



VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: FACTS AND FIGURES

(Reporting on England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)

April 2004

A. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

- **National and Regional Volunteer Centres**

England

In April 2004, “Volunteering England” was launched as the new national volunteer development agency for England. Formed through the merger of the National Centre for Volunteering, Volunteer Development England and the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering, this new organisation works to promote volunteering as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community. For further information, see: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

Northern Ireland

The “Volunteer Development Agency of Northern Ireland” located in Belfast is a membership organisation with some 350 members. The organisation’s mission is to strengthen communities through the promotion and development of volunteering and provides training, help and advice, publications on volunteering, volunteer management, child protection and voluntary management committees. For further information, see: <http://www.volunteering-ni.org>

Scotland

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) works strategically and in partnership to promote, support and develop volunteering in Scotland. The key aims of the organisation are:

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- * To develop and strengthen the Volunteer Centre network in Scotland;
- * To provide services which address members needs;
- * To provide an advocacy, media and promotion service;
- * To develop partnerships and innovative projects;
- * To provide a Scottish Research Centre for Volunteering;
- * To provide a training, information and knowledge exchange service.

For further information, see: <http://www.volunteerscotland.info/index.php>

Wales:

Wales Council for Voluntary Action WCVA is the voice of the voluntary sector in Wales. They represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities in Wales and through WCVA Europe. For further details, see: <http://www.wcva.org.uk>

All four organisations are members of the European Volunteer Centre (CEV): <http://www.cev.be>

- **Financing and Income of National Volunteer Centres**

England:

Volunteering England operates a “corporate supporters scheme”. Current major corporate supporters include:

- Marks & Spencer;
- British Telecom (BT);
- Barclays;
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers;
- Zurich.

Volunteering England is also grateful for the support of the “Active Communities Unit” at the Home Office, the Department of Health, Lloyds TSB Foundation, the GUS Foundation and a variety of other trusts and foundations. Volunteering England provides grants to local health and social care projects in England that involves volunteers in the delivery of their services. These grants are part of the Department of Health’s Opportunities for Volunteering (OFV) scheme. Volunteering England administers the general fund of the OFV scheme along with 17 other organisations, known as national agents. About £6.9m is distributed each year to over 300 projects which involve over 38,000 volunteers. For further details, see: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

Wales:

From a survey of public giving in Wales and accounts from large voluntary organisations, WCVA estimates that the income of the voluntary sector in Wales was £630m in 2001-2. The sources were 34% public giving, 34% national and local government, 26% internally generated (mostly rent of housing associations), 5% from the national lottery (all distributors), 2% from other voluntary organisations (trust funds) and 1% from businesses. See the following link for further details: http://www.wcva.org.uk/content/all/dsp_text.cfm?0=0&display_sitetextid=185

Scotland:

All volunteer centres in Scotland benefit from funding from the Scottish Executive in recognition of their work in building stronger communities, and all have been able to add to this by winning money from a variety of sources. For example from local councils, local health trusts, local enterprise companies and the European Union. Many receive funding from bodies such as the Community Fund, Lloyds TSB Foundation, the Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund, and EU grants to take forward particular pieces of work. Examples of this work include encouraging younger people to volunteer, delivering training to organisations, and offering particular services to people who need support to volunteer. Further details can be obtained by clicking on the link below: <http://www.volunteerscotland.info/aboutus/funding.htm>

- **Recruitment and Placement of Volunteers by Volunteer Centres**

Scotland:

In June 2003, “www.volunteerscotland.org.uk” was launched which allows people to search for volunteer opportunities in Scotland on-line for the first time. By August 2003, almost 4,000

organisations had registered some 15,000 volunteer opportunities on the site, which is driven by the Volunteer Centre Network.

England:

Information missing

Northern Ireland:

Information missing

Wales:

Information missing

B. BASIC FACTS

- **Statistical Data: Number of Volunteers in the U.K.**

United Kingdom:

According to the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering conducted by the Institute for Volunteering Research, approximately 22 million adults take part in some kind of voluntary activity each year.

