The right way to do it. They brought, they got a couple of trailers that are completely supplied with everything that is needed.

They actually travel the country.

Although both LVOADs noted the value of professional speakers, both communities also noted that education and trainings were met with mixed results. Some training workshops were very well attended while others had very low participation. This next excerpt discusses this predicament the LVOADs faced:

I guess they had the [member organization] got ahold of somebody that came in and showed us all how to use those sanitizing kits and had like a seminar. They had like a wall that said, 'this is how you can do it and this, and this' and I guess

they had like 30-some people show up for it, and then they tried to set up another one and I don't know if it just didn't get completed. I think this was like a month before I started. It just didn't get completed, or something had come up and then it just never went any further. So as far as I know, they had the big one turnout...

Although the premise behind speakers was generally well received by both LVOADs, participants noted the importance of having speakers that were relevant to the target audience. This next excerpt shows the importance of having a topic that resonates with the intended demographic:

We had [a guest speaker who] came in and spoke about tornado safety and the warning system, things you could do, and that was pretty good, that was a good one. We did have one that we tried a meeting; we paid a speaker to come in to help us work better as a team and communicate with each other, and that, you know, we had like ten people, so I guess they weren't interested in that, but everything else has been pretty well.

This next excerpt discusses the how salience affected the participation in meetings and how they attempted to confront the problem by bringing in speakers and workshops:

Actually, we were looking at offering the training once a year, but as we've met, um, and when you're not in disaster it's like our [Month X] meeting, there were a lot of people that just didn't come. Because we're not on top of a crisis. So, we are going to offer programming each quarter. Um, and the educational piece to make it worth people's time. A lot of times people won't show up until you're on top of the disaster. We want people to show up, get to know each other, so when a disaster happens you know who you're asking for help. You know who you're

dealing with. So, I think the programming, bringing in speakers on a regular basis, um, and there are many different disasters, so I think we're good for awhile (laugh). I think we'll help bring people to the table.

In addition to scheduling the meeting at a date and time that was accessible to the member organizations, participants noted the topic for the training needed to be geared towards the members. In some cases, the trainings were not appropriate subjects for the member organizations. This final excerpt discusses the relevance of the meeting topic and how they need to be catered to the disaster agency demographic:

Prior to my coming, they were, the meetings seemed to be very random and they may even be stuff everybody knows like, what should be in an emergency kit? That's a great topic, but I think that most of us, at least in our professions and we already know what that is. So this has come up in our conversations during the strategic meetings. When we offer training or speaker series, what is it what those individuals really need to know? And how would it interface best with the [L]VOAD and their organizations. What we have kind of decided is that it's not the [L]VOAD's place to instruct people how to be prepared, or how to build a strategic plan for their organization.

It is clear that professional speakers, disaster related trainings, and workshops have great potential to provide value with membership, as evidenced by the high turnout for certain types of trainings and speakers. However, it is less clear how often these trainings and workshops should be offered. Although educational and training opportunities were offered in both LVOADs that were in maintenance, one community had far more experience than the other with trainings and speakers. In general, the

professional speakers, trainings, and educational opportunities were highly regarded as important to the successful maintenance by both LVOAD members.

Conclusion

This chapter reported the factors found to facilitate and hinder the maintenance of the LVOADs in this study. Turnover, turf issues, and disaster salience were revealed as barriers to maintaining a LVOAD. Yet, LVOADs undertook three categories of activity to attempt to counteract these barriers. These three factors were general housekeeping, LVOAD evolution, and providing value of membership. The next chapter will discuss how these categories and factors fit together and the implications these findings have for future researchers and practitioners.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Chapter Six discusses the implications of this study in four sections. The first section revisits the context surrounding the need for Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). The second section discusses the findings and implications they have for the development of future LVOADs. The third section discusses the limitations and caveats involved with research on Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOADs). The fourth section discusses implications of this research for emergency management practice and the academic discipline.

Return to Context

Disasters are nonroutine, disruptive events that overwhelm the capacity of communities to respond and recover (Auf der Heide, 1989; Fritz, 1961; Quarantelli, 1998). When communities are impacted by hazard events, they often turn to the government for assistance (Auf der Heide, 1989; Hoetmer, 1991). Although this may seem like an easy task, it is far more complicated in reality. The community must first approach their local and state jurisdictions for assistance (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). If the disaster is beyond the state's capabilities, then the governor can request assistance from the federal government (Sylves, 2008). The federal government then makes the decision to either offer assistance or deny assistance (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). If the government denies assistance, it is up to the local government to respond (Alesch, Arendt, & Holly, 2008; Klindt, 2010; Ward & Wamsley, 2007).

If the government offers assistance, they are very limited with the types and amount of assistance they can provide (Drabek, 1983; 1985; 1987; Drabek et al, 1981;

Dynes, 1970; Kennedy et al., 1969; Quarantelli, Dynes, & Haas, 1966; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings, 1978). Most assistance is in the form of Public Assistance (PA), which is intended to rebuild infrastructure rather than to help individuals (Freemont-Smith, Boris, & Steurle, 2006; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011, Sylves, 2008). If a community qualifies, they may be eligible for Individual Assistance (IA) (Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011, Sylves, 2008). Even in the event that IA is awarded to a community, the assistance first goes through a rigid process to determine if the individual qualifies (FEMA, 2008). If the individuals do not qualify for IA, then they are left on their own to recover (Cherry & Cherry, 1997; McDonnell et al., 1995; Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003). If the individual qualifies for IA, the process may take a long time before they see it and it is usually insufficient for meeting individual's/household's needs (Cherry & Cherry, 1997; McDonnell et al., 1995; Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003). In short, the governmental response to hazard events in the United States is insufficient to meet the needs of individuals/households impacted by hazard events (Cherry & Cherry, 1997; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2004; Liu, 2010; Norris-Tirrell & Clay, 2006; Smith, 2011; Waugh & Hy, 1990). This drawback of the current system leaves several gaps in assistance to individuals and households (Cherry & Cherry, 1997; McDonnell et al., 1995; Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003). To help fill these gaps, communities rely on nonprofit organizations among other entities (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Kapucu, 2003, 2007, Kapucu, Yuldashev, & Feldheim, 2011).

