

Report for New Hampshire: Lebanon: Upper Valley Substance Misuse Prevention Partnership

Marc B. Goldstein, Ph.D., John Daviau, M.A., and Heather Sapere, M.A.

March 31, 2015

Earlier this year you participated in a study entitled “Coincidence of Role Expectations between Staff and Volunteer Members of Drug-Free Community Coalitions.” Since we received at least 10 responses from your coalition (including both paid staff and volunteer members), we have prepared the following report for your coalition that includes the data from your group.

Study Background

Over 650 substance abuse prevention coalitions are supported by Drug-Free Community (DFC) grant funds. These coalitions typically have one or two paid staff members to help support the operation of the coalition with the rest of the coalition membership consisting of volunteers. While the paid staff is there to provide principally logistical support, in our experience as consultants to coalitions, many staff become the *de facto* leaders of the coalition and are expected to manage nearly all aspects of coalition operation. The role confusion arising from the difference in expectations between staff members and volunteer members often results in considerable stress for staff members¹ (e.g., Ortqvist & Wincent, 2006) and can undermine grass root leadership development and active, broad-based community participation. This study compared the expectations regarding role responsibilities between paid staff and voluntary coalition members in a national sample of DFC-supported coalitions.

Methodology

A survey instrument listing some key operational behaviors for effective coalition functioning was developed by the authors and field-tested with a sample of paid staff members and voluntary members. The revised instrument included 37 coalition actions and respondents were asked to specify for each behavior listed, whom they felt should be primarily responsible for performing the task: paid staff or voluntary members of the coalition. Scores could range from 1 (totally the responsibility of paid staff) to 5 (totally the responsibility of coalition volunteers), with a value of 3 meaning that the responsibility for the task should be equally shared between staff and volunteer members. In addition, the survey contained a few questions regarding details of the coalition such as the number of years receiving DFC funding, and information regarding the individual respondent, i.e., were they a staff or volunteer, how long they had been associated with the coalition, and whether they chaired any coalition committees.

The survey was placed on SurveyMonkey© and links to the survey were mailed electronically to an identified staff person at a random sample of 69 coalitions in the US. A master list of all Drug-Free coalitions was found at www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/drug-free-communities-support-program. For each selected coalition, the contracted staff person was asked to: (a) complete the survey him- or herself, and (b) distribute the link to the survey to other members of the coalition and encourage them to participate. A sample contact letter for coalition members was provided. Coalitions that had at least 10 individuals reply (including staff and volunteers) were promised feedback reports on the data from their coalition.

¹See, for example, Ortqvist, D., & Wincent, J (2006). Prominent consequences of role stress: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13, 399-422.

Results

Overall, we received responses from 313 individuals representing 36 coalitions, a 52.2% response rate. These data were then inspected for completeness; an individual had to answer at least 19 of the 37 items to be included in the study.

Since the coalition was the unit of analysis, the mean response to each of the 37 items was computed separately for paid staff and coalition volunteers within each coalition. We only included coalitions that had data from at least one staff member and one volunteer member. This final sample consisted of 251 individuals from 22 coalitions. The mean scores on the 37 items across coalitions were then computed using the mean scores from each coalition.

Figure 1 (see Appendix A) presents the *national* means for paid staff and volunteers. The full wording of each item is listed below the graph. The horizontal distance between mean staff response and the mean volunteer member response for each item represents the *degree of discrepancy* between the two groups in terms of who they think is responsible for the task.

Overall, the track of the two lines is quite close together reflecting the general degree of agreement between staff and volunteers regarding who was responsible for accomplishing each action. In 28 of the 37 comparisons staff members had higher means than did volunteers, suggesting that they perceived the responsibility for these tasks should be more equally shared between staff and volunteers. We performed statistical comparisons among all the items and found that for five activities there was a statistically reliable difference ($p < .05$) between the means of staff and volunteers. These items and the mean scores for each group are shown in the table below.

Activity	Mean Score of Paid Staff	Mean Score of Coalition Volunteers
Chair coalition meetings	3.30	2.61
Lead the implementation of coalition activities	2.98	2.61
Chair committee meetings	3.44	2.86
Prioritize risk and protective factors that will be the focus of coalition activities	3.02	2.65
Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model or framework that drives coalition activities	2.32	2.66

Paid staff thought that leading coalition or committee meetings were tasks that should be equally shared by staff and volunteers, while volunteers thought those were responsibilities of paid staff. Similarly, volunteers felt that paid staff were more responsible for leading the implementation of coalition activities and that paid staff should also take the lead in prioritizing the risk and protective factors the coalition should address. Interestingly, volunteers thought they should take more responsibility in terms of educating others about the conceptual model that guides coalition actions than did paid staff members. This seems, in some ways, to contradict the previous item regarding prioritizing risk and protective factors.

While national data is interesting, coalitions are generally more interested in the responses from their own members. Figure 2 (in Appendix 2) presents the mean scores for paid staff and volunteer members for your coalition. We did not perform statistical comparisons on these data, but we draw your attention to items with large “gaps” between staff and volunteer perceptions.

For your coalition, there was exceptional congruence between the role expectations of staff and volunteers. The largest gaps were for the following items¹:

Talk with work colleagues and/or occupational peers about coalition purpose and actions

Assist with tasks (e.g., handout flyers, . . .) at coalition-sponsored events

Attend key meetings (e.g., town council, school board) when coalition-related items . . .

Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model . . .

We believe it would be useful to discuss these items at a coalition meeting to get a clearer understanding of these differences in role perception. Such a discussion may lead to a “rebalancing” of expectations between staff and volunteer members and better utilization of the skills all parties bring to the table. If there are large discrepancies in expectations between paid staff and coalition members on a number of items, this would suggest that the coalition needs to do some internal discussion and training to better align expectations and improve coalition functioning.