Scotland:

In 2000, almost 1.52 million adult Scots (aged over sixteen years) volunteered regularly on either a formal or informal basis. This equalled 38% of the total adult population.¹

However, a more recent survey which posed the question, “have you ever done voluntary work?” revealed that 15% of adults in Scotland were currently volunteering. Meanwhile, 3% of adults in Scotland had volunteered in past six months, 19% had volunteered more than six months ago and 63% of adults in Scotland have never volunteered. Nevertheless, these findings (that 37% of adults have volunteered over the previous twelve months) fit in with the results of another Volunteer Development Scotland survey which found that 38% of adults in Scotland had volunteered in the past twelve months.²

Northern Ireland:

There are approximately 448,000 formal volunteers in Northern Ireland and about 759,000 informal volunteers.³ Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid voluntary work carried out with or under the auspices of an organisation. Informal volunteering is defined as unpaid voluntary work carried out outside the framework of an organisation, often at neighbourhood level, but outside the immediate family.

Wales:

48% of adults in Wales (1.12 million) volunteer each year, giving an average 8 hours of time a month.⁴

¹ Scottish Household Survey 2000, see: <http://www.vds.org.uk/volunteersweek/factsnFigures.asp>

² NFO System Three Scottish Opinion Survey, July 2003

³ Northern Ireland Agenda for Volunteering, 2001 (an initiative of the Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland)

⁴ From recent research commissioned by the National Assembly of Wales

C. THE TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

- **Volunteer Training: National Volunteer Centres**

England:

Volunteering England offers volunteer training courses via their website. For example, “[Administrative Information](#)”, “[What Every First-Time Volunteer Manager Should Know](#)”, “[Effective And Fair Volunteer Recruitment & Selection](#)”, “[How To Cope With Difficult Volunteers & Situations](#)”, “[Getting Support & Supervision Right](#)” and “[Project Management Issues](#)” as well as links to other training centres, such as: <http://www.voluntarysector.org.uk>

Scotland:

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) is involved in training and organises several courses each year. The range of courses is developed to provide learning experiences for volunteer managers, co-ordinators, supporters and volunteer centre personnel across Scotland. One can choose from their free on-line learning, to a cluster of courses from their short course programme, to their series of validated courses. For further details, see: <http://www.vds.org.uk/training/Default.htm> VDS has also contributed to the consultation leading to draft standards for volunteer managers and offers training consultancy services delivering customised training for both large and small organisations.⁵

Wales:

WCVA Europe provides a range of training and information services. Whether to find out about a book on one of their comprehensive training courses, request a meeting with an adviser, find out the latest news, or simply see a full list of our training and information services, see their web site: <http://www.wcva.org.uk>

Northern Ireland:

The Volunteer Development Agency is currently developing its 2004-2005 training programme for those who work with volunteers. The Agency currently offers a range of training covering the whole spectrum of volunteer management, volunteer management committees and child protection. A few of the many topics the Agency covers are: “Recruitment and Introduction of Volunteers for Committees”, “Developing Volunteer Policies”, “Volunteers as Mentors”, “Volunteers, the Law and Expenses”, and “Basic Child Protection Awareness”.⁶

- **Most Common Forms of Training**

England:

Training in volunteer management seems very common and popular, for example Lantra Awards has launched a new vocational qualification – the Advanced Certificate in Volunteer Management - for everyone, paid or a volunteer, who supervises or leads volunteers on a daily basis. The certificate aims to develop course participants’ management skills while at the same time recognising the special nature and values of volunteering.

- **Number of volunteers that receive some form of training in the U.K.**

⁵ From the Training Report, VDS 2003 Annual Report.

⁶ From <http://www.volunteering-ni.org/Q'aire 04.doc>

No information found

- **Do Volunteers Want Training?**

United Kingdom:

It is in response to such high demand that volunteer centres and organisations run training courses for many volunteers.

D. SECTOR AREAS THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE INVOLVED IN

- **In which activities are volunteers involved?**

Scotland:

Fundraising, organising events and transport are the most common activities, consistently in both 1991 and 1997 surveys. Committee work has also greatly increased in popularity since 1991. In descending order of popularity, the following figures can be cited from 2002:

- Fundraising (24%);
- Organising and stage-managing an event (12%);
- Serving on a committee (10%);
- Offering support (10%);
- Helping with recreational activities (10%);
- Campaigning/advocacy (3%);
- Administration (3%);
- Environmental work (2%)⁷

England and Wales:

In 2001, 16.5 million people (39% of the population) in England and Wales volunteered formally at least once, with 26% volunteering formally at least once a month. The most popular volunteer tasks were:

- Raising and handling money;
- Organising or helping to run an activity or event;
- Being a leader or member of a committee;
- Giving advice;
- Information or counselling;
- Providing transport or driving.

