

UK-Wide Evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers Programme

Institute for Volunteering Research

**Research Report
No 357**

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UK Executive summary

Individual executive summaries for each home country can be found in annex one to four.

Introduction

- The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK-wide government supported initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-24.
- MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality, and recognition.
- Beyond the nine principles, MV has different operational and delivery structures in the four home countries.

Ownership by young people

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. In addition, within Scotland and Wales a distinct young person-led programme strand has been developed.
- All projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement. However, the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between and within countries.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles, with 74% saying they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, a minority of projects in all countries reported challenges in involving young people. These included: lack of resources and time (managers and MVs) and a lack of interest on behalf of young people in serving on committees.
- The evaluation pointed to confusion within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and youth led.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle, and a majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects has remained elusive.

Sustained Personal Commitment

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours within a year.
- In general there was strong support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. However, there were differing views over the desirability of the 200 hour requirement.
- Many MVs and projects welcomed the 200 hours. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment. Others, however, felt that it was a barrier to involving young people, particularly from marginalised communities with little tradition of volunteering.
- For some projects the problem was not so much the 200 hour requirement per se, but the rigid 12 month time-frame within which the volunteering had to be completed. This was

identified as being particularly problematic for young people from marginalised communities, but also for those from universities and colleges where volunteering activities had to be fitted in around other commitments.

- Concern was expressed as to what happens after volunteers have completed their 200 hours. Many MVs wish to continue their volunteering and projects often want to continue supporting them but were faced with limited resources and had no mechanisms by which to recognise their extra effort.
- The programme has been generally successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people. However, the evaluation suggests the need for revisions to the programme to take account of the fact that not all young people will be able to achieve 200 hours, especially not within the 12 month time limit. It also suggests the need for further thought to be given to how projects can better support volunteers who have completed their 200 hours.

Recognition

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours of volunteering and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, an enhancement to one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other rewards. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people or that a separate Award could be presented for the completion of a specific project, regardless of hours.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with just 33% of groups in Wales, 22% in Northern Ireland, 28% in England, and 33% Scotland having set up an accreditation system.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.
- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation, particularly in the smaller home countries where there had been a limited publicity budget.
- Overall the programme has been highly successful in meeting its aim of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Personal Profiles being well received. However there is scope for more national publicity of the programme, particularly among employers.

Inclusivity

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- On average across the UK two-thirds of MVs were female and one third were male. England had been most successful at striking a balance.

- The majority of MVs were aged between 16-18 years old and the programme had been least successful at recruiting 22-24 year olds. The imbalance towards the lowest age range was most prominent in Scotland, whereas Wales had most success at attracting an even split across the age groups.
- Across the UK 90% of MVs were white, 2% black, 5% Asian and 4% other. Compared to the profile of the population of 16-24 year olds as a whole it appears that MV has been successful in attracting young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Nearly two thirds of MVs were students, 4% were in other forms of training, 12% were employed and 19% were unemployed. Compared to overall figures for employment status of young people in the UK it can be seen that MV has been disproportionately successful in involving young people in education and those who are unemployed, and less successful in involving young people in employment, Scotland however fared better here.
- MV has been particularly successful in attracting young people who had never volunteered before, with nearly half of all MVs having no previous experience of volunteering. This was especially so in England. However, several projects made the point that young people may underestimate the extent of their previous involvement.
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering with individual projects across the UK employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included: minority language constraints; lack of financial resources and time for outreach work; and tension between investing in inclusivity and achieving numerical targets.
- The programme has made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove remaining barriers to participation, in particular the tension between inclusion and targets.

Variety and Quality

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing activities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities. Single-issue projects were by definition less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation's existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the centrality of young people, youth-leadership, recognition and the structured approach of MV.
- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health and safety checks, supervision and one-to-one support for volunteers.
- A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors both within placements and in the main MV organisation, review meetings, feedback from placements and peer-support. The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed throughout the evaluation.

- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support that could be offered by MV project staff and there was some concern expressed that the push for numbers could cut into quality.
- The audits highlighted the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, with just 10% of MVs reporting that they had not received as much support as they would have liked.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were met with mixed enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers.
- Overall the programme has been very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Partnerships

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects and the programme managers to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Projects were usually dependent on the personal and professional resources of their co-ordinators in networking, in drawing on their knowledge of local groups and organisations.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping opportunities. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support.
- Most projects had also developed relationships with other MV projects in their area. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support. However, some projects felt that there could have been more emphasis on drawing out examples of best practice during the early days of the programme.
- Overall the relationship between MV projects and management were positive, but views varied between countries. In Northern Ireland respondents were united in their praise of the Agency. In England there was a mixed response. Some groups were favourably disposed towards the MVU; others were critical. In Scotland and Wales projects were generally satisfied with the way the programme had been managed, although concern was expressed over the lack of staff resources within the management agency.
- These variations in satisfaction ratings between countries may be explained at least in part by the different organisation and delivery structures in place.
- At the UK level the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices across countries was found to be fairly limited beyond those directly involved in the national delivery organisational steering group.
- Overall, MV has been largely successful in building partnerships between participating agencies and the wider voluntary sector, but less so with the private and public sector.

Volunteer benefits

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.
- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.

- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people. The audits showed that 84% of MVs agreed that their confidence had increased, 78% were more willing to try new things, and 80% were more aware of the needs of others.
- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment. 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.
- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with 68% of respondents agreeing that they had become more committed to volunteering owing to their involvement in MV.
- One of the great successes of the MV programme has been the benefit accruing to the volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to the young people's lives.

Community Benefit

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of, and be of benefit to, the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra financial and human resources; increased service capacity; different approaches to involving volunteers (for example, recording of hours and safety checks); the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: enhanced access to services, peer support, social contact and improved quality of life.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work).
- On the whole projects continue to find the concept of community benefit difficult to grapple with, and measurement was a difficult task. In Northern Ireland a number of projects have implemented the MV Self-evaluation framework. Projects in other home countries are predominantly using informal measurement methods.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. However, the continuing difficulties for projects to measure community impact suggest the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Recommendations

- To look for ways of extending the youth-led element of the programme.
- To look for ways of exchanging practice between youth-led projects and more traditional placement provider projects.

- For government to recognise the potential tension between youth ownership and overall numbers and to give greater recognition to those projects which are adopting innovative approaches to the involvement of young people, even where this impacts on meeting targets.
- To give greater recognition to the reality that sustained personal commitment may mean different amounts of time for different people.
- To recognise that different activities enable young people to clock up their hours at different rates.
- To look for ways of introducing staggered awards at say 25 and 50 hours to recognise the contribution of volunteers who may not reach 100 and 200 hours.
- To look for ways of supporting volunteers who want to stay on after 200 hours, for example through encouraging projects to share best practice or holding regional workshops.
- To put more resources into a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the programme among key stakeholders, particularly employers.
- To build into the programme greater scope for reflection and self-assessment by young people, linked to a greater recognition that the programme is as much about personal development as it is about community benefit.
- To build on the existing (rather limited) success of tying MV into external accreditation systems by identifying what works and why and how to overcome barriers to further development.
- To give greater recognition to the difficulties of involving young people from harder to reach groups.
- To look for ways of making MV more attractive for young men and for those in the older age range of the 16-24 bracket.
- To work with employers at a national and regional level to encourage young people in employment to get involved in the programme.
- To review the design of the Volunteer Plan to make it more relevant and easier to complete by the young people.
- To facilitate a greater sharing of practice between MV projects in the ways in which MVs are supported and the quality of opportunities guaranteed.
- To facilitate closer working between projects in the same locality to widen the range of available opportunities on offer to volunteers.
- To explore ways of facilitating a greater sharing of good practice between different MV projects.
- To explore ways of increasing the involvement of the statutory sector in the programme, both as MV delivery agents and partners to MV projects.

- To explore ways of raising awareness of, and building commitment to, MV among private companies.
- To develop closer links between the projects and the national management agency England to help build trust and support for the programme within participating projects and the wider volunteering movement.
- To secure additional investment for the management of MV, particularly in Scotland and Wales, to facilitate closer links between projects and management agencies and enable greater support.
- To explore ways of enhancing systems for consultation, decision making, and for sharing practice between countries to ensure the programme continues to offer UK-wide recognised certificates (one of its selling points).
- To look for ways of highlighting the significant contribution MV is making to the personal development and employability of young people through such mechanisms as press releases, ministerial speeches and advertising literature.
- To work with employers to raise awareness of the value of MV in enhancing the skills and employability of young people.
- To develop additional mechanisms to enable young people to reflect on the personal benefits accruing from involvement in MV.
- To highlight the significant contribution MV is making to the community through press-releases, ministerial speeches and the like.
- To build on the work begun by The Institute for Volunteering Research with their Impact Audits to develop user-friendly self-evaluation tools for projects for measuring community impact.
- To run regional workshops to assist projects in measuring community benefit.

Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced by the Institute for Volunteering Research for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is the final report arising out of the evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers (MV) programme, which the Institute has been commissioned to carry out. The report combines findings from four stages of research, which are outlined below.

Background to MV

- 1.2 The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK wide initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-24. In October 1996 the Labour Party issued a consultation paper, *Millennium Volunteers: Labour's proposal for citizen's service*, written by two MPs with a longstanding interest in the question, David Blunkett and Peter Kilfoyle. Following consultation, the programme was officially launched in 1999. As the two key MV straplines state, young people were encouraged to 'build on what you're into' within their voluntary activities with the subsequent prospect of enhancing their employability with an 'MV for your CV'.

- 1.3 The operational aims of MV are to:

- Increase the number and range of both volunteering opportunities which meet the MV principles and the organisations offering opportunities.
- Enable young people to gain national recognition for their voluntary activity by achieving the MV Award of Excellence and encourage and support growing numbers of young people to take up MV opportunities.
- Bring added value to the community by completed projects and to young people in terms of their personal development and skills.

- 1.4 At the core of the MV programme are the following nine principles:

- Sustained personal commitment: To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering of no fewer than 200 hours over a period of one year.
- Community benefit: The programme aims to meet the needs of, and to be of benefit to, the local community.
- Voluntary participation: Participation by young people within the programme is entirely voluntary.
- Inclusiveness: The programme aims to include young people who have not previously been involved in volunteering and those who have experienced social exclusion.
- Ownership by young people: Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage young people to take decisions about their volunteering activities and become involved in the running of projects.
- Variety: The programme aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities.
- Partnership: To become involved in the programme, projects are encouraged to establish partnerships with other organisations and agencies.
- Quality: Opportunities available to young people should be of a high quality, delivering a quality experience for young people.
- Recognition: Young people are awarded a Certificate after the completion of 100 hours of volunteering, and the Award of Excellence after the completion of 200 hours.

- 1.5 More specifically, the aim was to involve 100,000 young people as MVs in England by 2004 and 820 in Northern Ireland. In Scotland the programme aim was for 1,000 young

people to have achieved their 200 hour Awards, a target set up the Scottish Executive. No specific targets were set in Wales.

Administering MV in the four home countries

- 1.6 MV has evolved into four unique programmes running in parallel across the home countries. Reflecting wider devolution trends the responsibility for the programme rests with national government, giving each country the autonomy to develop the programme as they choose, confined only by the nine principles of MV.
- 1.7 In England MV runs directly from the MV Unit within the Department for Education and Skills, through contract managers to the projects. In contrast, within both Scotland and Wales the programme has been devolved from government to be administered through a partnership of voluntary and statutory organisations, with the key volunteering development agency taking the lead in programme delivery. In Northern Ireland the Volunteer Development Agency (the Agency) has responsibility for managing and implementing the programme although, in contrast to Scotland and Wales, it is not part of a formal consortium but has established an advisory group to steer the programme.
- 1.8 The four home countries receive vastly differing amounts of money for MV, creating considerable differences in the organisation and delivery of the programme, as illustrated in the table below. The funding differences have inevitably influenced the programme design and management, in particular the different levels of funding available for local projects to deliver the programme.