We hope this information is useful to your coalition and that it can lead to greater clarity regarding the roles and expectations of paid staff and volunteer members. If you have questions, you can contact Dr. Marc Goldstein at Goldsteinm@ccsu.edu. Thanks again for your participation in our study.

¹This list is not meant to be definitive. There may be other areas of difference that would be worthwhile to discuss as a coalition.

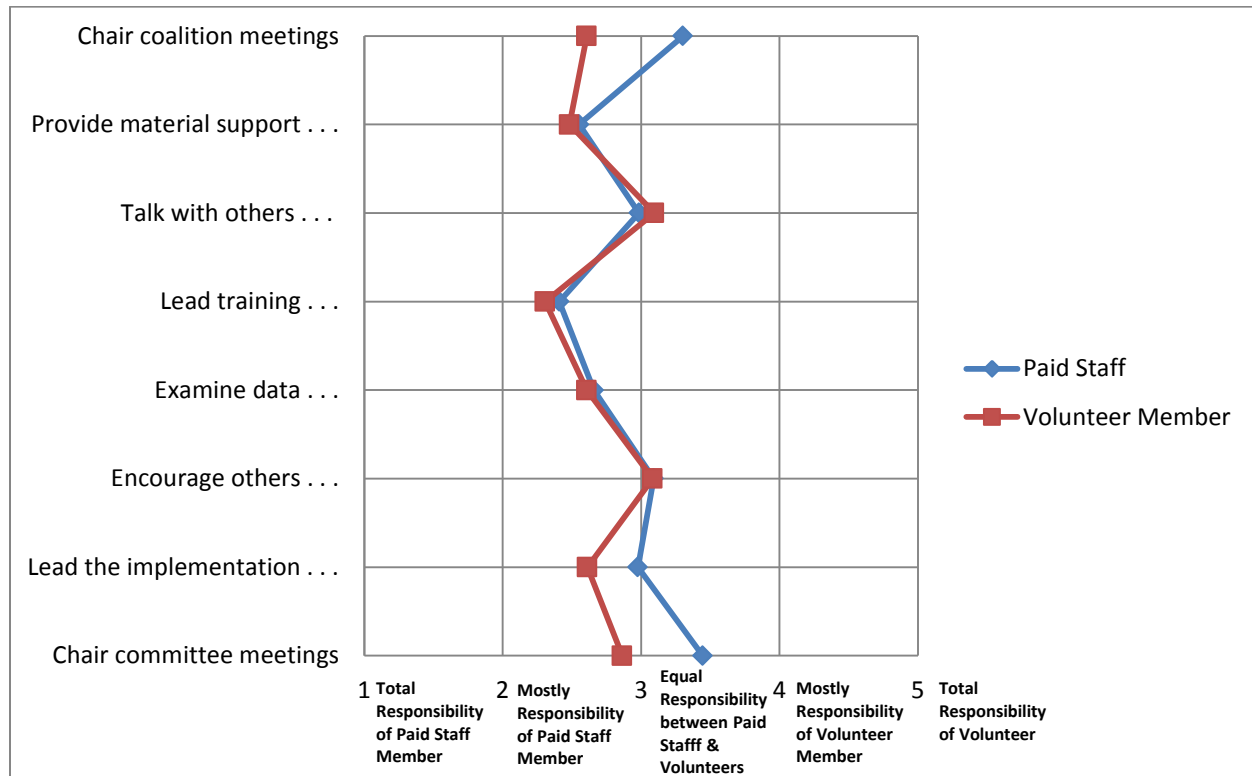
Biographical note:

Marc B. Goldstein, Ph.D., was a Professor of Community Psychology at Central CT State University for 33 years and now works as an independent evaluation consultant with community coalitions and non-profit organizations. He can be reached at Goldsteinm@ccsu.edu.

Heather Sapere, MA, works as a data analyst for an IT company, as well as an evaluation research assistant. Her e-mail is heather.sapere@gmail.com.

John Daviau, MACP, has over twenty-five years of training, consulting and management experience in non-profit organizations and schools focusing on substance abuse and violence prevention and school safety initiatives. *He can be contacted via: www.johndaviauconsulting.com.*

Appendix 1

Mean Responses¹ for Paid Staff and Volunteer Members Across CoalitionsFull description of tasks

Chair coalition meetings

Provide material support (e.g. donate food, meeting space, services such as printing or copying, etc.)

Talk with work colleagues and/or occupational peers about coalition purpose and actions