Throughout the history of the United States, nonprofit organizations have always played a valuable role responding to natural and manmade disasters (Kreps, 1990; Pipa,

2006; Rubin, 2007). Nonprofit organizations were providing invaluable goods and services to individuals in need before the government got involved with disaster relief (Kreps, 1990; Pipa, 2006; Rubin, 2007). The problem was that these organizations were not coordinating their efforts, which resulted in a lot of duplication of effort and unnecessary waste (Smith, 2012; Sylves, 2008). This problem came to light in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille when the nonprofit community at the time led a disorganized and reactive response (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Simpson, 1998; Smith, 2011). This led to the establishment of the National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (NVOAD) in 1970, which formed to resolve these issues (Egan & Tischler, 2010; Simpson, 1998; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.).

The goals of the NVOAD were to share information and resources to better communicate, collaborate, cooperate, and coordinate the response effort (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). The perceived success of NVOAD led to the creation of State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SVOADs) (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). SVOAD mirror the goals, mission, and structure of NVOAD and currently have representation in all 50 states (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). Although the outgrowth of SVOADs from NVOADs was a step in the right direction, there was still an element that had not been addressed. Disasters occur locally and are handled largely by local organizations (Hy & Waugh, 1990; Sylves, 2008; Waugh, 2000).

Although few would argue that NVOAD has reduced duplication of effort for the large-scale disasters, there are far more small-scale events that go unnoticed. Similarly,

SVOAD has likely increased communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination across the statewide disaster organizations, but still most nonprofit organizations and communities do not have representation on SVOADs. Over the past few years, Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs) have been created as a remedy for local level hazard events.

In addition to local need, the upsurge of LVOADs stems from problems within coordination across the local organizations in response to disasters (Pipa, 2006; Smith, 2012). Prior to the formation of LVOADs, response and recovery were handled with ad hoc committees and loosely knit relationships. LVOADs were created to strengthen relationships into a formal network founded on the 4 Cs (i.e. communication, coordination, collaboration, cooperation) (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). This study aimed to explore the factors that lead to successful LVOAD creation and identify the barriers that impede creation. Although LVOADs certainly have a number of benefits, this study also uncovered a number of barriers to the creation and maintenance of LVOADs, which are discussed in the next section.

Exploring the Findings

This study sought to explore the factors that influence the creation and maintenance of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). For a visualization of the process leading to the creation and maintenance of an LVOAD, see Figure 1. As the table illustrates, LVOADs in this study formed when the impact of a hazard event or series of hazard events created a number of needs/unmet needs within the communities. The hazard event(s) was followed by the manifestation of leadership roles within the community including external support, a motivated individual, and a core

group of committed individuals. The LVOAD organizational structure was the next step in the creation process and included by-law formation, elections, and organizational recruitment. This was the stage when participants felt the LVOAD became *official*, which signified the moment that the LVOAD entered into the maintenance phase. Maintenance was typified by the LVOAD engaging in housekeeping activities, evolutionary actions, and seeking value of membership.