In 2001, in England and Wales, 7% of the population volunteered through employer-supported schemes. Of those whose employers had schemes for volunteering, 21% participated. Education, religion, health and social welfare also have large numbers of volunteers involved.⁸

England: case-study from the sports sector

At the 2002 Commonwealth Games held in Manchester, England, 20,000 volunteers were recruited by the Pre Volunteer Programme (PVP), a four-year initiative set up by the Games organisers and by

⁷ All figures from NFO System 3 Poll, August 2002, Volunteer Development Scotland

⁸ From: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk>

Manchester City Council in 1999. The Programme aimed to ensure that the long term unemployed, members of ethnic minority groups, disabled or young people could be involved in the Games and get a step up in their employment prospects and further education and training. Mark Pritchard, the volunteer coordinator for this programme has said that, "black and ethnic involvement was 20%". While only 50% of those interested were actually selected to volunteer at the Games, they were all added to a new database, which would inform them about future volunteering opportunities. Activities in which volunteers were involved in at the Games included crowd control, stewards, medical specialists, accountants, computing and drivers.⁹

Northern Ireland:

A 2001 survey showed that over 30% of volunteers are involved in sports and recreation. This is an increase of 7% from 1995. Religious organisations are the next popular type of organisation with 27%. However this is a significant decrease of 10% from 1995. Raising money is still the most popular type of volunteer activity.¹⁰

- **Impact of United Nations 2001 Year of Volunteers in the United Kingdom**

United Kingdom:

According to the Institute for Volunteering Research, the true impact of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 will take some time to become evident: IYV 2001 sowed the seeds for an expansion of volunteering but any impact on public attitudes and behaviour will take a while to work its way through. However it is true that the International Year resulted in a greater visibility for volunteering in both the eyes of the general public and policy-makers, which has helped lever increased funding support from the latter. The Institute for Volunteering Research, England was responsible for the global evaluation of the International Year. For the full document, see: <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/events/iyv/beyond/index.htm>

Northern Ireland:

In celebration of International Volunteer Day on 5 December 2003, Labour Party MP David Drew tabled an early day motion to celebrate and recognise the contribution of volunteering to the community. The Volunteer Development Agency, in partnership with the UK Volunteering Forum (Volunteer Development Scotland, Wales Council for Voluntary Action and the National Centre for Volunteering) was delighted to see such a positive response from parliamentarians in support of volunteering. In particular, they were pleased that eight MPs from Northern Ireland endorsed the early day motion:

- DUP - Gregory Campbell, Nigel Dodds and Peter Robinson;
- SDLP - John Hume and Eddie McGrady;
- UUP - Roy Beggs, Lady Sylvia Hermon and Martin Smyth.

The early day motion was signed up by a total of 69 MPs. For further information, see: http://www.volunteering-ni.org/newslink_details.asp?NID=135

E. VOLUNTEER PROFILES

⁹ Volunteering magazine, National Centre for Volunteering, April 2003

¹⁰ See 2001 summary table of survey findings on: <http://www.volunteering-ni.org>

- **Proportion of Men-Women Volunteers**

Scotland:

According to the NFO System Three Scottish Opinion Survey of July 2003, 32% of men in Scotland volunteer or have volunteered compared with 41% of women in Scotland. This figure is interesting since many other surveys have found that men and women are equally likely to volunteer.

- **Age of Volunteers**

United Kingdom:

Fewer young people (under 24) were volunteering in 1997 than in 1991 whereas greater numbers of older people (retired from full-time, gainful employment) were volunteering. However, this situation may well have changed more recently given recent developments in student volunteering, for example. More research is therefore needed in order to highlight trends since 1997.¹¹

Scotland:

According to the NFO System 3 Poll, August 2002, adults aged between 35 and 54 years are most likely to volunteer. However, young people aged between 18 and 24 years are 1½ times more likely to volunteer than people over 65 years.