Lead training for coalition members on key skills

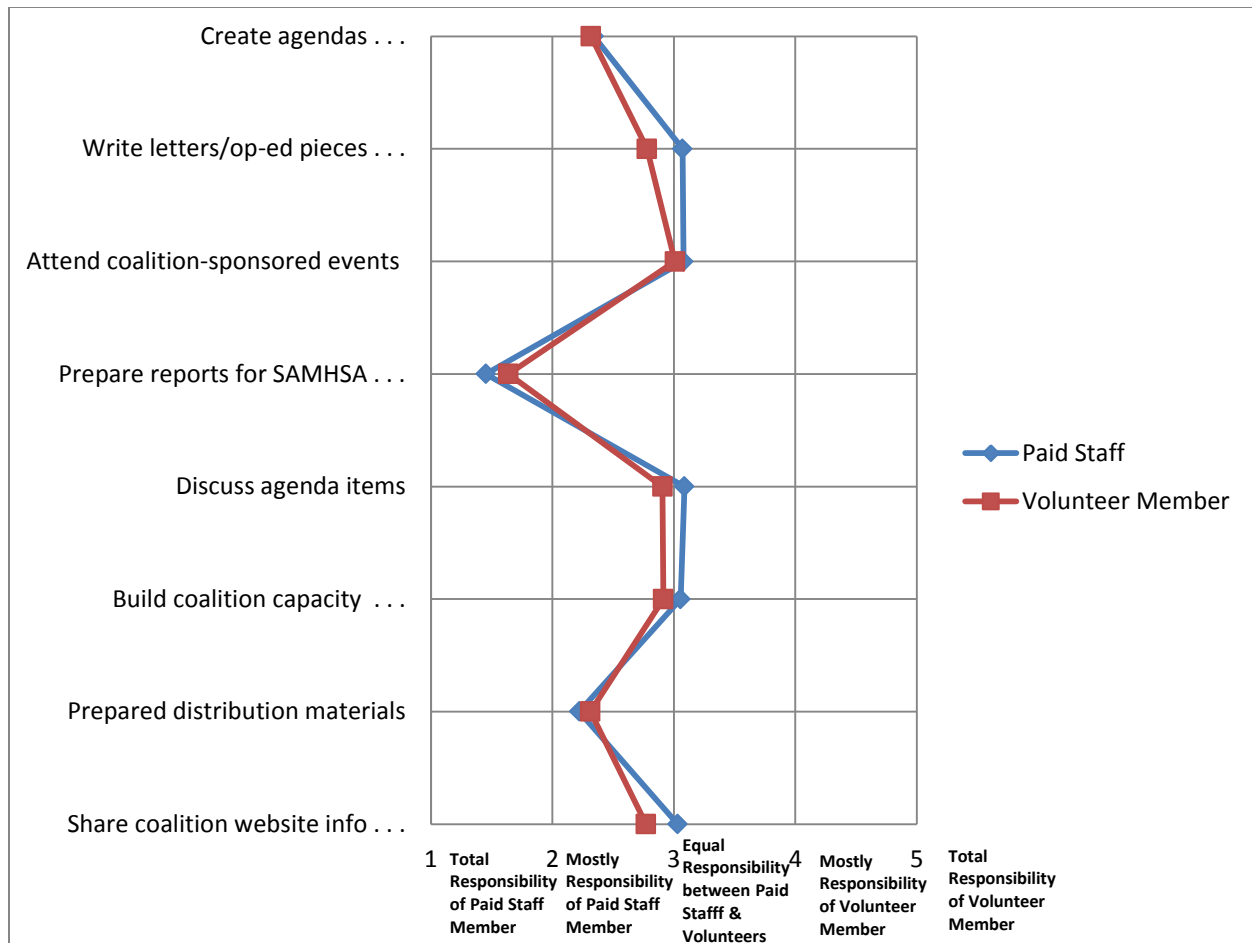
Examine data from the community to identify substance abuse problems and available resources

Encourage others to participate in coalition-sponsored event

Lead the implementation of coalition activities

Chair committee meetings

¹Please contact Marc Goldstein if you would like to have the actual means in tabular form.



Full description of tasks

Create agendas for coalition meetings

Write letters to the editor/op-ed pieces for local newspapers about coalition issues

Attend coalition-sponsored events

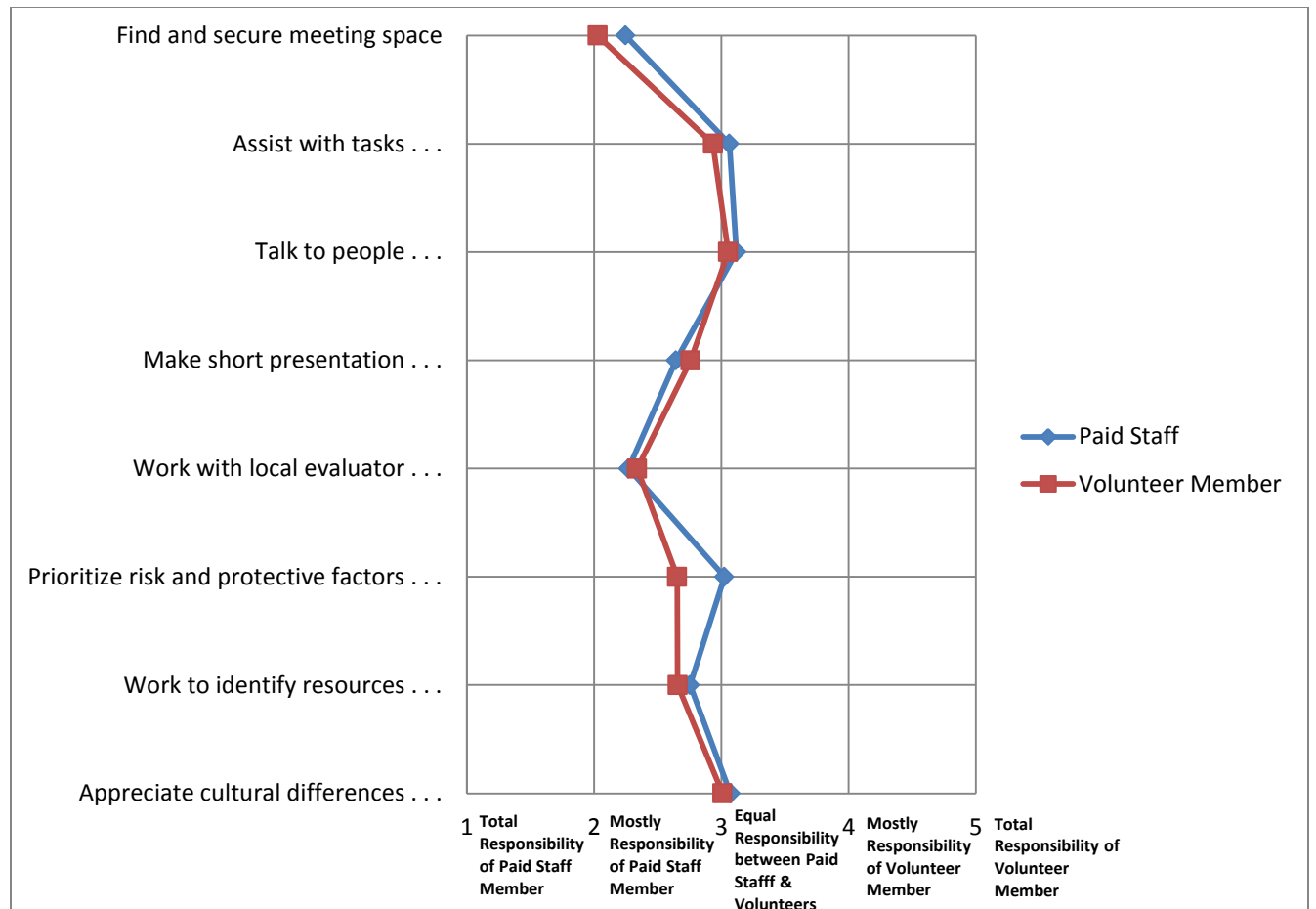
Prepare Drug-Free Community reports for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Discuss agenda items at meetings