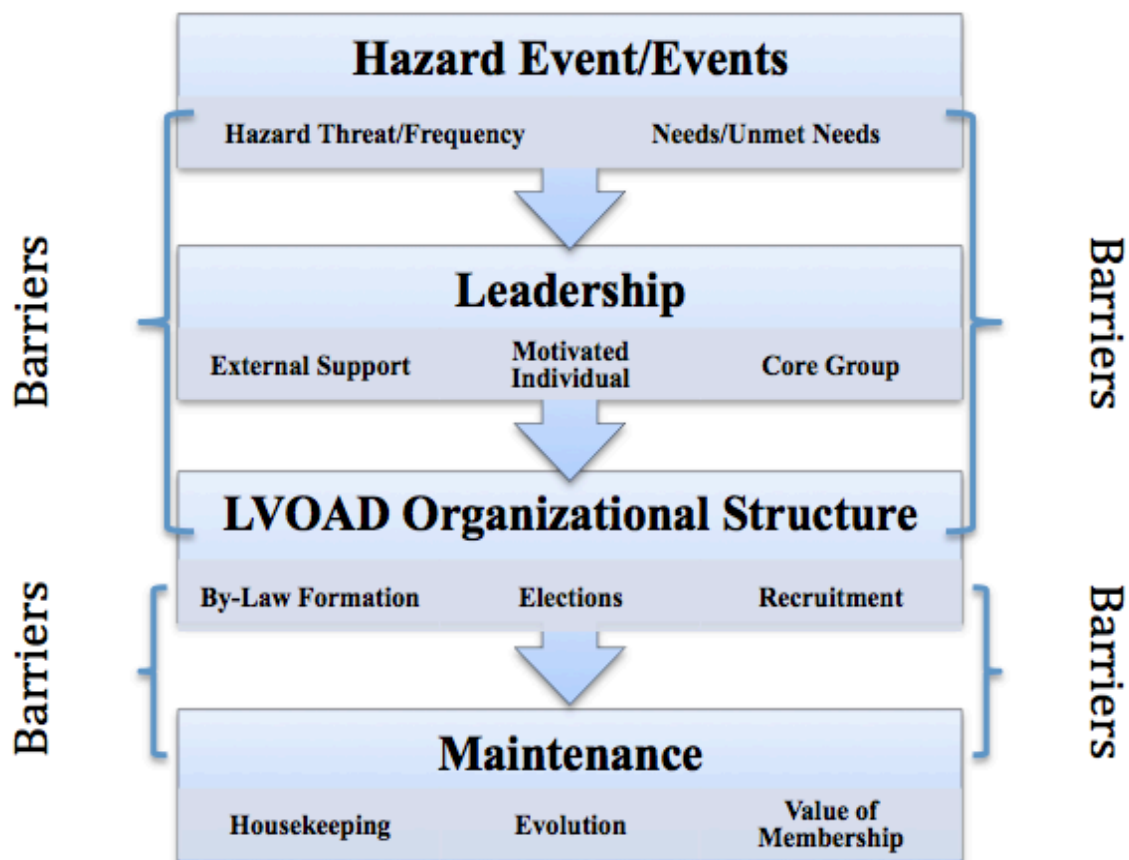


Figure 1. Process of LVOAD creation and maintenance.

As had been previously noted, the success of the Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD) in this study were largely dependent upon the balance between the factors encouraging and thwarting development of a LVOAD. These

opposing forces are highlighted by the relationship between the factors leading to creation and maintenance versus the barrier factors. These pressures and counterpressures were apparent throughout the life of the LVOAD from the inception of the LVOAD idea within the community, to the creation of an *official* LVOAD, and into LVOAD maintenance. This concept is fundamental to understanding LVOADs. The findings of this study suggest that LVOADs cannot exist without some degree of pressure.

In keeping with the principles of grounded theory, this study developed the model outlining the process of LVOAD creation and maintenance (See Figure 1) before seeking a goodness-of-fit with other models. Several models were examined post-data collection, but none quite captured the uniqueness of LVOAD formation. Within the emergency management literature, the Disaster Research Center developed a typology of the four types of groups that emerge in times of disaster (e.g., Quarantelli, 1977). Although the model provides a basic understanding of where emergent groups, such as LVOADs, fit into the overall scheme of disaster response, it does not provide enough detail to fit with the model illustrated in Figure 1.

Kreps and Bosworth (2007) created the DTRA model, which considered the role domain (D), tasks (T), resources (R), and activities (A) play in regards to organized response to disasters. While the DTRA model does support that LVOADs are a good potential thing by suggesting that disaster response is more organized when domains and tasks are determined pre-disaster and resources and activities applied post-disaster, the model does not offer insight into what factors drive the process of

LVOAD creation. The DTRA model also lacks explanation for how these groups maintain between disasters.

When expanding the search beyond emergency management literature and into the realm of sociology, the concept of coalition formation stood out as one with the potential to fit with the process of LVOAD creation and maintenance. In particular, coalition formation offers a greater understanding of what motivates individuals to become LVOAD leaders, members of the LVOAD core group, LVOAD members, associate members, and partner organizations by examining group phenomenon and group formation in general (Gamson, 1961; Lawler & Youngs, 1975). Although coalition formation research may offer valuable insight into what drives individuals, particularly what motivates individuals to pursue LVOAD development, it does not fit with the figure introduced in this research because it lacks the specifics to explain the broader context of LVOAD development.

A search of group formation in anthropology yielded similar results. Hoffman (1999) captured the tiered and cyclical nature of LVOAD development with her discussion of the three phases of recovery from a disaster: the crisis, the aftermath nexus, and the passage to closure. Hoffman's (1999) model captures some of the challenges the individual faces when forming a disaster-related group such as burnout, motivation, and value of membership. However, the model is focused on the individual and does not offer the insight into the group process necessary to understanding LVOAD formation and maintenance. Although each model discussed here offered insight into some of the factors discussed in this research, none provided a specific enough model to capture the

uniqueness of LVOAD formation. Therefore, an effort was made to find a model that fits with the process of LVOAD creation and maintenance and none could be found.

Time

Although Figure 1 outlines the process of LVOAD development, it leaves out an important factor in need of consideration. This factor is time. Time proved to be an elusive factor as it was most certainly influential with the creation and maintenance of LVOADs, yet not clear or tangible enough to constitute its own factor. Time was evident by participants referencing the days, weeks, months, and years following the hazard event(s) in their communities. Time was a difficult factor to measure due to a variety of reasons. One reason was the reliance on participant's memories to recall timeframes and timelines. Participants often gave different timelines regarding when the LVOADs officially formed, when specific events occurred, and when the different individuals and organizations joined, to name a few examples.

There was also a large degree of variance across the LVOADs. In three communities, participants were asked to recall events spanning a year or two. In the other two communities, participants had to recall dates and timelines from years prior to the interviews. These inconsistencies made it difficult to measure approximate times that the LVOADs spent within each stage. For example, it was difficult to distinguish if more or less time was spent in the hazard event stage versus the leadership stage or LVOAD organizational structure stage. The maintenance phase was the one exception as the by-laws were commonly referred to as the point at which the LVOAD became official. Therefore, all events following by-law creation were within the maintenance stage.