Table One: Funding MV

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Total Funding 1998-2002	£36,611,000	£780,000 (commenced 1999)	£2,195,000	£1,063,000
Funding 2002-2003	£15,000,000	£300,000	£695,000	£300,000
Funding 2003-2004	£15,000,000	£300,000	unconfirmed	unconfirmed

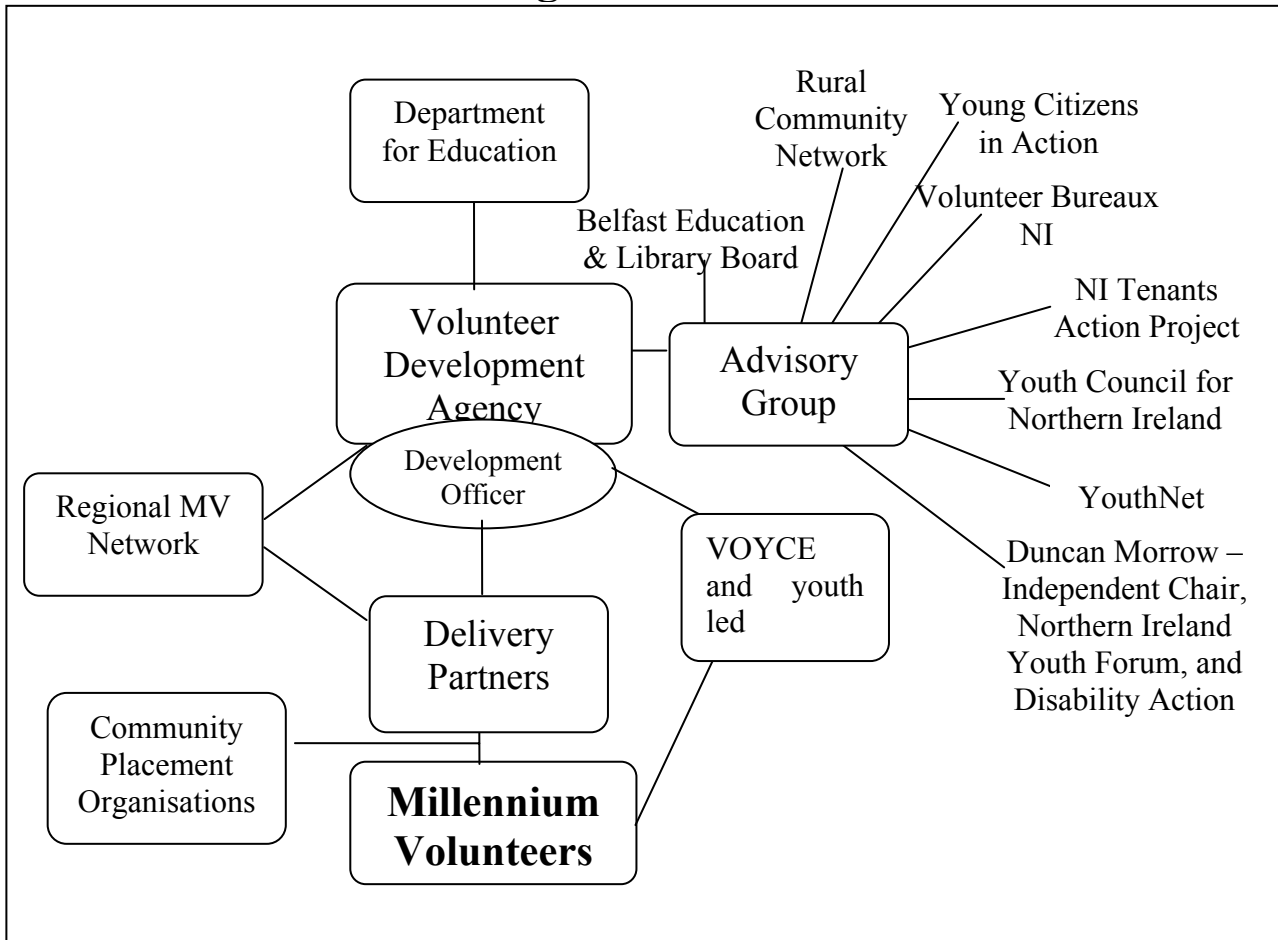
- 1.9 Beyond the different institutional frameworks of MV, each country has developed different delivery mechanisms. Wales and Scotland have both developed multi-strand delivery mechanisms: youth-led projects, Delivery Partners/Placement Providers, and Matchmakers/Co-ordinating Partners, and special development initiatives in Wales. However, there are differences within these strands not least with regard to the different amounts of funding available. In England and Northern Ireland the programme operates through a single strand of Delivery Partners, although great variations exist within and between countries. England projects tend to be relatively large, with a majority providing a range of internal and external placements.
- 1.10 The way in which projects are funded varies between country and between delivery models, according to the amount of funding available and the different time-scales with which they operate. In Northern Ireland there has been two funding phases to date, with projects receiving funding allocated for a two-year period, staggered over three-years in the first phase (1999-2002); in the second phase all grants have been awarded for two years (2002-2004). In Scotland and England there have been four funding rounds to date (two open and two closed). A majority of projects in England receive funding for a three year period, whereas those in Scotland are awarded grants for one or two years (although often renewed). Within Wales a majority of projects receive funding for a one year period, with

funding decisions made four times a year (youth-led projects however can apply at any point during the year).

1.11 The different organisational and delivery structures of MV in each home country are illustrated further in figures one to four below. The findings highlighted within the report should be read with consideration to these different structures and systems.

Figure one

Delivering MV in Northern Ireland

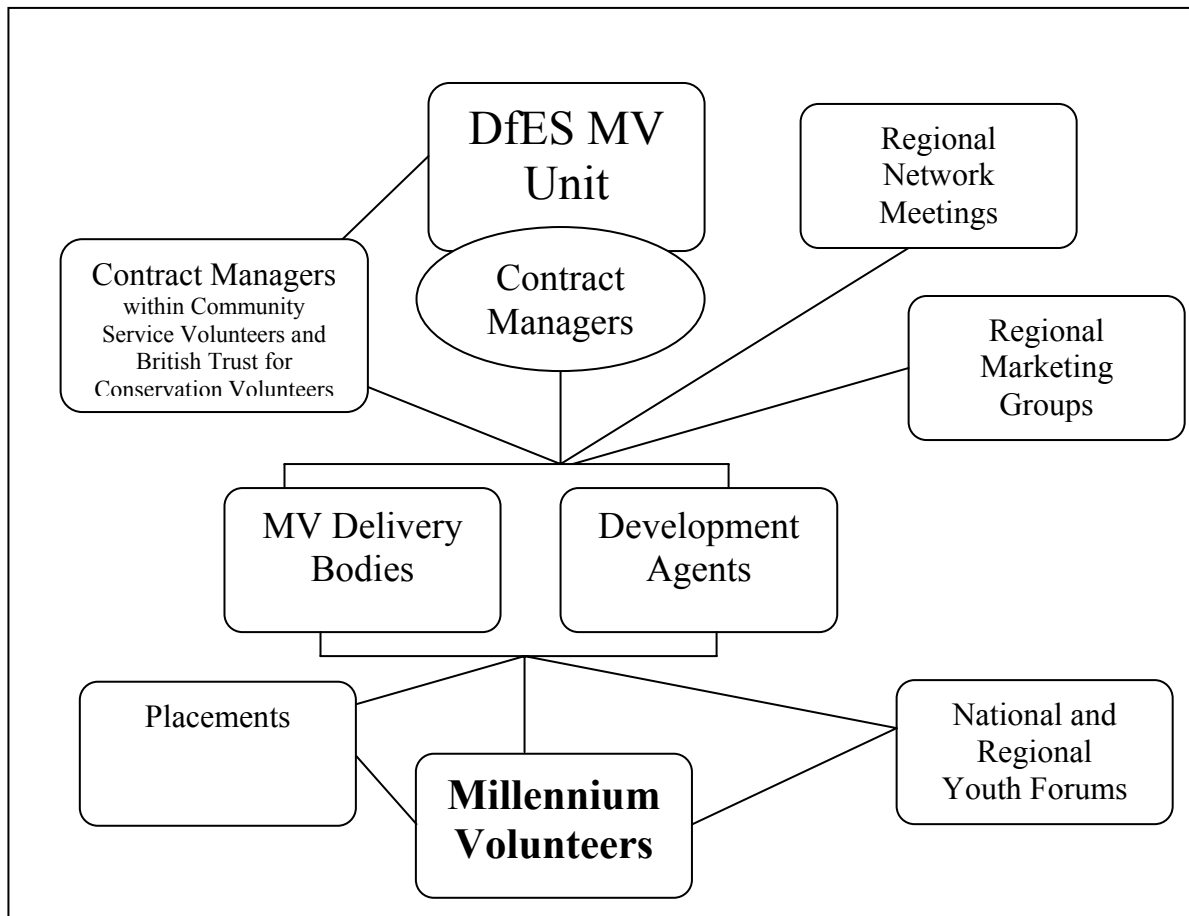


In Northern Ireland the Millennium Volunteers programme is administered by the Volunteer Development Agency (the Agency) and is funded by the Northern Ireland Department for Education. The Agency has set up an advisory committee to steer policy on MV; the advisory committee includes volunteer involving organisations, statutory bodies and young people. A sub-committee of the advisory committee has been established to assess and administer grants. The Agency employs one MV Development Officer to manage the programme. In addition, the Agency has been working with a small group of MVs, known as VOYCE, to facilitate young people’s involvement in the review and development of the Millennium Volunteers programme in Northern Ireland.

As of January 2002, 18 projects had been funded, known as ‘Delivery Partners’. There are also 4 ‘self-funded’ Delivery Partners, who have joined the programme and are working to achieve the goals and targets of the MV programme but are not receiving grant aid. In addition more than 100 community placement organisations are part of the programme, working with the Delivery Partners and subject to quality controls set by the Agency. During the second funding round for 2002-2003, 20 Delivery Partners were funded, receiving a maximum grant of £30,000.

Figure two

Delivering MV in England

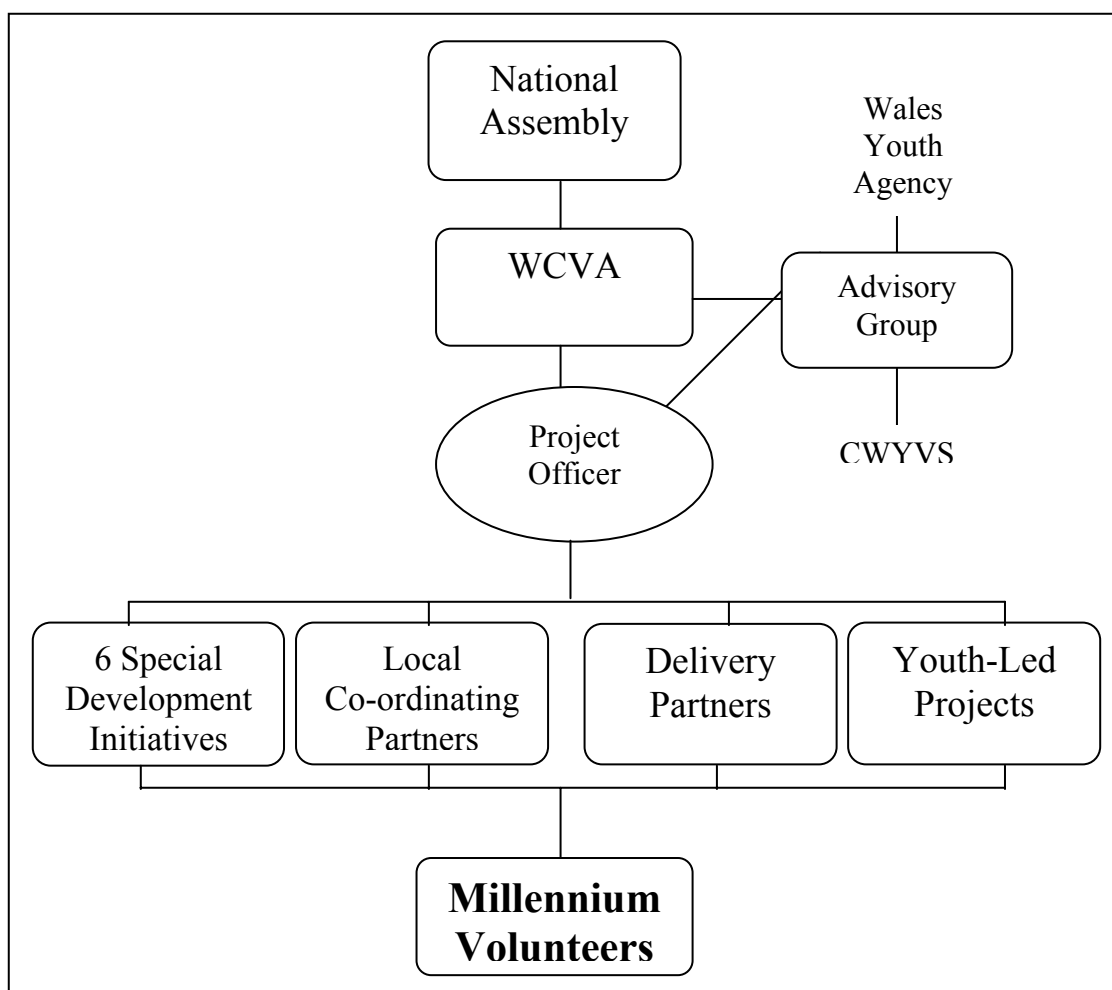


In England MV is administered directly by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). A MV Unit (MVU) has been established within DfES. Within MVU there are nine contract managers who act as regional programme co-ordinators. Beyond the MVU's contract managers, BTCV and CSV also house their own MV managers, to look after projects within the two organisations. National and regional youth forums have been established to enable young people to feed into the decision making process.