Build the coalition's capacity by identifying and personally recruiting key people and/or organizations to join or support the coalition

Prepare distribution materials for coalition meetings or public events

Share information from the coalition website to others via your personal social media links



Full description of tasks

Find and secure meeting space

Assist with tasks (e.g. handout flyers, staff tables at booths) at coalition-sponsored events

Talk to people in the community about issues of substance abuse to build readiness and support for community action and change

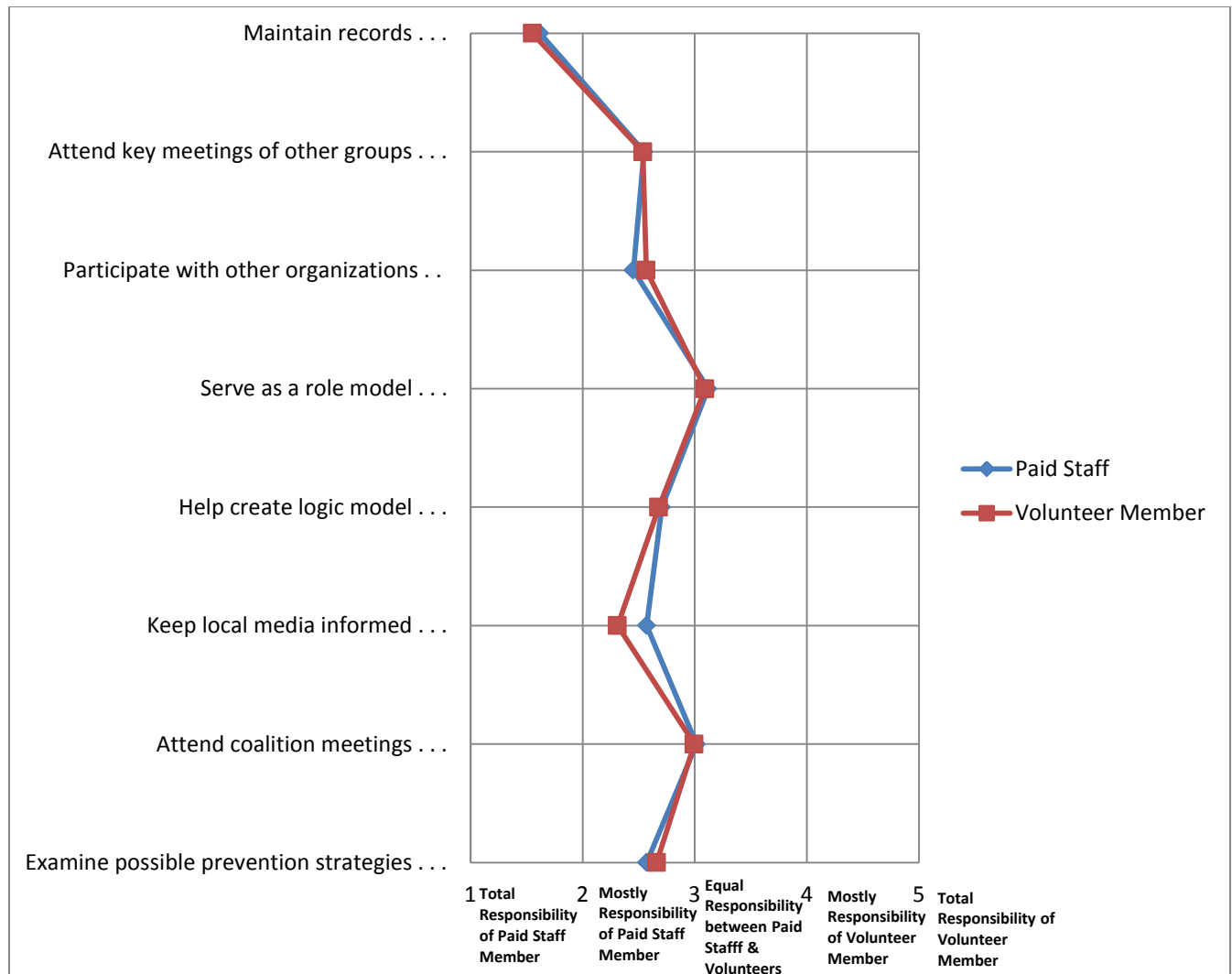
Make a short presentation about the coalition to other groups

Work with local evaluator to assess the impact of various prevention strategies

Prioritize risk and protective factors that will be the focus of coalition activities

Work to identify other resources and strategies that can maintain the coalition's efforts after DFC grant funding ends

Appreciate the different cultural groups in your community and insure that coalition actions consider the values of these constituencies



Full description of tasks

Maintain records of coalition activities

Attend key meetings (e.g. town council, school board) when coalition-related items are on the agenda