The effect of time was perhaps most evident in regards to the amount of time between hazard events. The fact that multiple hazard events seemed to play such a major factor with LVOAD creation brings up another related element, which was not discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. The findings of this study suggest that LVOAD creation was most successful with less time between hazard events, even while multiple participants mentioned needing or desiring a season off and there was evidence to suggest that communities needed time between hazard events to develop their LVOAD. Add in barriers such as burnout and meeting fatigue and it becomes even less clear what role time played in the creation and maintenance of a LVOAD. Perhaps time can best be understood as a dynamic component existent in all factors. Time is continually passing by and affecting the creation and maintenance of LVOADs to varying degrees in the days, weeks, months, and years following the initial hazard event. Although it is not clear the degree to which time influences each factor, it should be considered in the ensuing discussion.

Although time was a component to all factors, there are a few elements of time worth noting. Time is not going away. Nonprofits are overworked and lack the necessary time to complete all of the tasks and activities assigned to them. Therefore, the time individuals were expected to devote to LVOAD activities competed with the time individuals had to devote to other professional and personal matters. This appeared to affect leadership the most as leadership needed to be present over time to successfully develop a LVOAD. This was apparent in all five LVOADs. Although it is clear that time is important, it should be noted that not much can be done with this factor. In the other creation and maintenance factors, there is room to manipulate the factors to influence the

creation and maintenance of a LVOAD. Since time continues at a constant rate, there is no way to manipulate it, which is what separates time from the other factors. However, time is a variable present in all the other factors and needs to be considered when contemplating the affect of each individual factor.

The Creation Process

In all five communities, the notion of a LVOAD was not brought up until after the communities experienced one or more hazard events. In all five cases, the hazard event served as the initial pressure to develop and form. The evidence suggests that one hazard event may not be enough to keep the LVOAD idea alive. The two communities that were only impacted by one hazard event did not become *official* LVOADs. The community that was in the process of becoming official at the time of data gathering had just recently been impacted by a second disaster, which seemed to have prompted the creation more than the initial hazard event. The other two communities became *official* LVOADs only after experiencing multiple hazard events.

Earlier in this chapter, the notion of creating an entity that operates similar to NVOAD or SVOAD was considered. The findings of this study suggest that this is indeed possible, as two entities exist within FEMA's Region VIII. Both of the communities that developed "official" LVOADs went through the same progressive stages starting with the hazard event(s), followed by the development of leadership, an organizational structure and culminating in *official* creation. This has direct implications for potential LVOADs, developing LVOADs, and official LVOADs. The basic process has been outlined and the major barriers have been identified. It would seem that one has only to use the information supplied by this study to explore and refine the ideas

presented here. However, it is not so simple. The findings in this study suggest that the LVOADs were aware of the barriers and were actively working to combat the issues with limited success. Two of the communities did not make it to the organizational structure stage and a third was in its infancy leaving only two communities with *official* LVOADs

Although just making it to becoming an *official* LVOAD is a feat on its own, the findings suggest that LVOADs are incredibly difficult to maintain. In both communities that created official LVOADs, the leadership devoted a great deal of personal time and energy to continuing the LVOADs. Even with the devotion, time, and energy, one community was having a great deal of difficulty maintaining consistent leadership and the other had strong leadership but lacked membership participation. Throughout the interview process with members of these two LVOADs, there was a palpable air of positivity and pride in what the respective LVOADs had achieved and accomplished, but it is difficult to imagine that will be enough to keep the LVOADs alive. However, this comment should not be viewed with negativity. In both cases, the LVOADs had already been amazingly beneficial to their communities.

This study also does not want to diminish the other groups of post-impact entities. LVOADs are not the only players in the post-impact environment. There are also Unmet Needs Committees (UNCs), Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs), and Long-term Planning Committees (LTPCs), to name a few. However, these groups serve to emphasize the element of LVOADs that makes them so valuable. LTRCs, LTPCs, and UNCs are often ad hoc committees that form reactively to deal with response and recovery issues and disband when their goals are completed. LVOADs have an element of preparedness, which was emphasized in the two communities that became *official*

LVOADs. Therefore, it is unclear if it is feasible to expect LVOADs to function when not in a time of disaster.

Limitations, Caveats, and Value

It is generally assumed that coordination, communication, collaboration, and cooperation are important factors for communities to consider when preparing for and dealing with the effects of hazard event(s) (Alexander, 2010; Auf der Heide, 1989; Brudney & Gazley, 2009; Gillespie, 1991; Kapucu, Yuldashev, & Feldheim, 2011); Norris-Tirrell & Clay, 2006; Phillips, 2009; and Simo & Bies, 2007). Improving communication, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation across the multiple organizations involved with preparing for, responding to, and recovering from hazard events are the basic principles that guide a Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD) (Egan & Tischler, 2010; National Organizations Active in Disaster, n.d.). It has also been recognized that limitations within governmental assistance leave communities with unmet needs that are largely left to local nonprofit organizations (Comfort, 1988; Drabek, 1985; Sylves, 2009; Waugh and Strieb, 2006). Therefore, it could be argued that there is an inherent value in creating and maintaining Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOADs). Since this is the first and only exploration of the factors related to LVOAD creation and maintenance, in turn, it stands to offer tremendous value to knowledge of the function of emergency management.

It is less clear how viable LVOADs are during persistent blue-sky situations. The findings from this study suggest that there are major challenges to overcome just getting the LVOAD created and even greater struggles to keep the LVOAD maintained. Even with dedicated and committed leadership, the continual forces exerted by the counter-

pressures have negatively affected community participation. However, there are some major caveats that need to be considered. In addition to the limitations discussed in Chapter Three, one needs to take caution when contemplating the value of this study.