The first round was launched in 1999 with funding offered to more than 80 organisations (including a number of 'fast-track' groups). A second round took place in England in summer 1999, with funding being provided to a further 79 organisations and 9 Development Agents. The Development Agents Model was introduced for the second round following criticisms that the first round process had worked against the inclusion of small community groups who, although keen to get involved, were not in a position to administer the project grant themselves. Rather than running a third bidding round, the MVU worked with targeted organisations to fill in gaps in geographical coverage. In 2002 continuation funding was available for selected projects to bid for once they came to the end of their existing programme period. Projects receive a maximum of £500,000 over three years.

Figure three

Delivering MV in Wales



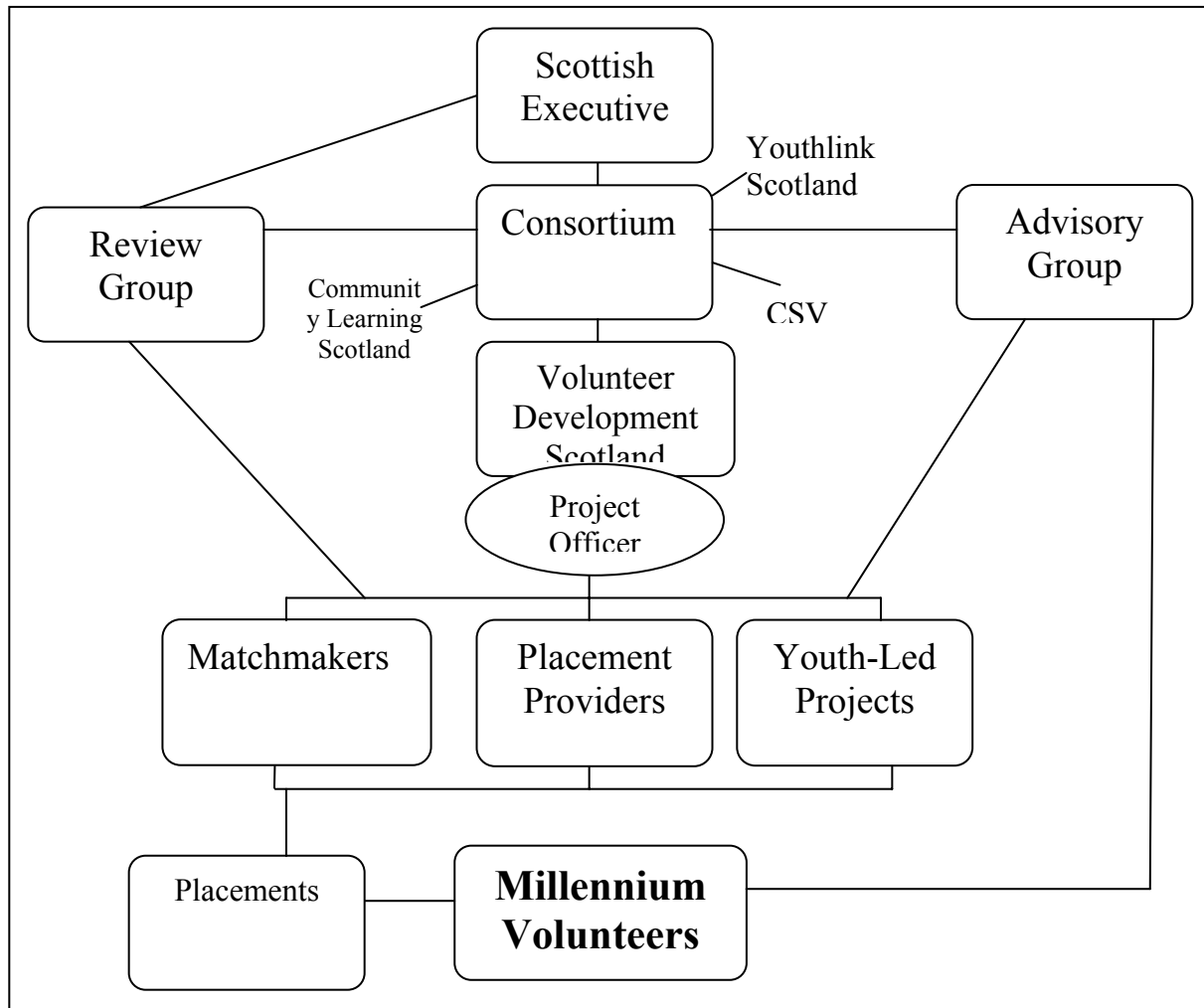
In Wales the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the lead agency in the Advisory group and holds the contract for running the programme from the National Assembly. Wales Youth Agency (statutory youth services) and Council for Wales of Youth Voluntary Services (CWYVS) are partners in the Advisory Group, alongside WCVA. Each partner organisation may appoint three representatives onto the Advisory Group. The Millennium Volunteers Co-ordinator is employed by WCVA and reports to the Advisory Group.

The programme in Wales is delivered through a four-strand structure:

- Local Co-ordinating Partners (LCPs) create the infrastructure for delivery in Wales, with one in each local authority area. LCPs receive an agency fee of £3,000 to promote MV and provide a contact point to direct young people to suitable placements. In January 2002 there were 22 LCPs, two of which were unfunded.
- Delivery partners (DPs) are local organisations that receive yearly funding with a maximum grant of £5,000 to cover the costs of administering MV, volunteers' expenses, training and some equipment. In January 2002 there were 226 DPs registered, 131 of which were unfunded.
- Six Special Development Initiatives (SDIs) have been awarded to address under-representation in the areas of volunteering by the homeless, volunteering through the medium of the Welsh language, volunteering by those with learning disabilities (two projects) and volunteering by those with physical disabilities. A sixth SDI project looked at barriers to volunteering within the ethnic student population. SDIs received an average grant of £33,287. A SDI has recently been established to focus on volunteering in the Somali community.
- Youth-led projects (YL) are devised and run by young people with an identified mentor and/or mentor organisation. A fast track grant application procedure ensures youth-led projects can apply for funding any time of year and will hear of their success within five weeks. Youth-led projects receive a maximum of £5,000 p.a. As of January 2002, there were 55 youth-led projects in Wales, 25 of which were unfunded.

Figure four

Delivering MV in Scotland



In Scotland Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) is the lead agency, joined in a Consortium to administer the programme by Community Learning Scotland (to 31 March 2002), Youthlink Scotland, and CSV Scotland. VDS chairs the Consortium and employs the MV Project Officer on behalf of the Consortium. The Consortium is accountable to the Scottish Executive, and thence to the Minister for Social Justice. In 2001 a Review Group was formed by the Scottish Executive to assess the future of the programme. The review group comprises the Consortium, MV organisations and other national agencies. An Advisory Group has been established to include MV organisations and MVs themselves.

The programme in Scotland is delivered through a three-strand structure:

- Matchmakers (MMs) operate in a similar way to volunteer bureaux, finding suitable external placements for young people. Between 1999-2001 MM received up to £10,000 (up to £17,500 thereafter), and employ one P/T staff. In January 2002, there was 13 MMs operating in Scotland, with a total of 15 having existed since the programme started in 1999.
- Placement providers (PPs) offer opportunities to young people within their own organisations. PPs receive up to £17,500. In January 2002 there was 24 PPs, with a total of 39 since 1999.
- Youth-led projects (YL) are devised and run by groups of young people receiving grants of up to £5,000. While this strand has been suspended for 2002-3 it may continue in the future subject to funding, 2002-3.

There have been four bidding rounds in Scotland to date. For 2002-03 all existing projects were invited to reapply for up to £17,500; all 33 projects that applied were successful, 12 of which were matchmakers.

Evaluation aims

- 1.12 The evaluation has been undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research, an independent research and consultancy agency specialising in volunteering. A team drawn from the staff of the Institute and associated researchers carried out the research over a period of eighteen months, commencing in autumn 2000. A national evaluation steering group consisting of DfES and representatives from lead agencies in each home country worked closely with the evaluation team throughout.
- 1.13 The aims of the evaluation were to:
- Examine how well MV is operating, meeting its aims and providing value for money.
 - Establish the benefits and value of the programme for young people who participate.
 - Establish the benefits of the programme for local communities.
 - Gather instances of good practice in achieving the objectives of the programme for young people, beneficiaries, and in achieving value for money.
- 1.14 The research has involved four phases, with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods used throughout. A range of stakeholders have been consulted throughout the evaluation, with a total of over 600 respondents taking part in the research: 244 staff from MV organisations and placement providers, 271 MVs, 86 community representatives, and 20 policy makers.

Methodology

- 1.15 The first phase of the research focused primarily on the views of the project managers and co-ordinators from round one MV projects (those that received funding in the first year of the programme). Qualitative telephone interviews were undertaken with 18 out of Northern Ireland's 20 projects, 17 out of the 21 round-one projects in Scotland, 74 out of 82 in England, and 21 out of 260 organisations receiving round one funding in Wales.
- 1.16 The second phase of research consisted of twenty-one case studies, nine in England, four each in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. As with all stages of the evaluation, the case studies were drawn from round one projects, which received funding for MV in the first year of the programme. The projects were selected to represent different kinds of delivery methods across a range of criteria, including geographical spread, income, number of volunteers and organisational type. For each case study, interviews (individual and group) were conducted with the project staff; staff of other relevant local volunteer-involving organisations; and MVs themselves.
- 1.17 In order to generate more in-depth and detailed understanding on the impacts of MV, the third stage of the evaluation involved nine impact audits. The audits involved volunteer impact questionnaires, with responses from 127 MVs. MV host organisations and their external placement providers were, wherever possible, brought together in a workshop to facilitate the completion of an impact questionnaire covering economic, human capacity and partnership development aspects. In total 26 organisations completed and returned the questionnaires. Finally, community representatives were drawn together in focus groups to look at the impacts of the programme on the wider community. Wales did not participate in this phase of the evaluation as it was deemed inapplicable given the small amounts of funding given to each organisation.
- 1.18 The final stage of the evaluation looked at the policy framework and organisational structures surrounding the programme in each home country. In total 20 policy makers and programme managers were interviewed, including representatives from the respective

government departments with responsibility for the programme; key staff within funded organisations; and representatives from MV advisory and/or management groups.

- 1.19 At all stages of the evaluation it has been stressed to participating organisations that the research was designed to assess the effectiveness of the MV programme as a whole rather than the performance of individual projects. Reassurances of anonymity were given throughout and, as such, no projects are named within the report and any that are included are pseudonyms. All responses within the boxed text are coded, indicating the country of origin and the classification of the respondent i.e. project staff, external placement, community representative (including service users), MVs, and management official (from stage four). Quotes incorporated into the text that are not coded can be seen as broadly representatives across all countries unless otherwise stated. Boxed text has been included to highlight key points of interest and specific examples from individual countries.

Structure of the report

- 1.20 The findings of the evaluation are (loosely) ordered under the main principles of the MV Programme. As listed above, there are nine such principles: ownership by young people, sustained personal commitment, recognition, inclusivity, variety, quality, partnership, community benefit, and voluntary participation. For the purpose of this report ‘variety’ and ‘quality’ have been incorporated into one broad section. The community benefit section has been divided to consider the impacts of the volunteers separately. The principle of voluntary participation has been excluded from the analysis, as it is an assumed starting point for all projects.

2 Ownership by young people

Key UK Findings

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. In addition, within Scotland and Wales a distinct young person-led programme strand has been developed.
- All projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement. However, the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between and within countries.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles, with 74% saying they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, a minority of projects in all countries reported challenges in involving young people. These included: lack of resources and time (managers and MVs) and a lack of interest on behalf of young people in serving on committees.
- The evaluation pointed to confusion within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and youth led.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle, and a majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects has remained elusive.