Participate with other local or state organizations focused on prevention

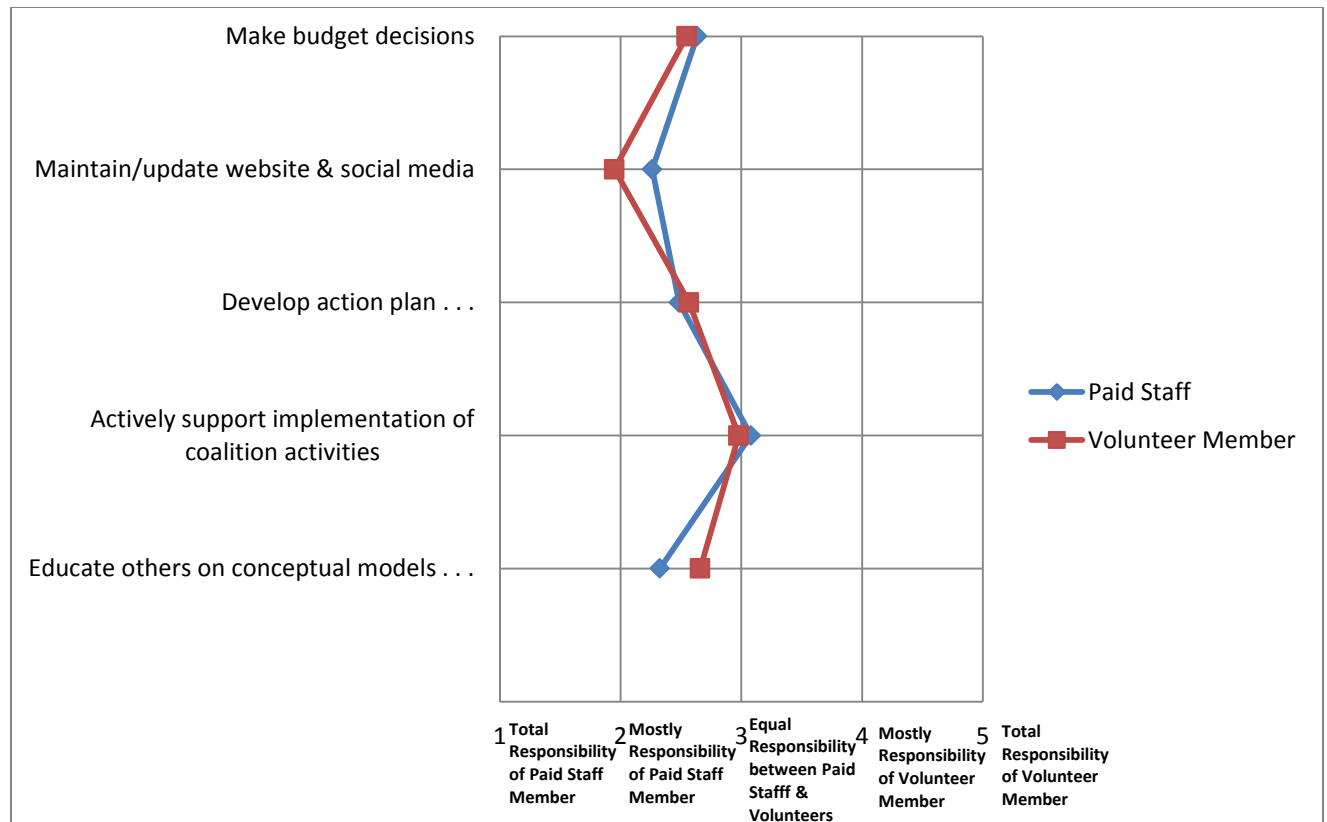
Serve as a role model to young people

Help create a logic model that links community conditions, risk and protective factors, prevention strategies with anticipated outcomes

Keep local media informed about coalition activities

Attend coalition meetings (day or evening)

Examine possible prevention strategies that might be used in the community and determine which are evidence based



Full description of tasks

Make budget decisions

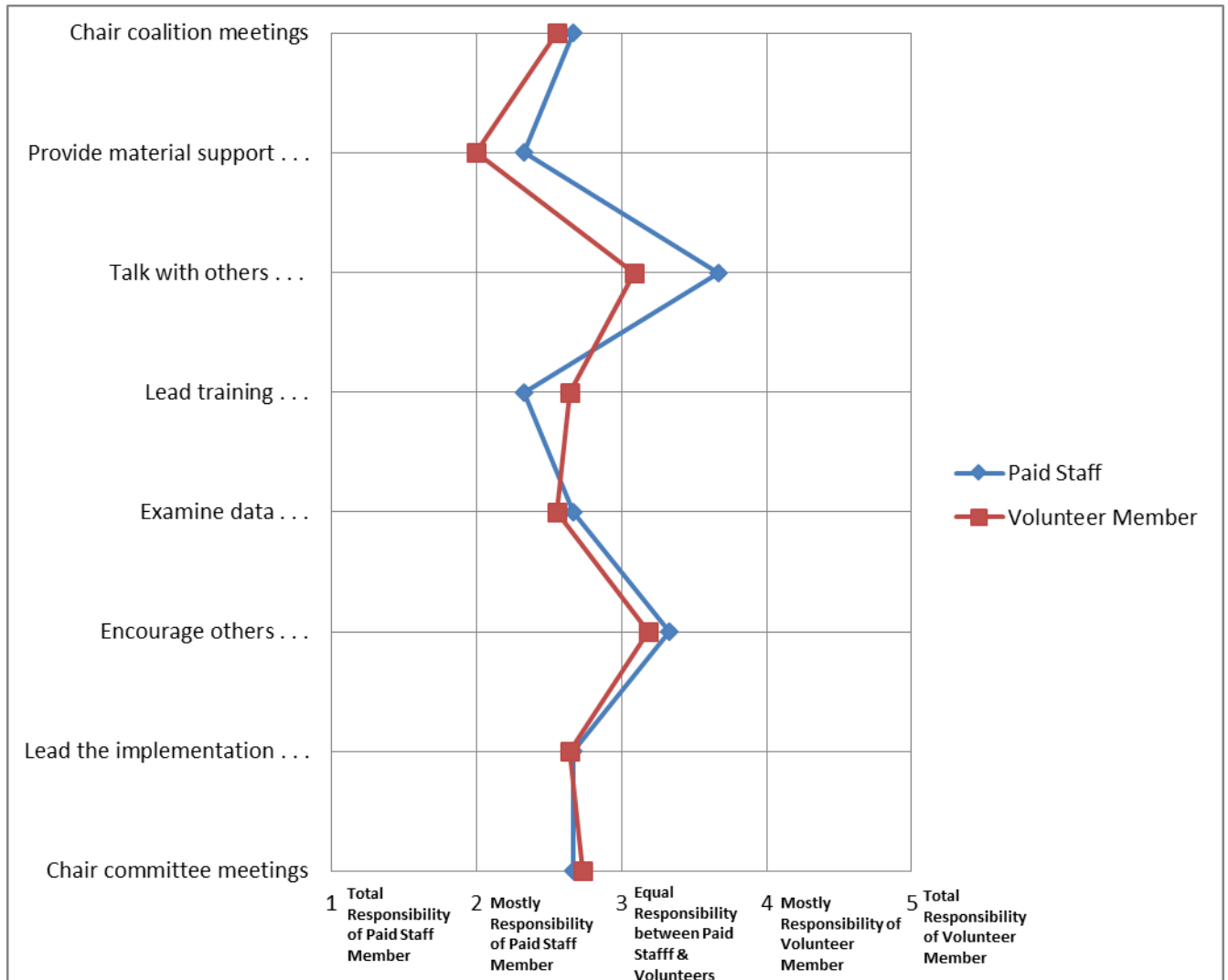
Maintain and update website/social media presence