This study only researched communities in FEMA's Region VIII and those in the region all formed as a result of flooding. It is worth noting that, although this study targeted all LVOADs in FEMA's Region VIII, participation was dominated by one state. This state's specific emergency management system may differ from other states, but the degree to which it differs is unknown because of the relatively small data set. Additionally, there are many other geographical locations with different hazard events that may warrant a LVOAD, or currently have a LVOAD, and these communities are also in need of research. More research needs to be undertaken in areas where LVOADs have developed in response to other hazards such as tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other hazards. In addition, there were two regional LVOADs that were excluded from this study. One was excluded because it was too large geographically to truly be considered local. The other community had an entity similar to a LVOAD but it was lead by for-profit organizations. Other than these two exclusions, all known LVOADs were involved in this study.

Although limited to flooding, there was a great deal of consistency across the five communities regarding the factors influencing the creation of a LVOAD. This consistency adds strength to the study's findings regarding the creation. Unfortunately, the findings regarding the maintenance were limited to only two LVOADs and are in need of further research. This study set out to explore this important topic and address a gap in the literature and has been successful in this regard despite the study's limitations.

Implications

This study is the first of its kind. This research was not intended to produce answers, but to explore the factors that influence the creation and maintenance of LVOADs. In this task, it succeeded. This study has uncovered factors that can be added to and developed as new evidence is discovered. This study puts forth a new model illustrating how LVOADs are created and maintained, illustrated in Figure 1. This study serves as the foundation for future research and it has applications for academia and practice.

Since this study is the first of its kind, it serves as a foundation for all other research of LVOADs. The findings reflect some fundamental factors that are in need of addition and refinement by future researchers. There is still much to be done regarding the distinction between Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs), LVOADs, and Regional VOADs, as none of them have clear definitions. In fact, in the process of data collection these terms were often used interchangeably. One participant referred to all of them as Geographical VOADs to avoid confusion. Evidence suggests that LVOADs are becoming more common and in need of greater attention from academics, particularly emergency management, as LVOADs serve an important function for emergency management professionals. The results also serve as a working model of LVOAD creation.

These results should yield benefits for both emergency management theory and practice. There remains a significant gap in the literature on how these organizations are created and how they function within communities. Gazley (2013) suggests the breadth of this gap.

...very little is known about Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs), including how many groups are operational, their geographic distribution, scope of responsibilities, membership and activities. Also yet unmeasured are their accomplishments, such as their ability to leverage additional private sector voluntary resources or to empower their own constituents to participate more effectively in emergency planning (p. 4).

LVOADs can potentially contribute significantly to the coordination of nonprofit organization (NPO) efforts at the local level. Local emergency managers and/or interested NPOs may be able to use the findings of this study to help initiate the development of a LVOAD in the community they serve and/or help an existing LVOAD with maintenance. Furthermore, the findings of this study could be integrated into training related to NPO involvement in disasters so that those taking the course have a better understanding of how LVOADs come to be and continue to serve communities over time. For more practical purposes, this study offers some considerations for individuals to contemplate if they are thinking of developing a LVOAD in their community. These considerations were developed based upon the factors discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The considerations are presented Appendix F in the same order in which the factors were presented in the findings.

The major factors seemed to follow a sequential order starting with the hazard event, followed by the development of leadership, followed by the formation of a LVOAD organizational structure, and ending with LVOAD maintenance (See Figure 1). Although the factors within each major creation factor did not follow a specific order, they were nonetheless essential to LVOAD creation. The maintenance factors had far less

support due to only examining two *official* LVOADs. The findings discovered in this study support that LVOADs would likely employ some type of housekeeping factors and evolving/expanding factors if they were to successfully maintain the LVOAD. However, there is much more research that needs to be done specifically focusing on *official* LVOADs.

It is generally accepted that disasters are local events and the current governmental response to disasters necessitates a local response. Since local government is dependent on local resources provided largely by the nonprofit community, these resources need to be maximized with the growing number of disasters occurring across the nation. Local VOADs provide a vehicle for communities to better use the money, materials, and manpower that are essential for individual and household response and recovery. In addition, more research needs to focus on the preparedness capabilities of LVOADs, since it is another tool at the hands of emergency management professionals. Potential LVOAD organizations have much to gain from this study. This study outlines the necessary factors to form and develop LVOADs in a clear and concise manner. It also presents the potential factors that may negatively impact the LVOAD formation and gives some practical instruction on how combat these barriers.

In addition to the general function of emergency management, city and county emergency managers have much to gain from the factors uncovered in this study. LVOADs have much to offer emergency managers. Since an emergency manager is responsible for coordinating resources in the aftermath of disaster, a LVOAD can conceivably make their job much easier. Since an emergency manager would normally coordinate with nonprofit organizations individually, a LVOAD allows them to reach a

large number of LVOAD organizations at one time. The tool located in Appendix F can aid emergency managers in identifying leadership that could potentially stimulate the creation of a LVOAD. This potentially reduces stress and allows time and energy to be spent on other important activities.