- **Educational Attainment of Volunteers/Socio-Economic Status of Volunteers**

United Kingdom:

The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering by the Institute for Volunteering Research showed that those who remained in education and obtained higher educational qualifications were more likely to volunteer than those who left the education system at a younger age. Only 40% of those questioned who left school at 15 were volunteering in 1997, compared to 73% of those who finished their education at 21 or older.

- **Who Volunteers in the UK?**

1. Young people
2. Students
3. Professionals
4. Unemployed
5. Retired/ about to retire
6. People with disabilities
7. Refugees/ migrants

Scotland:

1. **Young people:** 18-24 year olds are increasingly willing to volunteer;
2. **Students:** a new student volunteering has been established in Scotland to tap this huge resource;
3. **Professionals:** most volunteers in Scotland are in paid employment;

¹¹ From 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, Institute for Volunteering Research

4. Unemployed: research and several surveys in Scotland have shown that the unemployed, long term sick and disabled, short term sick, the poor, the least well qualified and those aged 50-64 volunteer much less frequently than expected;

5. Retired/ about to retire: see above;

6. People with disabilities: see above;

7. Refugees/ migrants: Volunteer Development Scotland has established a black and minority ethnic (BME) volunteers programme that aims to develop volunteering policies and practice and to promote and encourage volunteering among these communities. Important traditions of self-help among such communities that mainstream volunteering organisations have not included in the term “volunteering” have resulted in survey results which show very low levels of migrant involvement in volunteering.

Northern Ireland:

Research has demonstrated that in broad terms, there are a number of groups of people in Northern Ireland less likely to be involved in volunteering. These include:

- Young people;
- People from minority ethnic communities;
- The long-term unemployed;
- People with a disability;
- Older people.¹²

- **Are Those with a Higher Income More Likely to Volunteer?**

United Kingdom:

There is a general correlation between level of income and propensity to volunteer in the United Kingdom. 63% of people earning more than £25,000 in 1997 were volunteers, while only 23% of those with an annual income of less than £4,000 volunteered.¹³

Scotland:

53% of people in socio-economic class AB (professionals, senior management, lawyers, doctors, teachers) are volunteering, compared to 42% from C1 (administrative, junior management, supervisors) and 39% from C2 (skilled occupations, e.g. plumbers). Only 26% in class DE (partly-skilled/unskilled occupations) volunteer. This suggests there may be some correlation with income and likelihood of volunteering.¹⁴

Further comments on volunteer profiles:

The long term volunteer:

The long-term volunteer matches the common notion of the person who is dedicated to a cause or a

¹² From: <http://www.volunteering-ni.org/facts.asp>

¹³ 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, Institute for Volunteering Research

¹⁴ NFO System 3 Poll, August 2002 commissioned by Volunteer Development Scotland

group. The main characteristics of the long-term volunteer include dedication to a cause or an organisation. The long-term volunteer has a strong sense of affiliation with the organisation and its volunteer effort and he/she considers him/herself to be owner of the effort. Long-term volunteers often have a strong emotional investment in their volunteer role and in the sense of personal worth and identity they gain from their participation. The long-term volunteer is commonly recruited in one of three ways:

- By self-recruitment (finding the organisation on their own because of an existing personal commitment to the cause);
- By growth from within (becoming increasingly connected over time);
- By cloning, that is, being brought to the organisation because of a close connection to the existing circle of volunteers.

The long-term volunteer will tend to shape his/her own job, adapting their time and energies to whatever is necessary to make the cause succeed. Long-term volunteers tend to be generalists, willing to do whatever type of work is required to make the effort function, although this may not be exciting or rewarding in itself. Motivation for the long-term volunteer is a matter of both achievement and affiliation, and often recognition is best expressed as an opportunity for greater involvement or advancement in the cause or the organisation.

Short term volunteer:

Over the last decade, a different style of volunteering has begun to develop in the United Kingdom. For purposes of comparison, this style might be called that of the short-term volunteer. The short-term volunteer has a general interest in an organisation or cause, but not necessarily one of extreme depth. Whilst he/she supports the cause, he/she does not usually view the organisation or their involvement as a central part of their own life. The short-term volunteer is usually actively recruited to join the organisation. This can happen in one of three ways:

- They connect with an organisation;
- They are recruited through participation in a specific event, such as a weekend sports programme or race;
- They are recruited by forced choice, i.e. they are asked by a friend or employer to volunteer.

