

New Connections: New Directions

The 2011 National Conference for Scotland's Third Sector Interfaces

Workshop Report on:

The future of volunteering

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What's on our VAS agenda for volunteering?

(Other than the very positive development of Saltire Awards?)

Did you take a look at the conference agenda and think, "something's missing"?

This workshop is intended for TSI/VC managers, board members and development workers, and will:

- *Provide a summary of the 'state of volunteering and active citizenship' taken from a variety of sources.*
- *Enable participants to prioritise their list of key issues or actions for VAS to take forward with our partners in relation to volunteering.*

Report on the workshop:

1. A summary of the 'state of volunteering and active citizenship' taken from a variety of sources – David Maxwell, Volunteer Centre Glasgow

1.1 "The challenge of the goodwill surplus"¹

- The continuing trend across the country appears to be that there is increasing numbers of people coming forward to volunteer combined with enduring pressures and cuts in public sector resources for volunteering opportunities. And that general trend looks certain to continue. But is it true of most/every area?
- Quick straw poll: a show of hands please - How many areas of the country have public sector volunteering programmes effectively suspending volunteer recruitment while they come to terms with (a) whether volunteer roles are 'regulated work' as defined by PVG and/or (b) whether they can afford to pay for PVG scheme membership applications if they are 'regulated work'? Your local Active Schools programme? Your NHS Board?
- If it was up to me I would propose it's our responsibility locally and via VAS to conduct an impact assessment and find out.
- It's even more important in this context that live opportunities for volunteers do make use of all of our free advertising services AND that

¹ <http://www.volunteerglasgow.org/organisations/news/the-challenge-of-the-goodwill-surplus/>

these are joined up with those of our partners. Has anyone got an update on whether there are live effective web services from volunteerscotland.org.uk to SDS My World of Work or Careers Scotland?

- Create national and/or local mechanisms to map TSI/VC volunteering opportunity registration and advertising against known sectors, identifying gaps. Are we all assisting the full range of sectors: e.g. sport, mutuals/co-ops, social enterprising VIOs, community halls/centres, arts, heritage?
- Are we pressing for early decisions on any volunteering legacy programmes from the 2014 Commonwealth Games? e.g. national roll out of the pilot SQA Personal Best training and volunteering programme?

1.2 “The political minefield lying in wait for the unwary”²

- Have we cracked the job substitution issue? Who are we to say, “No, we’re not encouraging people to volunteer to do that” **if** something needs done **and** there’s likely to be people willing to do it? Even if someone used to do it in a paid capacity or still does?
- How do we facilitate getting those things done?
- Hot off the press are the results of SCVO’s state of the sector survey³. Nearly 40% of respondents expected the number of volunteers to increase, while only 15% thought the number of paid staff would increase. It does look, therefore, as though Third Sector organisations maybe expect increased demand for services to be met by volunteers not paid staff - but how do they organise and manage that?
- A permanent shift away from reliance on the public purse to get things done?
- A developing relationship between volunteering, the active citizen, the employee, the wealth-generating and tax-paying private sector, and the third sector?
 - o Develop shared guidance and resources for VIOs facing the triple whammy of increased demand for services, fewer paid staff, more potential volunteers?
 - o Work with partners such as SBC to deliver increases both nationally and locally in private/third sector partnerships including ESV, in-kind support, expertise, networking?

² http://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/news_and_media/News_Articles/Bill_Millar_Article

³ http://www.scvo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/SCVO_StateoftheSector_Report.pdf additional info kindly supplied by SCVO on request - Q4- ‘over the next 12 months do you think your organisation will see increases or decreases in the following?’ (response count 260). Survey closed wk beg 24 Oct 2011 – initial press release via link above. Further analysis of results forthcoming – ‘volunteering (recruiting volunteers and board members etc) has come up as a key issue for a number of respondents in the open question’ - (Q6) ‘What would you say is the single most important issue currently facing your organisation’ and analysis of this data will be available at a later date.

- Revamp web services, design training and information sharing for both sectors?

1.3 “We need more formally organised informal volunteering”⁴

- Does informal volunteering count?
- From ‘ladders’ to ‘spectrums’ of volunteering.
- ‘Co-production’ and the proposed ‘Community Empowerment Bill’: what lessons are there from the world of formal volunteering for community empowerment, community engagement, and community learning and development?
- Alternative models of volunteering?
- Issue based empowerment?
- How?
 - Joining things up: improving awareness locally increases engagement. Provide location specific, issue-based search results from MILO (for the public and for TSI users) – issues, related activities, groups/organisations, services, as well as formal volunteering opportunities?
 - Facilitate alternative models of volunteering such as Timebanking⁵? But bear in mind that one of critical success factors for Time Banks is genuine ownership by the membership from the start: schemes started and supported by agencies without it only last as long as the funding for the time broker role...

1.4 Credibility of TSI’s

Seemed to me yesterday (conference day 1) that the gauntlet was laid down for us –

- As facilitators and leaders
- As purveyors of intelligence on volunteering across third, public and private sectors

Next page for workshop participants’ proposed actions...

⁴ <http://www.vds.org.uk/Portals/0/documents/Mike%20Woolvin.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.vds.org.uk/Volunteers/VolunteerNow/TimeBankingScotland/tabid/156/Default.aspx>

2. Prioritised collective VAS/TSI actions discussed and formulated by workshop delegates:

<i>Proposed action (top priority first)</i>	<i>Votes cast</i>
We need a website that works well for our clients/public (to search for genuine opportunities in their area) – clarity: map to lead to right place on website!	18 (plus 8 – see * below)
Scrap the Volunteering Zone	13
Promotion of volunteering and recognition of the expertise in VC network – VAS as point of contact with links to websites – list of VCs.	13
Leave informal (volunteering) alone but be there when they need us.	11
Definitions of volunteering (work placements vs volunteering)	8
Sharing good practice/new ideas in bulletins; accessible web info; practitioners networks.	8
Not losing site of mainstream volunteer.	7
Costs to organisations of volunteering management – payment to organisations; outsourcing.	6
Info on ‘volunteer appropriate’ for public sector and link to website.	4
Volunteering with private sector organisations.	1