Introduction

2.1 Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage young people to take ownership of their volunteering, from identifying their volunteering activities through to organising whole projects. Within Scotland and Wales a distinct young person-led programme strand has been developed to offer young people the chance to bid for funding to develop their own projects. Within Northern Ireland and England Delivery Partners are encouraged to develop individual young person-led projects within the overall programme. In England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland young people are included at a policy level through advisory committees or youth forums. The evaluation has considered the mechanisms employed by projects to involve young people and the challenges which existed in encouraging youth ownership.

Involving Young People

2.2 The evaluation found evidence of young people being involved in the projects in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels. For some groups, involving young people in the design of their own volunteering and of the scheme itself was integral to the project; in many ways its defining characteristic. For others youth involvement was more marginal.

2.3 Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on a leadership role. 74% of volunteers surveyed in the audit phase said they felt they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering, with 76%

saying that they had been given enough responsibility. However, only 31% felt that they had ownership over their MV project.

- 2.4 A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process.

'Young people involved in different aspects of the project, for example distribution of funding, design of young people's guide to volunteers and leavers' form.' (Project staff, England)

'Two levels of planning – weekly delivery meetings with all MVs to plan what to do next and monthly planning/organisation meetings with 3-4 MVs to look at strategic and funding issues.' (Project staff, Wales)

'The danger is that you put resources in without asking young people what they want and then they won't use the facility. They are involved in every aspect of design. That is so crucial for young people who up till then have had little involvement in decision-making.' (Project staff, Northern Ireland)

'We have involved young people from the very go – even in deciding if we should go for it, through young people who were in contact with me or other youth workers in the area. We were determined it was about being youth led right from the very start.' (Project staff, Scotland)

Challenges of involving young people

- 2.5 Most organisations reported few problems in involving young people. The minority who had encountered difficulties highlighted the specific problem of encouraging young people to sit on committees. Respondents commented that it was hard to get young people to attend what were seen as boring or irrelevant meetings. Some groups identified the key problem as being to build the confidence of young people – the point was made that young people are not used to being asked for their opinion.
- 2.6 Another barrier was time. Some groups spoke of the time constraints young people face – full-time jobs or education plus part-time jobs – which limits their availability to get actively involved in the running of the projects; while others highlighted the lack of staff time to facilitate the involvement of young people, especially in youth-led activities. As one respondent said: 'The hatching, matching and dispatching model of placement is much easier than the nurturing of youth-led projects'. For a small number of groups the main challenge was to try and temper the enthusiasm and commitment of the young people with a note of realism. As one respondent said: 'There is a tension between freedom and keeping things within the bounds of reality – ideas and enthusiasm versus the practicalities of delivering'.
- 2.7 Pushing too hard at youth involvement could be counter-productive. Volunteers could come out of the experience feeling that too much was expected of them. 'We were given opportunities but it is five adults and two volunteers. It feels a bit like you are being fired at by more adults. They always want new ideas of how to get more young people in. I get lost, the last one was all about structures', was one MV's experience of going to a management board meeting.
- 2.8 There were differences between different types of organisation in the degree of youth involvement. Those from a youth service background tended to be more comfortable with a youth-led approach; while those from a local volunteer development agency or service-delivery background tended to favour a volunteer-placement model. In Scotland youth

involvement tended to be less developed in matchmaker projects where the host organisation was placing MVs in external placement agencies and more pronounced in placement provider organisations.

- 2.9 There appears to be a lack of clarity within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and being youth led. There is an expectation in MV that projects will be genuinely owned by young people i.e. that they feel their views and needs are taken seriously, and that they have real influence on how the project is run. This is quite different from a requirement for projects to be 'youth led' in the sense that the young people will have overall control of running the project. Some of the comments expressed by projects about the difficulties of involving young people appear to be based on a false assumption that all projects are required to be youth led.

Overall Assessment

- 2.10 The programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. All projects adopted youth ownership as an important defining principle of MV and a significant majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they had been given to plan their volunteering. Nevertheless, it is clear from the evaluation that real youth ownership for many projects has remained elusive. In many cases youth ownership has been interpreted rather narrowly as equating to involvement on management committees, a strategy that has not been universally successful (or popular) among young people. While some projects have been set up with the express purpose of being youth led it is disappointing that not more projects have found ways to utilise the energy and enthusiasm of MVs in the running and planning of the programme. Lack of resources (both time and money) were cited as major barriers to the greater involvement of young people in leadership roles, particularly when coupled with what was perceived by some projects to be an unhealthy obsession by government with numerical targets. For some projects there was a clear tension between investing in a proper youth-ownership strategy and meeting overall targets. It was clear to the evaluation team, however, that some projects, particularly those from a more traditional volunteer placement background, were not particularly innovative when looking for new models for involving young people.

Recommendations

- To look for ways of extending the youth-led element of the programme.
- To look for ways of exchanging practice between youth-led projects and more traditional placement provider projects.
- For government to recognise the potential tension between youth ownership and overall numbers and to give greater recognition to those projects which are adopting innovative approaches to the involvement of young people, even where this impacts on meeting targets.

3 Sustained Personal Commitment

Key UK Findings

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should (usually) be no fewer than 200 hours within a 12 month period.
- In general there was strong support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. However, there were differing views over the desirability of the 200 hour requirement.

- Many MVs and projects welcomed the 200 hours. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment. Others, however, felt that it was a barrier to involving young people, particularly from marginalised communities with little tradition of volunteering.
- For some projects the problem was not so much the 200 hour requirement per se, but the rigid 12 month time-frame within which the volunteering had to be completed. This was identified as being particularly problematic for young people from marginalised communities, but also for those from universities and colleges where volunteering activities had to be fitted in around other commitments.
- Concern was expressed as to what happens after volunteers have completed their 200 hours. Many MVs wish to continue their volunteering and projects often want to continue supporting them but were faced with limited resources and had no mechanisms by which to recognise their extra effort.
- The programme has been generally successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people. However, the evaluation suggests the need for revisions to the programme to take account of the fact that not all young people will be able to achieve 200 hours, especially not within the 12 month time limit. It also suggests the need for further thought to be given to how projects can better support volunteers who have completed their 200 hours.

Introduction

3.1 To be a Millennium Volunteer, young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours within a twelve month period¹. Young people who require a break in their volunteering may in certain circumstances use the activity and time that they have given as a ‘credit’ towards their Award, until they are able to take up their volunteering again. In Scotland a target of 1,000 young people achieving their Awards by 2002 was established during late 1999 at the outset of the new Scottish Executive and the commencement of the Scottish Parliament. The evaluation considered the issues around the 200-hour requirement, from the point of view of the volunteers and from project staff. The report also discusses what happens at the end of the 200 hours.

The 200 Hours Requirement

3.2 A key distinguishing feature of MV, which sets it apart from other volunteering initiatives, is the requirement on young people to contribute a minimum number of hours – 100 to achieve the certificate of achievement; 200 to gain a full MV Award. This requirement had been the subject of intensive discussion during the consultation process prior to the launch of the programme, with opinion sharply divided as its desirability. For some people the 200 hours requirement was seen as integral to the programme and essential if the programme was to achieve its aim of developing a culture of sustained personal commitment amongst young volunteers. For others it was seen as off-putting and divisive and likely to run counter to the goal of involving volunteers from communities with little tradition of formal volunteering. Opinion was similarly divided amongst those who took part in the evaluation.

3.3 A majority of volunteers were supportive of the 200 hours requirement, arguing that it was this which gave the programme its distinctiveness and value. Requiring volunteers to

¹ An extension of the twelve month volunteering period had been allowed to MVs in Wales, providing that sustained and regular volunteering is being carried out by the individual, where no further funding is required, and where volunteering opportunities are limited by personal or regional circumstances.

contribute 200 hours meant that they had a chance to do something worthwhile and gain valuable personal experiences; something which would not have been possible if the scheme had allowed people simply to make a one-off commitment. '200 hours gives it a uniqueness', said one MV. And another concurred, saying it was this which made MV 'a meaningful volunteer experience'.

- 3.4 For some MVs the initial thought of 200 hours had been off-putting, but once they had got involved their concerns had been allayed. 'You think that you won't get beyond 100 hours', explained one MV from England, 'but once you get into it you don't want to stop'. For some young people the 200 hours goal provided a challenge which kept them going - 'knowing that I had to do my 200 hours made me stick at it', was how one MV put it.
- 3.5 But a minority of MVs took the opposing view. For them the 200 hours, far from being a realistic goal, was an unobtainable barrier which did little to inspire or motivate them. 'It shouldn't have a time limit', said one MV. 'You can't predict your circumstances. It would take the fun out of it'. Another agreed saying that strict adherence to the 200 hours would put them off. 'You would not be a volunteer. It would be more like work'.
- 3.6 This reference to the lack of a strict adherence to the 200 hours requirement suggests that some organisations are choosing not to implement it, or at least not to press it too strongly (at least at the outset) from fear of putting people off. One case study organisation said that they didn't insist on people fulfilling 200 hours lest it 'terrifies' them. Another said they didn't 'dwell on it', but chose to talk instead about 'a yearly commitment required'. For one organisation flexibility was the keyword: 'The lads have all dipped in and out of what is on offer and that is the success of it'.
- 3.7 For some organisations the problem was not so much the number of hours which had to be carried out but the fact that they had to be undertaken within a 12 month period. Drop-out rates, it was felt, would be reduced if MVs could bank their hours and carry them over to a second year. 'After all', said one volunteer co-ordinator, MV was 'meant to be flexible – responding to what happens in [young people's] lives'. The time pressures of completing MV in 12 months were felt to be most acute for those young people 'coming from an under-resourced community where sustained voluntary work is often counter to the culture'. But it was also felt to be a problem for some university/college-based MVs, where it was 'frustrating trying to fit volunteering activities in with our timetable'. Some groups in England were unsure to what extent the DfES had relaxed the one year time period for completion. One worker was of the view that it was OK for young people with special needs to take longer, but not for others. Others were of the view that it had been relaxed for all MVs.

<p>Flexibility over the 200 hours requirement was demonstrated by one Northern Ireland project with a focus on involving people with learning disabilities. It was felt that 200 hours could be a relatively larger contribution for a person with learning disabilities than for a person without learning disabilities and so it was planned to issue the Award on the basis of their sustained commitment rather than the total hours.</p>

- 3.8 Some groups went further and expressed outright hostility to the 200 hours requirement. 'What is the purpose of having this?', asked one project co-ordinator, 'If someone is committed then why have it?'. For the critics the 200 hours was seen as damaging to their attempts to open up volunteering to a broader cross-section of the young population. 200 hours might be fine for those young people with a track record of volunteering, but for those who had never volunteered before and who came from communities where volunteering was not the norm, it could be off-putting in the extreme. As one volunteer co-

ordinator put it: ‘we accept the need to work with ‘non-volunteers’ and we focused on the disaffected. But this is the very group with fluid life-styles who do not fit into the MV structure’.

- 3.9 Some groups had found ways to reward young people who failed to complete 200 hours. One project produced their own ‘Youth Volunteer Award’ for young people that didn’t qualify for the full MV Award; while an environmental project used their own internal certificates for ‘someone who has done a bit of environmental volunteering’ but were not going to reach the 200 hours.
- 3.10 But other organisations did not find the 200 hours requirement a problem. Rather, as with many of the MVs, they saw it as an important and valuable feature of the programme, perhaps its key distinguishing feature.
- 3.11 There was a recognition by many people we spoke to that the 200 hours issue meant different things for different people. Not only was it perceived differently by different sections of the community but the ways in which 200 hours were achieved was uneven. It was pointed out that, for example, a summer play scheme in a youth club could add up to over 100 hours or that an adventure holiday with disabled children, together with weekend training and a couple of residential weekends could complete the hours. By contrast, three hours a week in a youth club could entail great commitment and contribute significant community benefit but not add up so quickly. As one respondent said: ‘The visits are usually 2-3 hours per week so it takes more than 12 months to get to the 200 hours. Managing that is really difficult. I feel particularly disappointed that those who’ve done 80-90 hours have come out with nothing.’

After 200 Hours

- 3.12 For some groups the main problem caused by the 200 hours requirement was not persuading young people to get involved, but what to do after the 200 hours was completed. There was concern that young people would have to be turned away once they had completed their Award because the programme did not provide financial resources to enable them to continue. This was seen as a waste of valuable resources within the community. Worse still was the negative effect it was likely to have on the perception of volunteering by young people. Some projects had attempted to get round the problem by continuing to support young people after they had achieved their Awards. In Northern Ireland the User Group VOYCE had drawn up plans for additional recognition of 500 and 1,000 hours. Others referred volunteers on to other organisations in their area which were looking for volunteers.