Develop a detailed action plan that specifies the steps for introducing prevention strategies into the community and those individuals responsible for accomplishing each step

Actively support the implementation of coalition activities

Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model or framework that drives coalition activities

Appendix 2
New Hampshire: Lebanon: Upper Valley Substance Misuse Prevention Partnership



Full description of tasks

Chair coalition meetings

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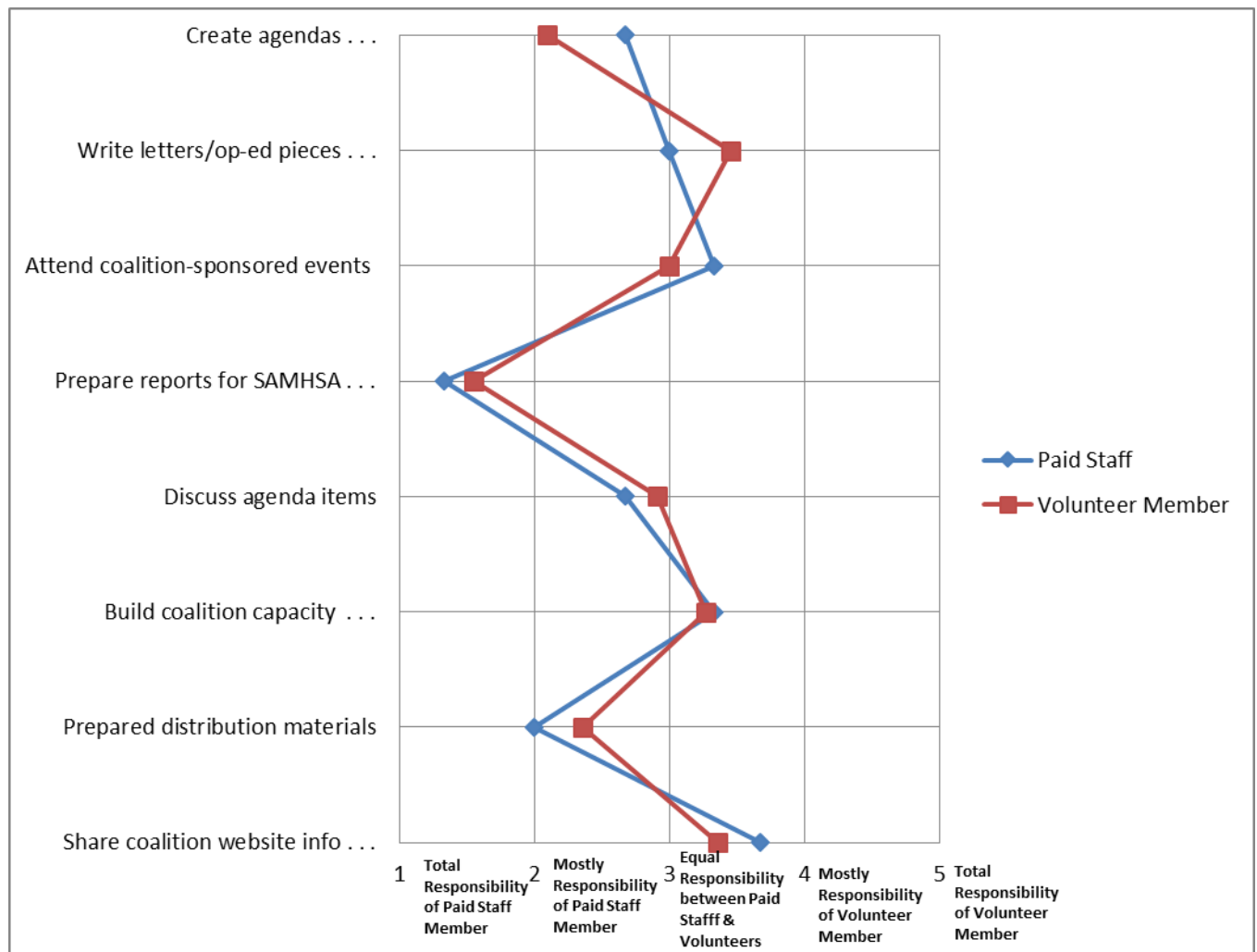
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Chair committee meetings