Short-term volunteers want a well-defined job of limited duration. They want to know at the beginning of their volunteering exactly what they are being asked to do and for how long they are committed to do it. Many short-term volunteers can be considered specialists because they are only with the organisation long enough to learn one job or are only willing to perform one kind of work. Usually the more limited the expected time commitment and the better delineated the scope of work, the easier it will be to recruit the short-term volunteer. They may well volunteer throughout their life, but they do not usually remain too long with any one organisation, or they will only work on tasks which allow them to closely control the amount of time they donate. Motivating the short-term volunteer is a matter of recognising their personal achievement, not their status within the group. It is a matter of thanking them for their contribution and allowing them to move on.

Employer supported volunteer:

The UK is seeing a steady increase in employer supported volunteering. In 2001, 7% of UK employees had participated in some form of employee volunteering. For further information, see: <http://www.employeevolunteering.org.uk>

Older Volunteers:

The demographics of society and work show an increasingly older population, as people live longer and healthier lives. In addition, many people retire or are being retired before the statutory retirement age. This means there will be a larger pool of active retirees to draw upon as volunteers, and to deal with the increasing need to provide services to older people as the statutory social and health services become more stretched.

Professional volunteer :

Many associations of professionals have developed active programmes to encourage, and in some cases require members of their profession to perform community work.

Episodic volunteer:

These are volunteers who go from organisation to organisation, getting involved in one-off events, then move on to other events within other organisations.

Transitional volunteer:

Individuals who are changing lifestyles (housewives re-entering the job market, those with emotional disturbances moving back into interaction with others, those with disabilities learning new skills, etc.) have often undertaken volunteering as an activity to forge a path back into the community.

Unemployed volunteer:

Unemployed people often begin volunteering as a way of developing skills and behaviour that may lead to paid employment.

Stipended volunteer:

Even those who receive a small payment for their services have become part of the volunteer community in the U.K.. Stipended volunteers may typically be those that offer their services on a full-time basis and food and accommodation may also be offered. This is most often the case with volunteers that come to the U.K. from abroad for the purposes of voluntary service.

F. VOLUNTEERS' MOTIVATIONS

- **Why People Volunteer: Motivations**

United Kingdom:

Encouragement by parents and schools are significant factors in young people deciding to volunteer. As with other groups, a stable neighbourhood, family and relationships and good social networks are associated with volunteering amongst young people. This suggests that a volunteering strategy should be complementary to other social inclusion measures and strategies.

In terms of volunteers' personal motivations for volunteering, a mixture of altruistic reasons and self-interested reasons, for example skills development feature highly, the latter more prominently among young people.¹⁵

Northern Ireland:

41% of formal volunteers cited a need in the community as the main reason for their volunteering. 38% said that they had personal reasons, which were connected to their own lives or to someone they know. A further 38% said the main reason for getting involved in volunteering was that they had time to spare. 29% feel they have a religious or moral duty and 25% say they volunteer because they are good at what they do. 14% cited personal enjoyment as a benefit of volunteering.¹⁶

- **Have Motivations Changed Recently in the United Kingdom?**

No information found

¹⁵ 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, Institute for Volunteering Research

¹⁶ 2001 Survey in Northern Ireland on Volunteering and Community Engagement

G. ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOLUNTEERING

- **Traditions and Cultural Acceptance of Volunteering in the UK**

Volunteering in the UK has a long tradition and is culturally accepted and seen as worthwhile by both the public and Government policy-makers. However, it often suffers from outdated notions of worthy philanthropy, therefore changing the image of volunteering to make it more attractive towards groups currently excluded or with lower levels of participation in volunteering would have a significant effect. Inclusion strategies based on case study demonstrations seem particularly effective in addressing this, with peer identity and community involvement important elements of a successful approach. As with young people, the image of volunteering needs to be moved away from the perception of middle class, middle aged activities based around charity shops if young people are to feel more welcome.