In two projects in Northern Ireland where MVs had completed their 200 hours, the projects continued to support the young people. In one case, part of a larger community development organisation, the project coordinator was working a full week (though half of it unpaid) and so was accessible throughout the week and willing to offer support. In the other case, the volunteer bureau offered – through ESF funds – support and training for volunteering and also expenses; also the project co-ordinator was funded for the other half-a-week as an outreach worker and s/he as well as bureau colleagues were accessible.

Overall Assessment

- The programme has been generally successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people. All projects signed up to the concept of sustained personal commitment, which they saw as one of the key defining characteristics of MV, which set it apart from other volunteering programmes. Many projects and volunteers

were happy with the 200 hours requirement, with MVs in particular, waxing lyrical about the value they placed on the Certificates and Awards. However, there was a sizeable minority view which saw the 200 hours requirement as inflexible and unwieldy and as working against attempts to open up volunteering to those groups of young people from communities with no tradition of formal volunteering. Concerns were also expressed about the lack of systems in place to deal with young people who had achieved their 200 hours and who wanted to carry on volunteering. The evaluation suggests the need for revisions to the programme to take account of the fact that not all young people will be able to achieve 200 hours, especially not within the 12 month time limit. It also suggests the need for further thought to be given to how projects can better support volunteers who have completed their 200 hours.

Recommendations

- To give greater recognition to the reality that sustained personal commitment may mean different amounts of time for different people.
- To recognise that different activities enable young people to clock up their hours at different rates.
- To look for ways of introducing staggered awards at say 25 and 50 hours to recognise the contribution of volunteers who may not reach 100 and 200 hours.
- To look for ways of supporting volunteers who want to stay on after 200 hours, for example by encouraging projects to share best practice or holding regional workshops.

4 Recognition

Key UK Findings

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours of volunteering and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, an enhancement to one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other rewards. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people or that a separate Award could be presented for the completion of a specific project, regardless of hours.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with just 33% of groups in Wales, 22% in Northern Ireland, 28% in England, and 33% in Scotland having set up an accreditation system.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.

- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation, particularly in the smaller home countries where there had been a limited publicity budget.
- Overall the programme has been highly successful in meeting its aim of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Personal Profiles being well received. However there is scope for more national publicity of the programme, particularly among employers.

Introduction

- 4.1 The Millennium Volunteer programme aims to recognise young people's volunteering through a Certificate for completing 100 hours, an Award of Excellence for 200 hours² which is signed by a government Minister, and a Personal Profile which is a written statement highlighting the activities undertaken and benefits received. In Northern Ireland, the Certificate is optional. Projects are also encouraged to recognise their volunteers through celebrating their success and to offer external accreditation. In addition to evaluating the success of the Awards and Certificates and external recognition, the report also considers the national recognition of the programme as a whole.
- 4.2 In Scotland a target of 1,000 young people achieving their Awards by 2002 was established by the Scottish Executive during late 1999 at the outset of the new Scottish Executive and the commencement of the Scottish Parliament; an equivalent target was not established in the other home countries. The number of Awards presented to date in each home country is shown the table below.

Table two: Number of MVs starting and completing Awards

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	UK total
Total number of Awards	11,574	560	519	416	13,069
Total number of MVs started	53,768	992	2,584	2,488	59,832

Total up to and including March 31 2002

Awards and Certificates

- 4.3 In general volunteers responded positively to the Awards and Certificates. They were seen as an added benefit to the volunteering experience, or indeed, as an incentive to become involved in the first place and a motivation to keep you going. As one respondent said: 'I was very chuffed to get a certificate, keeping a record, seeing the hours totting up, seeing it all come together – whoa! 200 hours, I would never have thought it.'
- 4.4 They were also seen to have real practical value, in terms of enhancing one's CV and helping with university and college applications and job-search. 'I would use it to get into college', said one MV from Scotland, while an MV from Wales commented that 'it looks good on your CV that you've committed 200 hours off your own bat'. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received and were seen as providing a useful reference for potential employers.
- 4.5 This generally positive view of the Awards was backed up by the projects. Managers saw them as a good way of saying thank you to their volunteers and of recognising their achievement. One manager in Northern Ireland said the programme was particularly valuable because it was UK-wide in scope, 'not just a project'.

² In 2002 England introduced plans to re-brand the MV Certificate into an Award, which will be signed by the Minister for young people and learning. The move was taken in recognition that not all young people will be able to reach the 200 hour Award of Excellence.

'Seeing all the youngsters getting their MV certificate was very special, but to see the lads who had been homeless in the streets it was to them like getting a degree. They were all cheering each other when they were getting their certificate – it was a real high'. (Project staff, Scotland)

- 4.6 Many organisations offered something to their MVs in addition to the official awards. This ranged from the groups own certificates, to ceremonies, social events, coverage in in-house newsletters, away-days and gifts of record vouchers to those who completed 100 hours. The awards ceremonies in particular, which involved drawing together MVs, their placement organisations, beneficiaries, and members of the community, were reported upon enthusiastically.

'The certificates included feedback from the co-ordinators of our placements and it was really nice as that made it personal. I don't want a photocopied certificate saying "done 100 hours, congratulations". But this said something specific about your area'. (MV, England)

'Each time there is an award ceremony we then take them out ice-skating. This can be nice, as the award ceremony with the MP can be a bit dry'. (Project staff, England)

- 4.7 A minority of respondents, however, were not convinced of the value of the Awards. 'My impression', said the co-ordinator of one England project, 'is that kids like something tangible and that they can see straight away'. This view was echoed by two MVs from the same project. 'The certificate is like almost trying to buy commitment', complained one; while the other asserted that he was 'not bothered about the certificate – I know that I made a difference'.
- 4.8 One particular problem which could arise was where MVs were engaged alongside other volunteers, often doing exactly the same tasks. In such cases there was a problem of not wanting to alienate existing volunteers by appearing to favour MVs. 'It has meant that some guys are getting certificates and some are not as they are not MVs', said one project manager in Scotland. 'Is that fair if the MVs are not doing anything different to the other volunteers?'. However, some organisations had turned this apparent problem to the good by introducing awards and recognition for all their volunteers.
- 4.9 Another area of concern was the lack of official recognition for those MVs who had not completed at least 100 hours. It was felt to be hard not to be able to give an official reward to young people who had failed to reach the required number of hours but who had made (for them) a major commitment.
- 4.10 Various suggestions were made by volunteers and staff alike as to how the Awards could be made more meaningful to the MVs. One suggestion was to give awards for both hours and activities, which it was felt would help to quell criticism of the programme as being too focused on quantity, although this also drew criticism from some who argued it could not address the aim of sustained commitment. A further suggestion was for the introduction of additional levels of recognition. Rather than just having certificates at 100 and 200 hours, a more staggered system should be developed. 'To stagger MV, for example, at 20 hours, would make a huge difference to their motivation to carry on', said one project manager in Scotland.
- 4.11 Indeed, discussions were underway on introducing a 50 hour certificate and reducing emphasis on the Award of Excellence while enhancing the status of the 100 hour certificate, a move which evidence suggests projects would widely support. There was,

however, some concern that if emphasis is completely taken off the 200 hours then that will devalue the achievements made by all those who have already achieved their Awards – a point raised particularly in Northern Ireland, where there was general satisfaction with the 200-hour standard.

External Accreditation

- 4.12 A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the telephone survey of project managers suggested that such projects were in the minority. The figures for those organisations which had begun to link MV to external accreditation systems were: 28% in England; 33% in Scotland; 22% in Northern Ireland; and 33% in Wales, although several other projects in each country were in the process of doing so.
- 4.13 Projects were involved in a variety of different schemes, including the Open College Network; Key Skills Programme; City and Guilds Profile of Achievement, NVQs, and SVQs (Core Skills). Many projects also delivered an array of smaller accredited training courses such as first aid certificates.
- 4.14 Apart from a few successes it was clear that many organisations were experiencing difficulties in getting started with external accreditation. Reasons for not making progress included lack of resources, lack of demand from young people, and concern about overloading volunteers with more paperwork. ‘The problem is time and resources, the cost of accreditation’, was a typical quote from one project manager, whilst another said that ‘we could be more proactive about it but MVs just don’t like formal training’.
- 4.15 There was some disquiet from MVs at the lack of progress on this front. ‘External accreditation should have been given more forethought’, complained one MV, ‘We are nearly at the end of the programme and that is still not on board’.
- 4.16 For some organisations accreditation was working well. Volunteers were keen to get involved and the process of administering it was proving manageable. ‘The OCN Personal Development course gives something extra to the skills learnt from volunteering’, said one project manager in Northern Ireland; whilst another admitted that they were ‘looking at other ways of offering training’ to their volunteers.
- 4.17 A number of organisations which had gone down the accreditation route, however, were unconvinced of its value. Some complained that MVs were spending too much time training rather than volunteering; others that the awarding bodies were taking too long to carry out the assessments and that the necessary support required to see MVs through the process could not be provided within the existing organisational resources.

Volunteer Development Scotland, in partnership with the MV Scottish Consortium, provided Assessor and Core Skills Training (D32/33) to 12 MV Co-ordinators so they could directly support and assess MVs working towards three Core Skills - Communication, Problem Solving, and Working With Others at Intermediate 1. MVs could draw on volunteering experience to build up evidence for these accredited units. VDS have also produced materials to help support the young people through the process. Three of the case study projects were involved in the SVQ pilot scheme and, although only relatively small numbers of volunteers had embarked upon SVQs, they were generally reported upon in a positive light.

In Northern Ireland one project was offering OCN accreditation for a conflict resolution and mediation course. Another project had adopted Youth Achievement Awards which offered

different levels of challenges and responsibility and so could be matched at bronze, silver and even gold awards with MVs' age and progress.

In Wales some MVs had trained to become qualified youth workers at the same time as taking part in the programme. MVs in another organisation had taken part in senior member training, through the Open College Network. Another provided organisational training in equal opportunities and child protection for all MVs.

National Recognition of the Programme

- 4.18 There was a general feeling across the projects that the national deliverers of MV could do more to publicise the programme at national (and local) level. Efforts to attract local interest in the programme it was felt were hampered by the lack of an effective, centrally-co-ordinated publicity campaign.
- 4.19 This view was backed up by several of the MVs we spoke to. 'The general public don't know about it', complained one young volunteer in England; while an MV in Scotland expressed concern that 'people don't know about it beyond this project'. There was also recognition that it was early days and that the programme required more time to become fully embedded in the public consciousness: 'It needs more time for people to hear about it', acknowledged one England MV.
- 4.20 Some of those who had seen the national advertising were critical. 'The advertising campaign has been a complete and utter waste of time', complained one Scottish respondent. A Scottish MV agreed saying 'more people would be interested if it was seen as hip and cool'.
- 4.21 Criticism was most pronounced from the smaller home countries with some respondents arguing that they had been short-changed in the publicity budget with 'all the money' having gone into England.
- 4.22 There was concern that the failure to invest sufficiently in the marketing of the programme was having a detrimental effect on the take-up by companies. It was all very well drawing a link between participation in MV and young people's future employability; but this would only be convincing if employers were aware of the programme.
- 4.23 Several ideas were put forward as to how publicity could be increased. These ranged from advertising on pirate radio stations to information stalls at music and cultural festivals.
- 4.24 On a local level projects in England had been involved in regional marketing groups, facilitated by their contract managers, and some projects had had considerable success in achieving local media coverage.

Overall Assessment

- 4.25 The programme has been highly successful in meeting its aim of recognising and rewarding volunteers. In quantitative terms, while Scotland has a considerable way to go in achieving the Scottish Executive's target of achieving 1,000 Awards; overall the presentation of over 13,000 Awards across the UK is a considerable achievement. The Certificates and Awards have gone down well with most young people and the Volunteer Profiles have also been generally well received. Less progress has been made by projects in linking MV in with external accreditation systems and there is clearly scope for more work in this area. There is also scope for more national publicity of the programme, particularly among employers. There is a clear mismatch at the moment between the

rhetoric of an ‘MV for your CV’ and the lack of awareness of the programme among employers.

Recommendations

- To put more resources into a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the programme among key stakeholders, particularly employers.
- To build into the programme greater scope for reflection and self-assessment by young people, linked to a greater recognition that the programme leads to personal development as well as to community benefit.
- To build on the existing (rather limited) success of tying MV into external accreditation systems by identifying what works and why and how to overcome barriers to further development.