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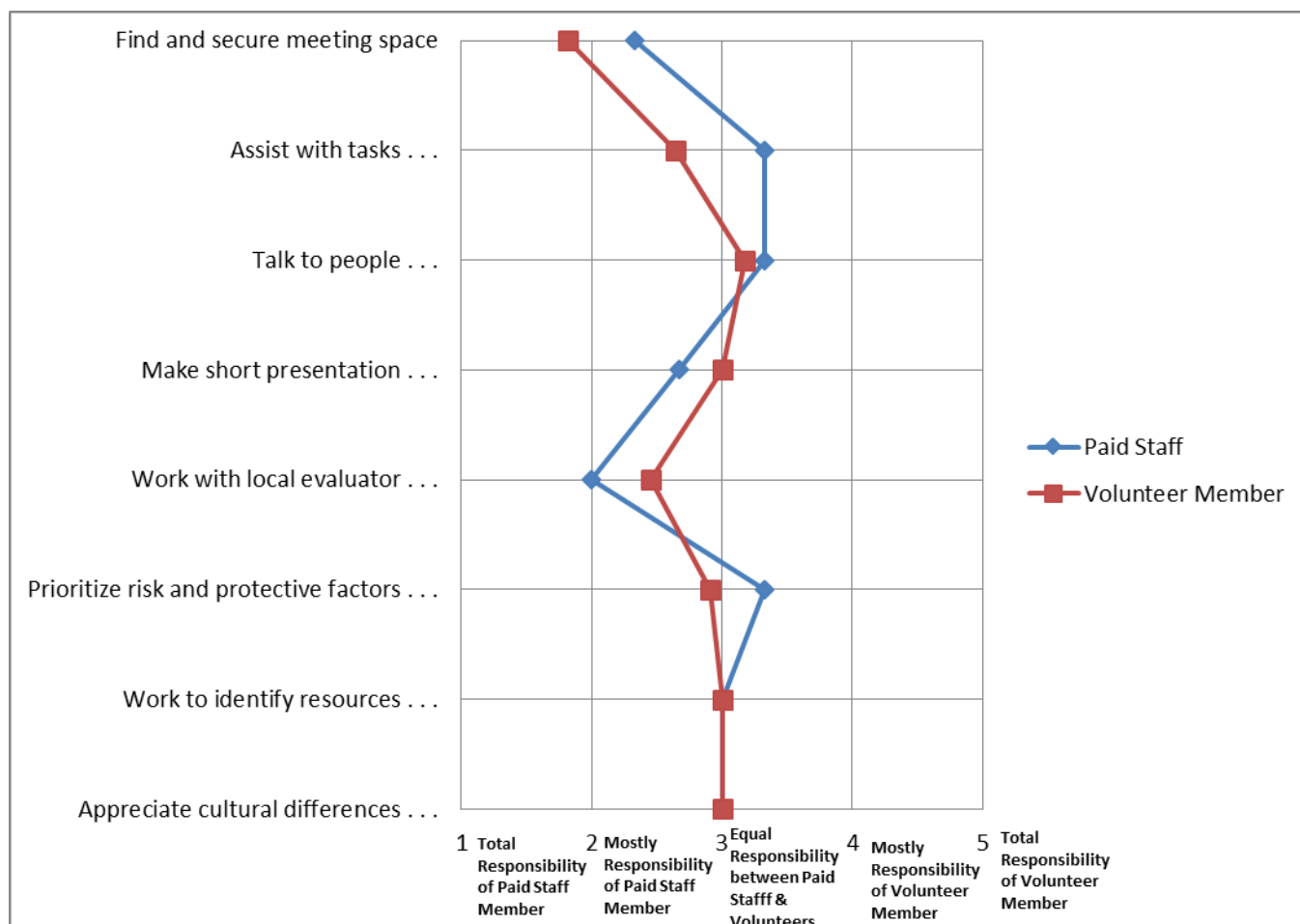
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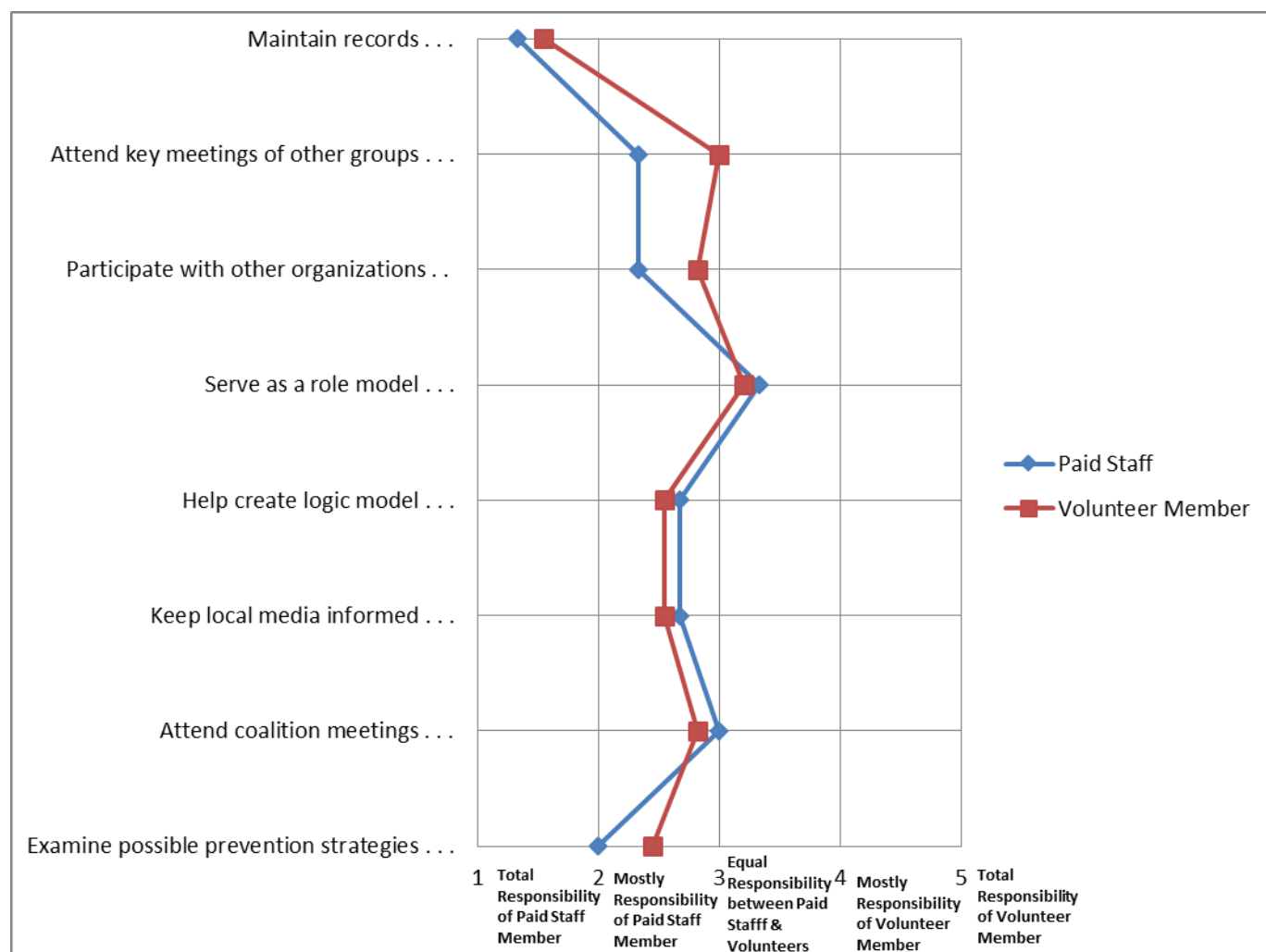