- **Do People in the UK View a Society with Volunteers as a Caring One?**

The overwhelming majority (90%) of the U.K. population considers a society with volunteers is a caring one.¹⁷

- **Government Policies Towards Volunteering in the UK**

The Compact on Relations between the Government and Voluntary and Community Sector

The Compact on Relations between the Government and Voluntary and Community Sector (or “Compact”) is a framework agreement between the government and the voluntary and community sector which aims to improve the relationship of one to the other to the benefit of both parties. The “Compact” is accompanied by four “Codes of Good Practice” which cover:

- Black and Minority Ethnic and Community Groups;
- Consultation;
- Funding;
- Volunteering.

The Compact is a framework within which government and the voluntary and community sector can understand what to expect from each other. It deals with many of the difficult questions that individuals in government and voluntary and community organisations face in managing their relationship.

The Compact was established in 1998 and was followed shortly afterwards by publication of Codes of Good Practice, including Local Compact Guidelines. There is increasing evidence, particularly at a local level, that the Compact is invaluable in helping both government officials and voluntary and community sector workers make sense of the complicated and difficult issues they have to face. Some 80% of local authorities have agreed or are developing a Compact with local voluntary and community groups.

In addition, the UK Government is increasingly recognising the important role the voluntary sector and volunteers can play in the delivery of public services, such as social care, housing, education and health care. More than 60% of UK charities are already significantly involved in this area. The national volunteer centres welcome this acknowledgement, but they urge the Government to be aware of the implications of public service delivery by the voluntary sector and volunteers, for example the Government must ensure that volunteers are properly trained

¹⁷ From: <http://www.vds.org.uk/volunteersweek>

and supported, and that sums of money are ear-marked for these purposes. Ironically however, two recent government documents on public services scarcely mention volunteers (the “Cross-Cutting” report and the “Future Builders” consultation document) – hence, public services volunteers have been dubbed “invisible volunteers”.¹⁸

H. ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

- **Statistical Data: Hours Devoted to Voluntary Activities**

United Kingdom:

In 1997, volunteers devoted four hours a week on average. In 1991, this was only 2.7 hours a week.¹⁹

Scotland:

Nearly 8 million hours a month are volunteered, according to the Scottish Household Survey, 2000.

Northern Ireland:

Volunteers contribute approximately 41.8 million volunteer hours per annum.²⁰

- **Estimated Economic Value of Volunteering in the UK**

United Kingdom:

In the UK, formal volunteering equates to approx. £40 billion a year.²¹

Scotland:

Volunteered hours equate to a contribution of between £400m - £1 billion to the Scottish economy annually (Volunteer Development Scotland).

Northern Ireland:

The annual economic value of volunteering is estimated to be at least £370 million.²²

Wales:

48% of adults in Wales (1.12 million) volunteer each year, giving an average 8 hours of time a month. This represents approximately 115 million hours each year and is valued at £1.1 billion, which is equivalent to 3.6% of the GDP of Wales.²³

¹⁸ Dr Justin Davis-Smith, “Where do Volunteers Fit in - The Brave New World of Public Services”, Volunteering magazine, August 2003, no. 90

¹⁹ 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, Institute for Volunteering Research

²⁰ Northern Ireland Agenda for Volunteering, 2001, an initiative of the Volunteer Development Agency

²¹ 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, Institute for Volunteering Research

²² Northern Ireland Agenda for Volunteering, 2001, an initiative of the Volunteer Development Agency

²³ From recent research commissioned by the National Assembly of Wales

- **Which Categories of People Give Most Time in General?**

1. Young people
2. Students
3. Professionals
4. Unemployed
5. Retired/ about to retire
6. People with disabilities
7. Refugees/ migrants

Wales:

89% of young people (aged 11-15) are involved in voluntary activity, giving on average, over 17 hours of volunteer time in the preceding 12 months. Thus 165,600 young people in Wales volunteer, contributing approximately 10 million hours each year.²⁴

- **Social/Economic Benefits of Volunteering in the UK**

In the U.K., volunteering is widely believed to underpin civil society, to be an essential part of a free society and vital for strong, active citizenship. Volunteering also creates sense of community identity and ownership, and is the foundations of social capital.

I. EVOLUTION OF VOLUNTEERISM IN RECENT YEARS IN THE UK

- **Recent Developments within the Volunteering Sector, UK**

UK Government Initiatives:

As outlined above, the “Compact on Relations between the Government and Voluntary and Community Sector” was established in 1998. This framework document sets out the basis for mutual cooperation between the two at both national and local levels. Nine regional Compacts for England followed the “Compact” in July 2000. The Compacts are a good step in recognising the importance and value of voluntary sector and volunteers although they are not yet legally binding.