5 Inclusivity

Key UK Findings

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- On average across the UK two-thirds of MVs were female and one-third were male. England had been most successful at striking a balance.
- The majority of MVs were aged between 16-18 years old and the programme had been least successful at recruiting 22-24 year olds. The imbalance towards the lowest age range was most prominent in Scotland, whereas Wales had been particularly successful at attracting all age groups.
- Across the UK 90% of MVs were white, 2% black, 5% Asian and 4% other. Compared to the profile of the population of 16-24 year olds as a whole it appears that MV has been successful in attracting young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Nearly two thirds of MVs were students, 4% were in other forms of training, 12% were employed and 19% were unemployed. Compared to overall figures for employment status of young people in the UK it can be seen that MV has been disproportionately successful in involving young people in education and those who are unemployed, and less successful in involving young people in employment, Scotland however fared better here.
- MV has been particularly successful in attracting young people who had never volunteered before, with nearly half of all MVs having no previous experience of volunteering. This was especially so in England. However, several projects made the point that young people may underestimate the extent of their previous involvement
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering with individual projects across the UK employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included: minority language constraints; lack of financial resources and time for outreach work; and tension between investing in inclusivity and achieving numerical targets.

- The programme has made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove remaining barriers to participation, in particular the tension between inclusion and targets.

Introduction

5.1 The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24 (25 in Scotland). For England, a target was set to include 100,000 young people as Millennium Volunteers by 2004, 820 by 2002 for Northern Ireland. In particular the programme aimed to reach young people who had no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion. The evaluation considers the extent to which diversity has been achieved in MV, before considering steps taken by projects to increase their inclusivity and the barriers to further inclusion.

Making diversity a reality

5.2 Respondents identified the aim of involving volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds as one of the most important features of MV. There was a clear recognition that if MV was going to leave a mark as a distinctive national programme then it needed to embrace the concept of inclusivity and draw in significant numbers of young people from different backgrounds who had never previously considered volunteering.

5.3 The evaluation suggests that the programme has had significant success in meeting this aim. Figures from the MV databases show that projects in all four countries had managed to recruit volunteers from a cross-section of the community. Based on analysis of the MV databases held in each of the four home countries we can see that the profile of MVs between countries is broadly similar, with one or two interesting differences.

5.4 Across all four countries approximately two-thirds of MVs were female and one-third male. Compared to the findings from the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, which showed that men and women participated equally, it would appear that young men are under-represented as MVs.

Table three: Gender of MVs

	Male %	Female %	N = Total number of MVs on database
England	38	62	41280
Scotland	34	66	2433
Wales	33	67	2297
Northern Ireland	34	66	992
UK average	35	65	

Figures for all the following tables in this section are taken from the end December 2001 unless otherwise stated.

5.5 There are differences also in participation rates by age. The majority of MVs recruited as MVs were aged between 16-18, as the table below shows. Overall, the results indicate that MV has been least successful in recruiting 22-24 year olds. The imbalance towards the lowest age range was most prominent in Scotland, whereas Wales had been particularly successful in attracting an equal proportion from each age group.

Table four: Age of MVs

	% aged <16-18	% aged 19-21	% aged 22 and over	N = Total number of MVs on database
England*	46	32	23	52577
Scotland	62	23	15	2441
Wales	37	31	33	2297
Northern Ireland	48	27	25	992
UK-wide MV average	48	28	24	

*England figures from February 2002

5.6 In terms of ethnic background, table five shows that on average across the UK 90% of MVs were white, 2% black, 5% were Asian and 4% other. This compares to the GB population profile of 16-24 years olds of 93% white, 2% black, 5% Asian, and 1% other, suggesting that MV has been successful in attracting young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. However, a considerable amount of variation is visible between countries. MVs in England appear to be most diverse and those in Wales the least so. Much of this variation can be explained by the different population make-up in the smaller home countries. For example, in Scotland 98% of 16-29 year olds are white, indicating considerable success at involving MVs from black and minority ethnic communities in Scotland. However, as the actual numbers of people from minority ethnic communities that have been involved in MV in the smaller home countries are relatively small, there is still some work to be done to increase diversity there.

Table five: Ethnicity of MVs

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	UK-wide MV average
Black/African	1.8	0.6	0.1	0.3	2
Black/Caribbean	1.8		0.2	0.3	
Black/other	1.3		0.5	0.2	
Chinese	1.0	2.2	0.5	0.3	5
Bangladeshi	1.5		0.3	2.8	
Indian	3.9		0.8	2.1	
Pakistani	2.9		0.7	0.4	
White	79.5	95.1	95.5	89	90
Other & unspecified	6.4	2.1	1.4	4.2	4
N = Total MVs on database	41280	2433	2297	992	

5.7 As table six shows, on average across the UK, 7% of MVs have a disability and/or health problems indicating that the programme has been reasonably successful at including disabled young people, particularly so in Northern Ireland.

Table six: Disability status of MVs

	% with disability and/or health problem	% without disability and/or health problem	N = Total number of MVs on database
England	7	93	41280
Scotland	7	93	2433
Wales	4	96	2297
Northern Ireland	9	91	992
UK-wide MV average	7	93	

5.8 In terms of employment status, table seven shows that on average across the UK nearly two thirds of the MVs were students, a further 4% were in other forms as training, 12% were employed, and 19% unemployed. All four home countries show broadly similar trends, although Northern Ireland has been particularly successful at attracting unemployed young people and Scotland had been particularly successful at attracting those in employment. This compares with the UK figures for employment status of 15-24 year olds (figures not available for 16-24 age group) of 36% in employment, 7% unemployed, 22% in education and employment, and 26% in full-time education only. Whilst the figures are not strictly comparable it can be seen that MV has been disproportionately successful in involving young people in education and those who are unemployed and less successful in involving young people in employment. Some of the variation between the national figures and those for MV for employment status may well be explained by the fact that MVs are drawn so far mainly from the younger age groups.

Table seven: Status of MVs

	England (%)	Scotland (%)	Wales (%)	Northern Ireland (%)	UK-wide MV average
Student at school	21	62	25	32	64
Student in HE	16		26	14	
Student in FE	31		17	10	
Other training/ed.	3	3	4	5	4
Unemployed	11	20	17	28	19
Employed	13	15	8	11	12
Other	4	0	3	0	2
N = Total number of MVs on database	41280	2433	2298	992	

5.9 The database results shown in table eight highlight the success of MV in attracting young people who had never volunteered before; England had been particularly successful. While figures are not available for Scotland, the first evaluation phase showed that 88% of organisations felt they had been successful at involving young people who would otherwise not have volunteered. However, through the evaluation several respondents made the point that young people may underestimate the extent of their previous involvement. For many young people volunteering is a term which has little currency and previous activities undertaken in the community would not necessarily be described as such. In the same light some projects reported that the young people they involved did not see themselves as engaged in volunteering, but rather as in helping the community. ‘We’re enjoying it, so it can’t be volunteering, they say’, was the revealing comment from one manager.

Table eight: Previous experience of volunteering among MVs

	Have had previous volunteering experience %	No previous volunteering experience %	N = Total number of MVs on database %
England	41	59	41280
Wales	59	41	2298
Northern Ireland	58	42	992
MV average*	53	47	

*Figures are not available from the Scottish MV database on previous experience of volunteering.

5.10 While conclusive evidence is not available on the success of MV in ensuring geographical inclusivity, some very general comments can be made. The geographical coverage,

uniformity, and level of access to MV had been an area of considerable debate. Through the establishment of the Co-ordinating Partners, with one in each unitary authority, the Welsh MV delivery structures ensured complete geographical coverage. As one respondent said: 'It is brilliant the way that it is set up here in Wales as no matter where you are you have the same access to MV'. This level of geographical uniformity has not been established in the other home countries, despite considerable attempts, particularly in England, to ensure that MV is spread across the country.

Inclusivity in action

5.11 There were many examples of projects that had been successful in broadening their base. One England project reported that 80% of its volunteers had never volunteered before; 30% were from black and minority ethnic communities and 42% were unemployed. The project had been less successful with involving disabled young people, due to a lack of disabled access in the building they occupied, although they had involved young people with learning difficulties and mental health problems. Another project in Wales had been successful at including young women who were single parents or survivors of domestic violence, a programme that had not been possible previous to MV.

5.12 A range of different methods had been employed by projects to increase participation among under-represented groups. These included:

- reviewing recruitment literature to include multi-format for the visually impaired and different community languages;
- developing forums of under-represented young people;
- visiting hard-to-reach young people at exclusion centres, job centres, special schools and community groups;
- employing outreach workers;
- establishing a buddying system;
- recruiting specialist project staff to focus on under-represented groups;
- developing a cyber café to attract more young men;
- advertising in local press;
- using existing volunteers from under-represented groups as role models.

In Northern Ireland a key issue of inclusivity was the balance between young people from the two traditions or communities. The overall composition of MV in Northern Ireland shows a larger number of participants were identified as Catholic rather than Protestant, 58% and 33% respectively. However, the case-study projects had been successful in involving young people from both communities and did not appear (as far as it could be judged) to be identifiable in sectarian terms. Indeed, the projects were seen to be providing a place for young people of both communities to meet with 'no barriers'. Young people could not select volunteering opportunities on the basis of religious affiliation; they could not, for instance, specify the religion of the person they would be working with. Commonly, the emphasis was put on *individual* achievement, both among young people themselves and community workers, rather than on communal inclusivity. This was a deliberate rejection of classifying or being classified on the basis of religious affiliation.

In Wales, Special Development Initiatives were introduced to encourage inclusivity by putting extra resources into those areas in which young people did not traditionally volunteer or where there were additional hurdles to be overcome by individuals who wished to volunteer. The SDI projects concentrated on the areas of volunteering by the homeless, volunteering through the medium of the Welsh language, volunteering by those with learning disabilities (two projects) and volunteering by those with physical disabilities. A sixth SDI project looked at barriers to volunteering within the ethnic student population.

Barriers to Inclusivity

- 5.13 Projects identified a number of barriers to opening up volunteering to a broader range of young people. In some instances the barrier was the institution itself or the environment in which it operated. For example, several managers at university-based projects explained that although they were keen to engage a more diverse range of young people they were limited by the profile of the young people they were working with.
- 5.14 Language could be seen as a barrier to involving people from black and ethnic minority communities where English was not the first language. As one project manager explained: ‘In the area there are lots of Somalis and because there are no full-time Somali youth workers, communication can be difficult’.
- 5.15 The prevailing methods of recruitment could work against a more inclusive approach. Project managers saw word of mouth as one of the most effective recruitment methods, especially where existing MVs were used as ambassadors. However, despite its value as a recruitment tool, projects acknowledged that word of mouth had its drawbacks in that it tended to lead to a cloning effect, with people recruiting friends and colleagues from similar backgrounds to themselves. There was a strong feeling that if projects were to be successful in involving young people from marginalised communities then alternative recruitment strategies would need to be employed.
- 5.16 One of the key barriers identified by project managers, who were struggling with the issue of diversity, was the tension which they felt existed between inclusivity and targets. Developing a strategy for diversifying volunteering takes time and resources and MVs recruited may have extra support needs, and yet several projects said they were being judged solely on the total number of MVs they involved. Pressure to meet targets meant some projects transferred existing volunteers onto MV while others sought ‘easy’ targets through schools and colleges. ‘Because of high targets we go for the easier groups such as 6th forms’, admitted one manager; whilst another claimed that ‘pressure of hitting numerical targets means less emphasis has been placed on trying to achieve a good mix’. This tension was particularly problematic in England where there was some disconnection over the issue of targets between projects and the MVU, but also in Scotland. In Wales and Northern Ireland the issue was less prevalent as targets were lower or none existent.
- 5.17 Several national stakeholders we interviewed felt that this tension between inclusivity and targets represented the major weakness of the programme. It was argued that the aims of the programme had not been sufficiently clearly established at the outset. Was the programme about numbers or about diversity? Or about both? And if it was about both, what mechanisms had been put in place to resolve the inevitable tensions which they felt would arise in trying to deliver on these very different outcomes?

Overall Assessment

- 5.18 The programme has made significant strides towards achieving its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. Across all four home countries approximately half of all MVs had never previously volunteered (almost 60% in England), and a good mix in terms of the ethnic background of the young people involved has been achieved (especially in England). The programme has also been successful in terms of involving unemployed young people. However, challenges remain if MV is to be able to claim to be wholly inclusive. The programme has been relatively unsuccessful in engaging young men and in involving those in the older age range. It has also failed to attract significant numbers of young people in employment. Moreover, there is evidence that

some projects have chosen to go for relatively ‘easy’ options such as 6th formers in order to hit targets which has worked against them diversifying their volunteer base.