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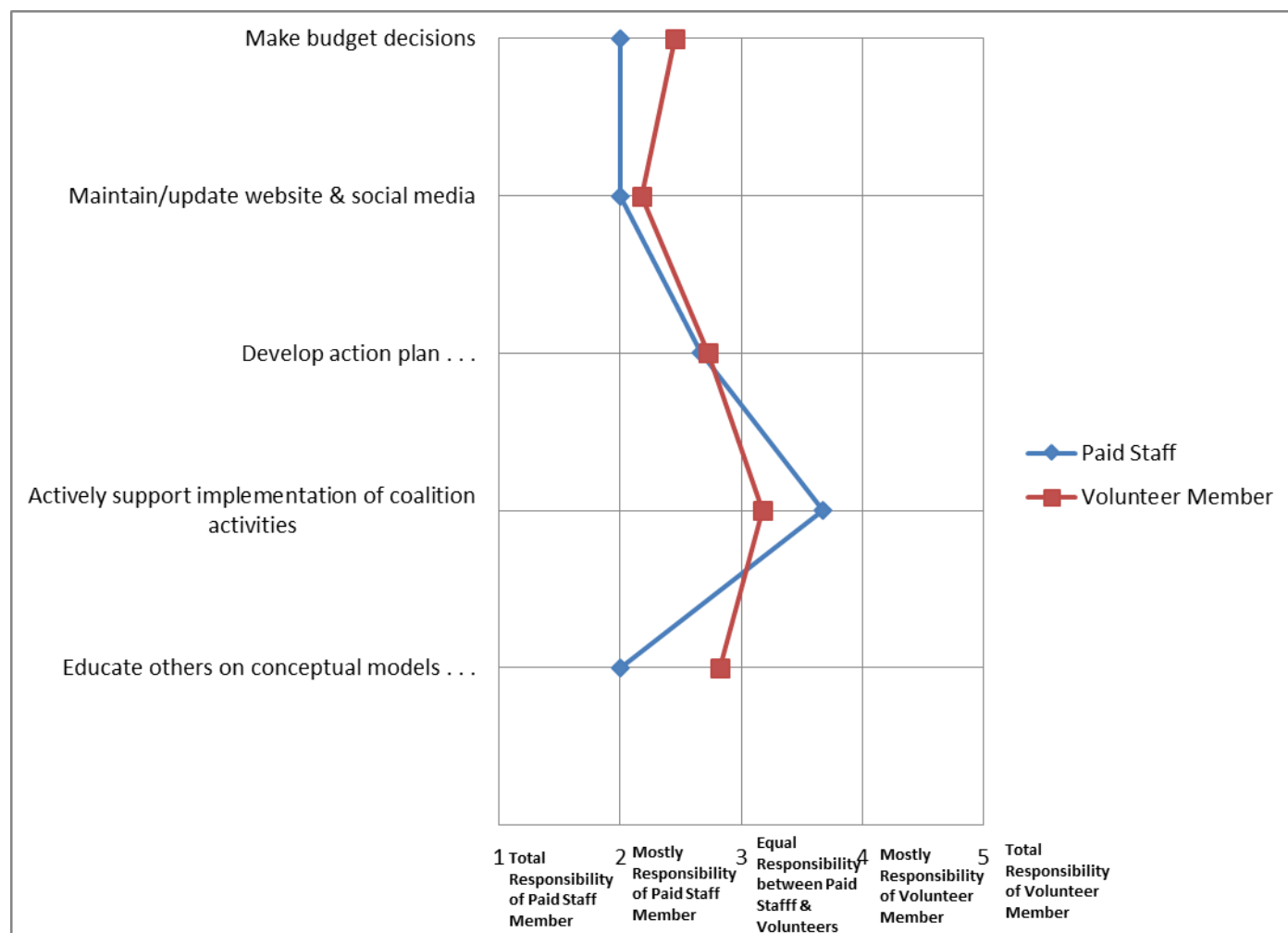
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