The “Compact” is underpinned and supported by five “Codes of Good Practice” covering funding, consultation, volunteering, the black and minority ethnic communities and community groups. The Compact recognises the importance of volunteering as well as laying out the agreed rights and responsibilities of both the government and the sector.

The Volunteer Code of Good Practice for the first time constitutes what amounts to a “volunteers’ charter”. It sets out the importance of volunteering to society; the rights and needs of volunteers and the responsibilities of the state to recognise, support and invest in volunteer development.²⁵

For further details on the Compact including the full texts, see:

<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/PDFs/Community%20Groups%20Code.pdf>

In addition, the UK Government has pledged £188m to the Active Community Unit (ACU). This Unit is responsible for the achievement of the Government’s target of increasing voluntary and community sector activity, including community participation, by 5% by 2006.²⁶

²⁴ From recent research commissioned by the National Assembly of Wales

²⁵ Text of a speech given at the AVA International Conference, Connection Points (9-12 October 2002 - Denver, Colorado, USA) by Christopher Spence MBE, Chief Executive, The National Centre for Volunteering:
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/centre/denvertxt.htm>

The Government has also recently pledged £125m towards the creation of the futurebuilders investment fund. This fund is intended to support the voluntary and community sector in its public service work.²⁷ It was created following a cross cutting review published in September 2002 of the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery and which explored how central and local government could work more effectively with them to deliver high quality public services. The report laid out 42 recommendations intended to overcome the barriers facing voluntary and community organisations in providing high-quality public services and forming a successful partnerships with government.²⁸

Finally, an annual meeting on volunteering is convened which reports to Parliament on progress throughout the year, setting out a jointly agreed action plan for the year ahead.

UK Government Spending on Volunteering

All of the above represent part of a panoply of initiatives and spending by the British Labour Government since 1997. Such spending is intended to demonstrate the government's commitment to enabling the non-profit sector to play a full part in tackling social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal and reform of public services, as well as to promote active citizenship as a means of tackling the so-called 'democratic deficit'.

Further Initiatives

United Kingdom:

Millenium Volunteers Programme

Millennium Volunteers is a Government-funded initiative for young people. As a millennium volunteer (MV), young people volunteer their time to help others, doing something that they enjoy. Anyone between 16 and 24 can be a millennium volunteer. The scheme encourages young people to get involved in local issues they care about. These could include, sports coaching, environmental issues, youth leadership, music and dance. Since 1999, 4,000 young people have started on the MV programme, with almost 1,000 achieving their 200 hour "Award of Excellence"²⁹.

Student Volunteering:

Student volunteering is relatively well developed in the United Kingdom with infrastructure agencies in place such as Student Volunteering England to support the involvement of students in volunteering. Such bodies work to ensure that every student has the opportunity to volunteer and make a positive difference in their community and beyond.

Internet or On-Line Volunteering

The UK has seen significant levels of investment in the new information and communication technologies as a key tool to support the development of volunteering. For example, the Scottish Executive has recently invested £10,000 in the development of <http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk> which includes an on-line database of volunteer opportunities in Scotland. TimeBank is another large organisation in the UK which offers a database of volunteer opportunities on-line searchable by postcode. See: <http://www.timebank.org.uk>

²⁶ The ACU contributes to the delivery of Home Office Aim 7, "to support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms by developing social policy to build a fair, prosperous and cohesive society in which everyone has a stake ... and to ensure that active citizenship contributes to the enhancement of democracy and the development of civil society." See: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/inside/org/dob/direct/accu.html>

²⁷ See: http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/News/NewsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=1181409&chk=ZraCEm

²⁸ See: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_ccr/ccr_voluntary_report.cfm

²⁹ New figures show that until 2005, there have been 150,000 starters and that 55,000 of them have already achieved their 200 hour Award of Excellence.

More generally in the UK, there is an increased awareness and public prominence of internet volunteering via literally hundreds of web sites. The use of web sites for information gathering, contacts, training, news distribution, and communication is also popular and on the rise.