Recommendations

- To give greater recognition to the difficulties of involving young people from harder to reach groups.
- To look for ways of making MV more attractive for young men and for those in the older age range of the 16-24 bracket.
- To work with employers at a national and regional level to encourage young people in employment to get involved in the programme.

6 Variety and Quality

Key UK Findings

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing activities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities. Single-issue projects were by definition less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation’s existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the centrality of young people, youth-leadership, recognition and the structured approach of MV.
- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health and safety checks, supervision and one-to-one support for volunteers.
- A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors both within placements and in the main MV organisation, review meetings, feedback from placements and peer-support. The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed throughout the evaluation.
- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support that could be offered by MV project staff and there was some concern expressed that the push for numbers could cut into quality.
- The audits highlighted the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, with just 10% of MVs reporting that they had not received as much support as they would have liked.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were met with mixed enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers.
- Overall the programme has been very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Introduction

6.1 Alongside being inclusive of different groups of young people, MV aims at offering a diverse range of opportunities for young people, from tailored placements through to self-designed projects. In particular MV aims to offer something new, to be an addition to existing activities (less so in Wales). In addition MV aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences through engendering best practice in regard to volunteer management. The evaluation assessed the success of the programme in meeting these two aims by first looking at the variety of opportunities available and then at the mechanisms in place to ensure a quality experience.

Variety of opportunities

6.2 The evaluation suggests that viewed overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide range of volunteering activities for MVs to choose from. Many projects had taken extensive steps to establish new opportunities and activities, often by forging partnerships with other local volunteer-involving organisations. However, within individual projects the variety of opportunities on offer differed widely, largely depending on the nature of the organisation and its delivery model. Matchmaker projects in Scotland, co-ordinating partners in Wales and the relatively large Delivery Partners in England were able to offer the greatest diversity, through providing a range of internal and external volunteering opportunities (often having access to tens if not hundreds of placement opportunities and challenge-type activities). Opportunities were more restricted in placement providers which only offer internal placements, and single-issue specialist projects.

The following extract, taken from the annual report of one matchmaker project in Scotland illustrates the extensive network of opportunities available to young people:

‘Volunteers have been involved in over 15 organisations and with four young-people led projects over the life of the Millennium volunteers project. However there is access to over 100 organisations on the [organisation’s] database, which we know fit the criteria for a quality placement under Millennium Volunteers. These voluntary activities cover the breadth of volunteering from art therapy to peer education drugs work to charity shops.’

6.3 Results from the impact audits show that MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had themselves been instrumental in developing or suggesting new activities. Of those questioned just 13% felt that they had not been able to do the type of activities that they were interested in, with only 19% feeling that the tasks that they had been involved in were repetitive. Moreover, many of those who felt they had been involved in repetitive tasks were not unduly critical. In the words of one volunteer: ‘Some tasks have been repetitive but this is also a good way of learning, therefore this did not cause a problem for me’.

6.4 The variety of activities available within MV was highlighted as one of the key distinguishing features of the programme, and one of its successes. As one respondent commented: ‘MV brings a diversity of opportunities – MVs get something exciting and get to see volunteering as different, and then they are likely to continue volunteering throughout adult life, which is important’.

Is MV offering anything new?

6.5 The first phase of the evaluation explored the extent to which projects being run under MV delivered a different service from that already being provided. Results showed that 7% of the projects in England had been set up as new and so by definition were offering

something different. However, in England 42% said that there was no significant difference in MV and the activities previously being offered by the organisation, beyond a more structured approach, 19% of projects in Wales gave a similar response, as did 12% in Scotland and 11% in Northern Ireland.

- 6.6 However, the majority of projects noted a number of key differences. The centrality of young people was the most common difference reported in Scotland and Wales, with the formal involvement/focus on young people being key in Northern Ireland and England. Further differences noted included: the diversity of activities available for volunteers, accreditation and 200-hour recognition, being able to offer tailor-made individual experiences, and the support implicit within MV.

'It's very much the young person's own ideas and aims. They create volunteering opportunities for themselves. It is a unique development.' (Project staff, Scotland)

'Placements that we arrange, because of the principles of volunteering that come through them, are better supported, with more clear roles as it is more structured and volunteers are increasingly involved in the whole process, they are more in control.' (Project staff, Wales)

'It has increased the range of activities that we do.' (Project staff, England)

'It is new for [this organisation] to be delivering external placements.' (Project staff, England)

Ensuring the quality of placements

- 6.7 All organisations saw quality control as an important part of their work. Only a small number of projects had experienced problems with placements and most of these were relatively minor instances which had been speedily dealt with.
- 6.8 A variety of procedures had been put in place by projects to ensure quality levels were maintained. Chief among these were individual one-to-one supervision and support for volunteers, visits to placement agencies in advance of signing them up as partners and formal contracts with placement agencies, covering a wide range of issues from health and safety to risk assessments, checking volunteer management policies and insurance.
- 6.9 Where placement visits were carried out the aim was to look at systems in place - risk assessments and health and safety checks were made and equal opportunities and health and safety policies were examined. Some projects issued guidelines for placement agencies to adopt, whereas others scrutinised and accepted existing policies. Some projects had to develop policies from scratch. One organisation expressed concern about quality assurance of youth-led projects: 'perhaps youth led projects may be more problematic, because young people are designing the project and opportunity themselves'.
- 6.10 Some projects had entered into formal contracts with placement providers to try and ensure a quality placement. 'There is a contract between ourselves, the volunteers and the organisations – a partnership agreement, taking on the responsibility to agree to improve quality', reported one project. Others preferred a less formal approach, with one explaining that 'You get a feel of what makes a good placement'. For some projects the fact that the volunteer opportunity was already registered with a volunteer bureau was in itself an assurance of quality.

Support for Volunteers

6.11 All projects saw support as an integral part of their work with young people. Levels of individual support varied and depended on the resources of the project and the needs of the individual MV. Most projects offered regular reviews, either face-to-face or by telephone, and many operated an open-door policy whereby volunteers could seek assistance at any time.

'We do get mad if an organisation promises something and then doesn't deliver. If support doesn't come from an organisation then it comes from me. All organisations ask about support but all I can offer is me! Lack of resources for a support officer.' (Project staff, Scotland)

'Support comes from the Delivery Partner but the MV can come back to see me anytime.' (Project staff, Wales)

'Volunteer induction pack. Also wallet-sized card with 24hr helpline number. Named supervisor for each MV. Peer support system – MV to MV mentoring. Also placement support volunteer to work alongside project staff to ensure satisfactory placement experience.' (Project staff, England)

'Supervisions – three way meetings between MV co-ordinator, placement support worker and MV – have three monthly meetings to check up on both the placement and that the young person is benefiting from it and can move forward in it.' (Project staff, Northern Ireland)

6.12 Other support mechanisms employed included MV support groups and peer mentoring, newsletters and social groups. Induction was common in many organisations as was more formal training in subject areas relevant to the volunteering opportunity, such as first aid or IT.

6.13 The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed by project staff, MVs, placement providers and community representatives alike.

6.14 The evaluation found no specific issues concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support which could be offered by MV project staff, particularly among smaller projects and those involved in youth-led activities. Some projects made the point that being more inclusive raised additional difficulties over support. One project was already taking steps to address increased support needs: 'We are going to appoint a part-time project worker to focus on disaffected groups who need support'.

6.15 Most volunteers were satisfied with their placements. The audit phase showed that 77% of MVs thought that the information they received before becoming MVs was good; just 10% felt that they had not received enough support; and 53% felt they had received adequate feedback on their progress. In particular the role of the MV co-ordinator was highlighted by the MVs as giving tremendous, but balanced support. As one MV said: 'we want to be independent but have the support if needed'.

6.16 A small minority of MVs, however, voiced their dissatisfaction. 'At [X organisation] I never felt like part of the team. I just went once a week,' said one volunteer. Another commented that 'in terms of feedback from the placement we don't get any – don't know if the staff consider us as more of a hindrance than anything else. I don't really feel like part of [the organisation]'.

6.17 Some projects, particularly in England and Scotland, felt that the support they could offer volunteers was constrained by the need to increase numbers. ‘Some disadvantaged people have been prevented from volunteering as they need too much support’ was one coordinator’s worry. The same concern was not so apparent in Northern Ireland and Wales.

Volunteer Plans

6.18 Satisfaction with the Volunteer Plans varied considerably between projects. Many said they found the Plans useful, primarily in helping volunteers to think through their options and in providing a framework for the process. ‘Volunteer Plan seen as good starting point. Many don’t know what they want to do; only what they don’t want to do. The Plan offers a good opportunity to kick off the discussion’, was the view of one project manager.

6.19 A minority of projects said they found the Plans unhelpful. Some of the criticisms focused on the design of the form – no space for the volunteer’s name or that of the project. But there were more fundamental concerns. For a small number of groups the Volunteer Plans were symptomatic of what they saw as an over-formalised, over-bureaucratic approach to volunteering. Projects reported their volunteers complaining that it was ‘just like being at school – we don’t want to do it’, and that they felt ‘bogged down with paperwork’. One project worker said the Plans reminded them of the New Deal – ‘for Volunteer Plan read Action Plan’, and commented that although they ‘understand the thinking, young people just want to do something useful’.

6.20 Volunteers were similarly divided on the value of the Plans. Some felt that the plans focused thought: ‘It made me more aware of what I wanted to do – you have to think to write it down’, said one. However, a volunteer in the same focus group disagreed, saying ‘it was hard to get down a perception of myself on paper. I didn’t take to it. I know where I want to go’.

‘The Volunteer Plan works best when it is treated informally – paperwork can frighten some people so personal contact and conversations are documented rather than making the MVs fill in the plan. The Volunteer Plan is against the culture and natural experience of what they’re used to.’ (Project staff, England)

‘A lot of volunteers do not like it, they just want to do the work, we try to keep it to the minimum.’ (Project staff, England)

6.21 The process of completing the Plans differed between projects. Some gave volunteers the option of taking the Plan away to complete on their own, while others saw the process as a collaborative one, with the form to be filled in by the volunteer and the project manager at a face-to-face meeting. The stage at which the form was completed also varied between projects. While most were filled in at an early stage, either at the induction meeting or very shortly into the volunteering placement, some projects delayed the process until much further down the line. The argument advanced in favour of delay was that volunteers could not be expected to know what they wanted until they had had a chance to try things out. More than one project pointed to problems which had arisen because the volunteers had changed their minds about their preferred placement after the Plans had been completed.

Overall Assessment

6.22 The evaluation suggests that the programme has been generally very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities. Most projects were offering a wide variety of different opportunities and most had put in place systems to ensure that the quality of the placements was maintained. We found very few examples of a

volunteering placement that had gone badly wrong. The Volunteer Plan appears to be working reasonably well although there may be a case for reviewing its design to make it more relevant and easier to complete by the young people.

Recommendation

- To review the design of the Volunteer Plan to make it more relevant and easier to complete by the young people.
- To facilitate a greater sharing of practice between MV projects in the ways in which MVs are supported and the quality of opportunities guaranteed.
- To facilitate closer working between projects in the same locality to widen the range of available opportunities on offer to volunteers.

7 Partnerships

Key UK Findings

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects and the programme managers to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Projects were usually dependent on the personal and professional resources of their co-ordinators in networking, in drawing on their knowledge of local groups and organisations.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping opportunities. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support.
- Most projects had also developed relationships with other MV projects in their area. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support. However, some projects felt that there could have been more emphasis on drawing out examples of best practice during the early days of the programme.
- Overall the relationship between MV projects and management were positive, but views varied between countries. In Northern Ireland respondents were united in their praise of the Agency. In England there was a mixed response. Some groups were favourably disposed towards the MVU; others were critical. In Scotland and Wales projects were generally satisfied with the way the programme had been managed, although concern was expressed over the lack of staff resources within the management agency.
- These variations in satisfaction ratings between countries may be explained at least in part by the different organisation and delivery structures in place.
- At the UK level the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices across countries was found to be fairly limited beyond those directly involved in the national delivery organisational steering group.