Conclusion

This chapter started with a return to the context surrounding LVOAD development. Next, a working model was presented and the findings were explored in greater detail. The next section discussed the limitations, caveats, and inherent value of the study. The chapter closed with implications for the profession and academic discipline of emergency management. The next chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The nonprofit community was involved with aiding individuals impacted by disasters long before the government even had a role in responding to disasters. However, it was not until Hurricane Camille in 1969 that the nonprofit community decided to get together and coordinate their services in an attempt to eliminate duplication of effort and wasted resources. The result was the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). NVOAD eventually expanded into an umbrella organization encompassing State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (SVOADs), Regional Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, and most recently the formation of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LVOAD) across the nation. Prior to this study, LVOADs had not been researched leaving this study as the foundation for future research to build upon.

This research studied five communities across FEMA's Region VIII and explored the factors that influenced the creation and maintenance of LVOADs in their respective areas. The findings showed that the factors leading to the creation of LVOADs had a high degree of consistency across the five communities and progressed in three sequential stages culminating in the *official* creation of a LVOAD. Since only two communities developed official LVOADs, there was a higher degree of variance with the maintenance stage. The findings show that all communities were dependent on a hazard event to spark interest in LVOAD concept and the communities needed strong leadership to overcome the barriers and progress to the organizational structure stage of development.

Once the communities reached this stage, they considered themselves to be official LVOADs and moved on into the maintenance stage and faced more barriers. To

overcome the barriers, the two LVOADs that made it to this stage engaged in housekeeping activities, attempted to evolve as an organization, and attempted to offer value to members. The findings show that communities likely need a specific sequence of events in order for a LVOAD to develop and they face greater barriers once they make it to the maintenance stage. The evidence suggests that LVOADs have a difficult time maintaining during Blue Sky situations when the LVOAD is between disasters or has gone long amounts of time without experiencing a disaster. Although the results do not offer a lot of optimism regarding the future of LVOADs, the findings do show that, where implemented, LVOADs hold a lot of potential to increase communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination across the LVOAD member and associate member organizations to include emergency management professionals.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research has outlined several key factors that influence the creation and maintenance of a Local Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (LVOAD). These factors were presented in a working model that future researchers need to further develop, change, and build upon. Since this study is the first exploration into LVOADs, future generations of researchers need to proceed with an open mind as they attempt to confirm the creation factors presented in this study and apply the factors to hazards other than flooding. Although there is no central directory of LVOADs, one need only inquire with the State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as to whether or not there are LVOAD operating within their states.

In addition to the creation factors much more research needs to be undertaken on the post creation stage. This study was limited to only two official LVOAD and there was

far more variance with maintenance factors. Although it is likely that any LVOAD would engage in housekeeping factors and some type of evolutionary actions, both factors need be reexamined for additions and improvements. The final factor, value of membership, needs particular attention, as it was the one identified specifically by only one community.

The suggestions thus far have been for more research of a similar qualitative nature as the one presented in these pages. However, there is also room for quantitative or mixed methods. The findings suggest that it takes multiple hazard events to trigger interest in LVOADs. However, it is not clear if the amount of damage is a major factor or the number of people affected. Quantitative approaches may also shine some light on the time factor that is so difficult to measure. Above all, more research needs to be undertaken as LVOADs hold a great deal of value to everyone involved in a disaster from the impacted individuals to the government officials assigned to the case.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

North Dakota State University
Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
<http://www.ndsu.edu/emgt/>
James Jorissen

Interview Guide

1. Tell me a little bit about your involvement with [insert organization name].
2. How did the LVOAD develop?
3. How is the LVOAD doing now?
4. Where do you see the LVOAD in the future?
5. May I contact you in the future if I have further questions?
6. Who would you recommend that I speak with for more information on your LVOAD?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND PROBES

Potential Interview Follow-Up Questions & Probes

1. Tell me a little bit about your involvement with the VOAD.
 - When did you/your organization become involved?
 - Why did you/your organization become involved?
 - What did you do when you became involved?
 - What role did you/your organization fulfill within the organization initially?
 - What role do you/your organization fulfill within the organization now?
 - How engaged have you/your organization been with the LVOAD?

2. How the VOAD develop?
 - Who was involved initially?
 - Which were the first organizations involved?
 - What did/does the VOAD perceive to be its role as an organization?
 - Describe the relationships among the VOAD member organizations.
 - Describe the LVOADs relationship with state or National VOAD?
 - To what extent did/does the VOAD bring about coordination among nonprofits?
 - Describe the relationship between VOAD and local government.
 - To what extent did/does the VOAD facilitate coordination with government?
 - What was/are the key to the organization's success?
 - What were/are some of the barriers to the organization's success?

3. How is the VOAD doing now?

If active

 - Describe the organization's current leadership.
 - Describe the engagement of the current VOAD membership with the VOAD.
 - How do VOAD members stay in touch with one another?
 - How often do you have meetings?
 - What is done within VOAD meetings?
 - Describe meeting attendance.
 - Describe other activities that the VOAD sponsors.
 - Is it different when outside of disaster times?
 - What resources are available to the VOAD to fulfill its mission?

If inactive or disbanded

 - Why do you think the VOAD stopped meeting?
 - Why do you think the VOAD discontinued?
 - How was the decision made to discontinue the VOAD?
 - Are there any plans to get the VOAD back together in the future?

4. Where do you see the VOAD in the future?
 - Do you think the VOAD will be around in 1 year, 3 years, or five years?
 - Do you foresee any problems in the future?
5. May I contact you in the future if I have further questions?
6. Who would you recommend that I speak with for more information on your LVOAD?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INVITATION LETTER

North Dakota State University
Department of Emergency Management
Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management
Department 2351
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
(701) 231-5595

Dear [Potential Participant Name],

I am a graduate student in North Dakota State University's emergency management program. I am currently conducting a study on the process involved with the creation of local VOADs.

