VOLUNTEER
BÉNÉVOLES
CANADA

Framework Foundation

Established in 2002, the mission of the **Framework Foundation** is to promote civic engagement of Canadians aged 22 to 35 through the merits of volunteerism.

Conceptualised by four friends, Anil Patel, Simon Foster, Nick Maiese, and Andrew Klingel, Framework discussed their initial volunteer engagement plan – *Timeraiser* - with Toronto-based volunteer agencies, academics, volunteers, peers, and charitable status organizations to elicit interest and feedback. Based on this first round of research, the **Framework** model was refined into the early summer of 2003. [1]

At this point, **Framework** engaged two MBA students, Bryan Santone and Ron Jagdeo, through a United-Way internship program. Their research was designed to improve the understanding of current trends in civic engagement and volunteerism, the mitigating factors for and against entry into volunteering roles, and to determine specifically how the target demographic (22–35 year olds with a post-secondary education in Toronto) might respond to the **Framework**-designed '*Timeraiser* event-model'. Four specific behaviour-groups were identified within the targeted demographic, including:

1. Volunteer - Givers
2. Volunteer - Non Givers
3. Non Volunteer - Givers
4. Non Volunteer - Non Givers

A 'Giver' was defined as "someone who had donated money towards a registered not-for-profit and/or charitable organization - sometime in the past three years." A 'Volunteer' was defined as someone who had given their time freely to work with a community organization in the planning or carrying out of a significant task – sometime in the past 3 years. The 'Non Volunteer – Giver' was thought to be the strongest candidate for involvement in voluntary activities through the **Framework** '*Timeraiser*' concept.

Focus group discussions explored how 'Givers' and 'Non givers' might perceive this kind of event, how likely they might be to participate, and how likely they might be to complete their volunteer commitment. Preliminary findings suggested that the giver/non-volunteer demographic was the desired target because they had no current volunteer commitments; Framework's proposed volunteer options did not represent an onerous time commitment and Framework proposed volunteer opportunities in the area of

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[1] Unless otherwise cited, the following discussion is adapted from Dom Bortolussi, Lead Author. FRAMEWORK FOUNDATION: A WORKING PAPER ON THE: FRAMEWORK TIMERAISER MODEL RESEARCH PROGRAM AND FINDINGS (2002- 2003). p.3-4. Accessed on March 31, 2010 from http://www.frameworkfoundation.ca/pdf/Research_TR_Design.pdf

Culture and Recreation that this demographic found interesting. This research has informed **Framework's** volunteer engagement activities.

Timeraiser, the concept explored in their preliminary research, is a comprehensive volunteer engagement process that they describe as "part volunteer fair, part silent art auction and part night out" or "speed-dating" for volunteers. The cost of the event is $20.00 plus a minimum pledge of 20 volunteer hours to be completed in the next 12 months. Guests bid additional volunteers hours at a charitable organisation they choose for pieces of original art. Following completion of their volunteer hours, participants bring home the artwork as a reminder of their goodwill. *Timeraiser* has positioned itself as "a 'win-win-win' situation: A **Framework** agency will get the skills and expertise of a motivated volunteer, the participant will get a rewarding volunteer experience, and potentially a piece of original artwork as a reminder of their contribution to community."

The *Timeraiser* event facilitates connections between citizens, businesses, charitable and not-for-profit organisations and emerging artists. It seeks to cultivate engaged citizens by making it simple for individuals to find meaningful volunteer opportunities believing that engaged citizens are critical to building strong communities.

The silent art auction is the key component of the *Timeraiser* event. Art is not donated but purchased at fair market value from new Canadian artists. As Anil Patel states in a promotional video on their site, artists are often approached to donate art to support charitable causes. Purchasing their art and then using it as an incentive for volunteers benefits the Canadian art community by supporting individual artists. As of 2010, *Timeraiser* has invested over $310,000 in the careers of more than 450 artists across the country. The promotional benefits for individual visual artists whose work is chosen for inclusion in the auction are significant, as noted by Drew Kahn, artist in the same video available on the *Timeraiser* website.

Agencies wishing to become involved in a *Timeraiser* event submit an online auction which is reviewed by a jury. In selecting partner agencies, *Timeraiser* strives to provide event participants with a variety of interesting volunteer opportunities that will inspire them to volunteer in the long-term. A short, 9 minute video posted on the CivicFootprintTV Youtube channel describes how agencies may (re-)engage in their city's *Timeraiser* event[2]. The video talks agencies through the registration process, provides information about the event, including tips on how to successfully market the agency, and the follow-up process. Agencies are advised that they will be solicited for feedback in the post-event period, and will be contacted prior to the next *Timeraiser* event in their city to determine interest in future activities.

Prospective participants register on the *timeraiser.ca* website where they can explore the art gallery and obtain details about agencies that will be participating in their city's event. The highly interactive website encourages participants to get involved in their communities

Following the *Timeraiser* event, volunteer commitments are monitored by **Framework.** Participants are provided the contact of the organisation to which they committed their

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[2] This channel has 26 uploaded videos available that not only walk volunteers, participants, agencies, and artists through the *Timeraiser* event, but also provide information about many different technologies that support *Timeraiser*'s ongoing work.

volunteer hours. In turn the organisation is given the contact information of the participant. Participants make the necessary arrangements to fulfill their commitment, and once they have completed the required number of hours, they claim their piece of art. Participants are encouraged to plan, track and adjust their giving, volunteering and participating efforts on the **Civic Footprint.ca** website with goal of the broadening their civic footprint; the "concept refers to each citizen's unique ability to contribute time and money to help develop stronger communities across Canada."

Since its launch in Toronto seven years ago the *Timeraiser* program has expanded nationally to Calgary (2006), Vancouver and Ottawa (2008), Hamilton and Edmonton (2009) with plans for further expansion in 2010. The *Timeraiser* website states that this expansion prioritized managed, meaningful growth focusing "on nurturing vital local partnerships, engaging enthusiastic and skilled local volunteers while going deeper into existing cities." *Timeraiser* has also engaged in community development by bringing together emerging community leaders from across Canada with the goal of providing a forum where participants were able "to share ideas and learn from a variety of diverse community impact initiatives across the country"; participants explored similarities and differences ". . . return[ing] to their city with new ideas of how to make the Timeraiser as relevant and meaningful to their community."

Due to their collaborative approach, at the end of 2009, *Timeraiser*, had successfully:

1. Generated over 51,000 volunteer hours
2. Invested $300,000 in the careers of emerging artists
3. Engaged 5,000 Canadians to pick up a cause; and
4. Worked with 250+ charitable organizations.

Further, they state that if you take into account "the total financial and social community impact…the program's return on investment is estimated to approach 220%, generating nearly $2.20 in 'social good' for each dollar invested in programming."

Their future goal is be present in every major Canadian city, to deepen their involvement in every community in which they operate, and to continuing to inspire people to become involved in their own communities.[3]

For further information contact, check out their various web presences:
Framework Foundation: http://www.frameworkfoundation.ca/
Timeraiser: http://www.timeraiser.ca/
Civic Footprint: http://civicfootprint.ca/
Timeraiser 's Public Gallery: www.picasaweb.google.ca/timeraiser
Facebook: www.facebook.com/timeraiser
Twitter: www.twitter.com/timeraiser

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[3] Anil Patel in MIXING VOLUNTEERISM WITH THE ARTS, accessed on April7th, 2010 from http://www.getinvolved.ca/watch/video/timeraiser