Employee Volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility:

While employee volunteering is on the rise in the UK, it is also true that such programmes and opportunities have not yet filtered down to the vast majority of businesses and in particular, small and medium sized businesses. It is also true that employee volunteering by Government bodies and the voluntary and community sector itself lags behind. Meanwhile, the level of corporate funding of the non-profit sector remains at less than 3%.³⁰

Scotland:

In November 2002, Volunteer Development Scotland produced a “Manifesto” stating the benefits of and key facts about volunteering in Scotland, as well as outlining future political action necessary for the promotion and strengthening of volunteering.

Wales:

Valuing Volunteers Initiative, April 2003

WCVA will be supporting four volunteers to carry out research into the value of volunteering in society and the benefits it can have in helping to combat discrimination faced by socially excluded groups. The overall aim of the project is for the volunteers to use their research findings to influence policy and to combat inequality and discrimination faced by socially excluded groups. Volunteers will aim to make a real difference by making it easier for people from socially excluded groups to find and keep employment. The project is part of a partnership programme - DEEP which is led by the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). The project is funded under the EQUAL European programme to tackle inequality and discrimination in the workplace.

- **Methods for the Recruitment and Training of Volunteers**

No details found

J. REWARDING VOLUNTEERS

- **Common Ways of Acknowledging/Thanking Volunteers in the UK**

The UK has seen a proliferation of reward ceremonies recently, e.g. Whitbread Awards. In addition, in 2002 more than 130,000 volunteers were thanked with Volunteers Week certificates.³¹

- **Do Volunteers want Recognition of their Work?**

There is a consistent message from the literature in the UK that for all age groups, an appreciation of the individual volunteer is important – covering their skills and abilities, their need for support and consideration, while seeking a balance between choice and control.

- **Is it Important to Recognize Volunteers' Work in the UK? If So, Why?**

³⁰ Text of a speech given at the AVA International Conference, Connection Points (9-12 October 2002 - Denver, Colorado, USA) by Christopher Spence MBE, Chief Executive, The National Centre for Volunteering. See: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/centre/denvertxt.htm>

³¹ Facts and Figures in the UK, on <http://www.vds.org.uk/volunteersweek/factsnFigures.asp>

Recognising and rewarding the contribution of volunteers helps organisations to retain them. However, there is a feeling that the overall quantity of awards is perhaps undervaluing the efforts of rewarding volunteering. This is because volunteers feel that rewards are not personal or individual enough, and they want something more regular than just a round of handclaps once a year.³²

K. FINAL REMARKS/ CONCLUSIONS

From this review of volunteering in the United Kingdom, a number of common themes and concerns can be identified. These include the lack of quality evidence on volunteering, the failure to adopt consistent definitions of volunteering, a reluctance to set targets for certain sectors and agents (e.g. the private sector), and an avoidance of realising the costs of volunteering and of recruiting, supporting and retaining volunteers. Much is expected of volunteering, often regardless of its capacity to deliver, and for the sector to be involved in partnerships and agreements with no discussion of how its delivery is going to be resourced.

Furthermore, while the Government appears more committed than ever to the voluntary and community sector and to volunteering, problems persist. For example, the “Compact” remains a non-binding framework agreement and at local level few Compacts yet exist. Consequently, in spite of joint undertakings set out in the Volunteering Code of Good Practice to strengthen the volunteering infrastructure at local level, this remains extremely weak. There has been no significant increase in local investment and currently about 60 of the 380 local volunteer development agencies are at risk of closure because of a crisis in funding. In addition, there is a need to clarify both to the general public and to government and policy-makers the difference between voluntary sector organisations and volunteering organisations. In this regard, it is notable that in many reports, policies and analyses, volunteers and the voluntary sector are taken to be synonymous although many volunteers are engaged in public agencies, charities and the private sector and so are outside the voluntary sector itself. This lack of attention to detail results in great confusion and resulting in potential for under-provision, duplication and overlap of services between agencies and individuals.

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom has seen significant interest and investment in volunteering over recent years, including in infrastructure agencies, information and communication technologies, glossy new volunteer programmes and awards. Volunteering is seen as vital to fulfil a range of government and public interest objectives in the fields of social inclusion, education, health, democracy, community development, environmental protection and more. This will ensure that volunteering, in the near future at least, will remain firm on the political agenda in the UK.

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³² Volunteering Magazine, February 2002

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