Presently, there has been little research on local VOADs. I hope to get a better understanding of your perspective on the importance of local VOADs and any benefits they provide to their communities.

I am eager to find out what you think and hope that you might be willing to share your thoughts. I am asking you to sit down for as long as your schedule will allow and chat with me about the process around creating the local VOAD in your area. If you are able and willing, I will meet you at a time convenient for you and at a location of your choice. If you are unable to meet face-to-face, I am also willing to do a telephone interview.

Please feel free to contact me at james.jorissen@my.ndsu.edu or (701) 840-0853. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Jessica Jensen, if you have any questions at ja.jensen@ndsu.edu or (701) 231-5762. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule an interview and thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Best Regards,

James Jorissen

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET



North Dakota State University
Department of Emergency Management
Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management
Department 2351
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
(701) 231-5595

“The Creation of Local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster” INFORMATION SHEET

Research Study

You are being invited to participate in a research project entitled “The Creation of Local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters.” This study is being conducted by James Jorissen, with the Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management, North Dakota State University.

Purpose of Study

There has been little research done on how Local VOADs are created. This study intends to fill in this gap by obtaining a better understanding of who is involved and how they are created.

Basis for Participant Selection

You have been invited to participate in this research project because of your involvement with the creation of one of the four local VOADs in North Dakota. The interview will last as long as your schedule permits and can end at any point if you so choose.

Use of Recording Device

Audio recordings will be obtained through the use of a digital audio recorder. Audio files of the interviews will be uploaded to James Jorissen's personal computer for transcription. Once the transcription is complete, the audio recording will be deleted.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

There should be no potential discomfort or physical, social, psychological, legal, or economic risk to you due to your participation in this study.

Potential Benefits

By participating in these interviews you would provide us important insight into how Local VOADs are created and what assists in their creation. The information gathered through these interviews will be used to educate students, academics, practitioners, and policy makers with training, practice, and policy related to disaster management.

Assurance of Confidentiality

There can be no assurance of confidentiality if you chose to participate in this study. That being said, we will take steps to protect your privacy. Your name and your organization's name will not appear in published findings nor will your information be shared with other interviewees.



North Dakota State University
Department of Emergency Management
Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management
Department 2351
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
(701) 231-5595

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Your participation is voluntary and you may quit at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your present or future relationship with The Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management, North Dakota State University or any other benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

Offer to Answer Questions

You should feel free to ask questions now or at any time. If you have any questions, you can contact the lead researcher, James Jorissen, at (701) 840-0853 or james.jorissen@my.ndsu.edu. You can also contact James Jorissen's thesis advisor, Dr. Jessica Jensen, at (701) 231-8908 or ja.jensen@ndsu.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of human research participants, or wish to report a research-related problem, contact the NDSU Institutional Research Board (IRB) Office at (701) 231-8908 or by email at ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu.

APPENDIX E: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

NDSU

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

*Office of the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer
NDSU Dept. 4000
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive
Research 1, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050*

701.231.8995

Fax 701.231.8098

Federalwide Assurance #FWA00002439

IRB Certification of Exempt Human Research Project

February 21, 2012

Protocol #HS12135
"The Creation of Local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Local VOADs)"

Jessica Jensen
Dept. of Emergency Management, 102 D Putnam

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **James Jorissen**

Study site(s): **NDSU** Funding: **n/a**

It has been determined that this human subjects research project qualifies for exempt status (category # 2b) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on the original protocol application received 2/3/2012 and consent/information sheet received 2/13/2012.

Please also note the following:

- This determination of exemption expires 3 years from this date. If you wish to continue the research after 2/20/2015, the IRB must re-certify the protocol prior to this date.
- The project must be conducted as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, pre-approval is to be obtained from the IRB, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to subjects. A *Protocol Amendment Request Form* is available on the IRB website.
- Prompt, written notification must be made to the IRB of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB policies.

Thank you for complying with NDSU IRB procedures; best wishes for success with your project.

Sincerely,



Teryl Grosz, MS, CIP
Manager, Human Research Protections Program

NDSU is an EO/AA university.

APPENDIX F: CONSIDERATIONS FOR LVOAD DEVELOPMENT

The following tool was crafted to aid persons contemplating forming an LVOAD in their community. The considerations are organized according to the process of LVOAD development put forth by this study with the section headings listed in bold at the start of the section. The design of this tool begins with a series of questions followed by a rationale behind the questions. The questions are rhetorical, meaning they are not asking the reader for an answer, but rather meant to stimulate deeper thought or consideration.

Hazard Threat

- Is your community under threat from a hazard?
 - ❖ Rationale: The findings from this study suggest that communities under threat from a hazard are more likely to develop a LVOAD, particularly when the hazard has recently manifested in more than one hazard event.
- Are there needs/unmet needs in your community that are not being met through other means?
 - ❖ Rationale: The findings from this study suggest that a community is more likely to develop a LVOAD if they have persistent unmet needs. Communities that fulfilled their needs through other means (Unmet Needs Committees, Long-term recovery Committees, or working groups) struggled to maintain relevance for continuing with a LVOAD.

Leadership

- Have you contacted your local emergency management organizations, State VOAD, National VOAD, or FEMA to establish their level of support with forming an LVOAD?
 - ❖ Rationale: The findings from this study suggest that these organizations/entities provided critical support by contributing information and technical knowledge. These agencies can work with the community to offer technical knowledge on how to create a LVOAD, as well as informing the community on services and resources that may currently be available for individuals and households and also with respect to unmet needs post-disaster.
- Are you, or do you have, an individual from the nonprofit community that is motivated to start and maintain a LVOAD?

- ❖ This study suggests that a leader capable of motivating others to create a LVOAD is essential to forming an LVOAD and inspiring others to stay involved.
- Is there a core group of individuals from the nonprofit community that are willing to create and maintain a LVOAD?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that a core group of motivated individuals are necessary to complete the tasks and activities necessary to create and maintain a LVOAD. There are far too many tasks and activities for any one individual to complete including recruitment, establishing meeting times and locations, and maintaining contact information, to name a few.

Organizational Structure

- Have you contacted your State or National VOAD to request information regarding by-law formation or electoral processes?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that the communities that formed official LVOADs used by-law templates provided by representatives from their State VOAD. The State VOAD by-laws closely mirrored those of the National VOAD. These by-laws were used as guidelines for a number of LVOAD tasks and activities including elections, leadership roles, conditions of membership, voting procedures, and financial management, to name a few. Therefore, the by-laws may be of use to those considering starting a LVOAD.
- Has your community attempted to recruit individuals/organizations from area nonprofits to gauge their interest in forming a LVOAD?
 - ❖ The findings suggest that gathering support from the local nonprofit and governmental community is important for building a strong foundation for LVOAD creation and maintaining an expansive LVOAD network.

Barriers

- Do you have a plan to deal with burnout or meeting fatigue within your LVOAD leadership and membership, particularly surrounding maintaining active meeting participation?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that LVOAD members will likely experience feeling of burnout and meeting fatigue, both of which were listed as two of the primary barriers to creating a LVOAD.
- Are there any ongoing disasters in your region?

- ❖ The findings suggest that larger, more salient, disasters can divert attention and resources from smaller hazard events. The communities that experienced disaster competition noted difficulty maintaining active membership, due to members migrating to the larger scale disasters.
- Are you prepared to deal with turnover of members and leadership?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that staff turnover can be problematic, especially amongst LVOAD leadership. The findings suggest that planning for turnover helped maintain knowledgeable individuals in the key leadership positions.
- Are you prepared to deal with turf issues amongst the nonprofit community?
 - ❖ The findings suggest that turf issues, particularly within the nonprofit community, are likely to occur when developing a LVOAD. However, the findings suggest that working through turf issues can also strengthen the LVOAD in the long-term.
- Are you prepared to deal with complacency in the event that your community experiences prolonged periods without threat of a hazard event?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that complacency becomes an issue as more and more time elapses between hazards events. The findings suggest that complacency can result in loss of membership participation.

The considerations listed above outline the important factors noted as important to LVOAD creation by participants from the five LVOADs in this study. The factors were followed with a list of the primary barriers that impeded LVOAD creation and maintenance. The remainder of this tool is devoted to maintenance considerations with some helpful suggestions on ways to deal with the barriers.

General Housekeeping, LVOAD evolution, & Value of Membership

- How are you planning to manage finances?
 - ❖ Although the LVOAD is not an action group that deals with allocation of money or resources, it may require some financial support to pay for expenses such as educational materials, professional speakers, trainings, workshops, and so forth. The findings of this study suggest that LVOADs can charge annual membership dues to pay for these expenses. If dealing with finances, the LVOADs in this study noted that it was important to use a third party to handle the finances. The decisions to determine who uses the money and how the money was to be used were made through

democratic voting as defined in the by-laws. How are you planning to manage finances?

- How often do you plan to revisit and revise the by-laws?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that treating the by-laws as a working document was important with ensuring the LVOAD was operating within its scope. Participants noted that it was helpful to revisit the by-laws at least annually and to revisit and revise them as necessary to meet unforeseen challenges.
- How do you plan to maintain up-to-date information?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that maintaining updated information is very challenging. Information pertains to member contact information, social media (Facebook page, website, blog, twitter), meeting schedules, and meeting minutes. Assigning responsibility for updating information may help ensure that they are being maintained.
- Do you have local schools and universities in your area that may be able to offer interns?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest that interns are valuable resources because they are able to devote time and energy, specifically to address the needs of the LVOAD. In addition, interns may possess technical knowledge and expertise that the LVOAD may be able to use to their advantage. The findings of this study identified intern tasks included writing by-laws, updating contact information, updating social media, and creating tools to track available resources, to name a few.
- How do you intend to maintain meeting participation?
 - ❖ The findings of this study suggest maintaining member participation can be problematic, particularly when not in times of disaster. You will have to decide how often the LVOAD will meet and what will be offered to members if they participate. The findings suggest participation was increased when the LVOAD offered new and relevant speakers or trainings.
- What other hazards do you intend to focus on?
 - ❖ The findings suggest it is important to take an all-hazards approach with LVOAD planning. Participants noted an all-hazards approach can help deal with issues such as burnout and complacency.

- How are you planning on offering value for members?
 - ❖ The findings suggest that it is important to offer members value since they are expected to devote their time and energy towards the LVOAD. LVOAD can offer value with membership by recognizing members and providing relevant education and training opportunities.

The purpose of this tool is not to persuade you on whether or not to create a LVOAD in your community; the goal is offer a snapshot of the many factors one needs to consider when contemplating LVOAD development to better prepare you for the challenges that lie ahead. The findings suggest communities that identified and addressed the considerations presented above were more likely to see successful LVOAD creation.