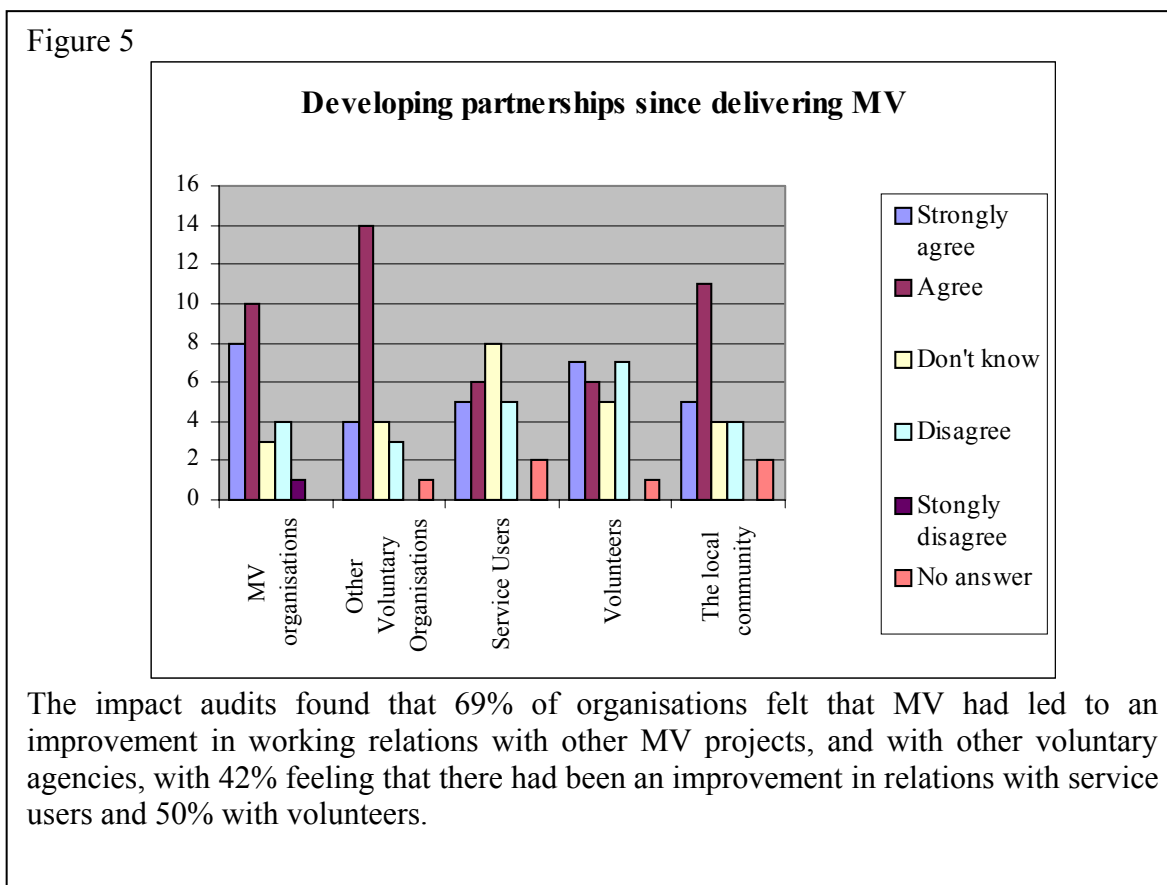
- Overall, MV has been largely successful in building partnerships between participating agencies and the wide voluntary sector, but less so with the private and public sector.

Introduction

7.1 MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors to increase the opportunities available to young people and ensure the programme is delivered effectively. The evaluation considered the success of projects in the development of partnerships at a local level with other voluntary agencies and explored how these partnerships were used. The evaluation also considered the success of building partnerships between MV projects across regions and between MV projects and the programme managers in each home country.

Developing partnerships with local voluntary agencies

7.2 Figure five highlights the results from the impact audits, illustrating the success of MV projects at developing partnerships with various local stakeholders. The evaluation found that the overwhelming majority of projects had established links with other voluntary agencies in their area. In a small number of cases organisations had come together to jointly run projects. In most cases, however, existing organisations that were in receipt of MV funding had established links with other agencies.



7.3 Some of these links were informal, for example sharing of premises for meetings; holding joint training sessions and joint award and recognition events. Others were more formal, with MV projects inviting representatives from different agencies in the area to sit on their management or advisory committees.

7.4 Many projects said they had established links with other networks in the area such as youth forums, women's groups, health action zones, social service trusts and more general

volunteering networks. A common view expressed was that it was good ‘to meet up and have a chat or work together to exchange views and ideas’.

‘I think it is good how the project allows us to work with different/diverse people.’ (Project staff, England)

‘It has reinforced for me how important face-to-face work is and networking and pooling resources. It has meant that I have been able to really pull things together.’ (Project staff, Scotland)

‘Particularly on the recruitment side – we have built up very good partnerships with schools ... It takes time to develop partnerships but now they keep landing in my lap.’ (Project staff, England)

- 7.5 Projects were usually dependent on the personal and professional resources of their co-ordinators in networking, in drawing on their knowledge of local groups and organisations. Where the MV project was already part of the volunteering infrastructure potential partners were mostly already known. Even so, projects acknowledged that additional resources had enabled them to focus on youth volunteering in a way that they had not been able to do in the past. Additionally, having MVs identifying what they wanted to do had acted as a spur to finding new contacts who were able to offer the opportunities the young people wanted.
- 7.6 MV projects not located in the existing volunteering infrastructure did not have such ready access to new partners. However, at least one organisation noted that there was a plus side to not being part of existing networks in that their thinking was not constrained by knowledge of existing opportunities.

The use of partnerships

- 7.7 Partnerships were found to be a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers. Projects had made links with a variety of different local agencies, such as career services and colleges to act as referral points for potential volunteers. One project had made links with local health visitors and the Social Work Department who aided in the recruitment of both volunteers and the identification of service users for receipt of MV services.
- 7.8 Partnerships were also used to shape volunteering opportunities, making them more interesting for young people and more flexible. In Northern Ireland a youth club recruited its senior members as volunteers to run activities and passed new volunteers on to other volunteering opportunities if more appropriate. In another project a co-ordinator tailored opportunities by creating a partnership between a community drug and alcohol abuse project and local grammar school students to provide peer education on these topics.
- 7.9 Partnerships had also been developed on a more functional basis, to develop and implement specific elements of individual projects. For example, following the identification of the need to provide transport for young people from rural hinterlands, one project had developed a successful partnership with the Scottish Borders Rural Partnership and the Scottish Borders Transport Department. Together the organisations and the MVs were developing a subsidised transport scheme, to be operated by local adult volunteers.
- 7.10 Partnerships were also used to secure additional funding. In England 58% of organisations surveyed said they received additional resources through their links with other organisations, with 42% saying they were totally reliant on MV funding. In Scotland none of the organisations surveyed relied totally on MV money, with 76% of projects identifying a parent organisation as a source of additional support.

- 7.11 A key source of additional support in all countries was the local volunteer development agency, such as Volunteer Bureau. In many cases this support was forthcoming because the project was housed within the local development agency, for example in Wales Local Co-ordinating Partners are all volunteer bureaux or in one case the local CSV. Support ranged from accommodation, supervision, volunteer recruitment and management, administrative back-up, financial services, training provision and use of resources such as minibuses.
- 7.12 Other key sources of support included local and health authorities; schools, colleges or universities; youth services; local businesses; and other voluntary agencies. Corporate support included a cash donation from a high street bank, business cards from a printers and a camera from Kodak (as a prize in a poster design competition). Other minority sources of support included the national lottery; charitable trusts; and one grant from Europe.

Contact with other MV projects

- 7.13 Most projects had developed links with other MV projects in their area. Results from the first wave telephone survey found that 94% of projects in Northern Ireland, 92% of projects in England, 71% of projects in Wales and 71% of projects in Scotland were in regular contact with other MV projects.
- 7.14 Projects exchanged practice and shared experiences (good and bad) and provided each other with informal support. Several of the newer projects had visited existing projects as part of their induction process and were particularly struck by the value of the experience.

'Discuss publicity and advertising, we pool ideas and resources – for example, we are funding an MV T-shirt together to make it cheaper.' (Project staff, England)

'Helpful when we first got delivery partner status – share experiences etc.' (Project staff, Northern Ireland)

'As co-ordinating partner we have a regional network, wrote to all Delivery Partners but it was slow to start – it is helpful as it means that people are getting information and support and it has a capacity building function.' (Project staff, Wales)

'Very closely in touch with other Volunteer Bureaux matchmaker projects that have got MVs both formally and informally – sharing ideas, publicity, contacts and problems- invaluable.' (Project staff, Scotland)

- 7.15 For some projects an important factor in liaising with other MV projects was eliminating unnecessary competition between projects operating in the same area. For these groups regular contact with other MV projects was seen as essential, as 'we are chasing the same people'. One project had developed a database with two other projects to avoid 'knocking on the same doors'; while another project described their role 'as collaborating with others rather than competing'. To eliminate the danger of 'turf-wars' between projects it was seen as important that projects be made aware at an early stage of any new MV projects coming onto their patch. More than one organisation complained to us that the MV Unit had not informed existing projects of new arrivals.
- 7.16 The key barrier to working with other MV groups was seen as the lack of resources. As one group in Scotland said: 'We tried to establish a MV network but because of funding it

hasn't happened'. The size of project had a bearing, with smaller projects on the whole finding it more difficult to form alliances than larger ones. In Wales one youth led project summed up the problem faced by smaller projects thus: 'don't know of anyone else in the region doing MV; too busy getting the job done'.

Relations between MV projects and MV management

7.17 Overall reports on the relationship between MV projects and management were positive with effective partnerships having been developed, but views varied between countries. Responses were most positive in Northern Ireland, where respondents were united in their praise for the role of the Agency in managing the programme. In Wales responses were positive, although 19% of projects interviewed in round one had experienced some difficulties in their relationship with WCVA mainly in relation to a lack of staff time. In Scotland nearly half the projects reported having some difficulties with VDS's MV Unit, mainly due to limited resources particularly in terms of the Development Officer's time. In England 47% of projects interviewed in round one expressed some criticism with the MVU's performance. Key complaints included the slowness of response to enquiries, excessive bureaucracy and paper work, tight deadlines, high staff turnover, lack of experience among staff in the Unit of the voluntary sector and volunteering, and the contract managers having dual (possibly contradictory) roles which placed tensions on the relationship.

7.18 Latter phases of the research have suggested that criticism of the MV Unit's performance may have declined, with for example, the change from regional advisor to contract manager making the lines of demarcation clearer. However, the feeling remains among some organisations that some staff within the Unit have little understanding of, or feel for, volunteering.

'They are excellent as they are always there when you need them but they are not imposing.'
(Project staff, Northern Ireland)

'It is difficult – only one administrator for a whole load of project – it is difficult to get through to someone.' (Project staff, Scotland)

'The DfES don't understand the voluntary sector and are very controlling.' (Project staff, England)

'Clear political message coming through about the link between volunteering and employability. No scope for active citizens and governance models. Too prescriptive.' (Project staff, England)

7.19 These variations in satisfaction ratings between countries may be explained at least in part by the different organisational and delivery structures in place. In Northern Ireland the close association between the Agency as the body charged with managing MV and the Delivery Partners has ensured that the lines of accountability and support are clear. The Delivery Partner Network meetings within Northern Ireland were reported upon positively and respondents also commented that the scale of the programme and the size of the country facilitated links. Within Scotland, the lines of accountability between VDS, the Consortium and the Scottish Executive created scope for confusion and failure of communication. Further, the relatively low ratio of MV management staff to projects meant that less time could be devoted to each project. Within England there was a greater distance between projects and the MVU. This was partly a consequence of the size of the country and the programme, and partly due to the lack of a voluntary sector intermediary between the government and projects.

To streamline the management of MV in Wales, the administrative structures of the programme were reduced from a separate management committee and grants panel, to a single advisory group. At the same time, the partner organisations challenged the Welsh Assembly's continued involvement in the day-to-day management of the programme. One respondent reported: 'The Welsh Assembly was originally on the management group with the other three organisations but then we sat down and said 'are we really running it?'... now the director of WCVA signs everything off on behalf of the Consortium'. The Advisory Group continue to report to the Assembly but have achieved considerable autonomy, ensuring that administrative arrangements are less cumbersome and decisions are processed efficiently.

In England, since the establishment of Connexions in 2001, the MVU has come under its direction within DfES. Subsequently, Delivery Partners have been encouraged to link into their local Connexions partnerships, which pull together all local agencies and people working with young people. A pilot scheme is being run in Lincolnshire and Rutland to deliver MV through the partnership. This move suggests a step towards devolution and greater partnership working in England.

MV as a UK-wide partnership

7.20 At a UK-wide level, the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice across countries was found to be fairly limited. Respondents who had been involved in the UK national delivery organisations steering group and evaluation steering group spoke positively about the opportunity to transfer knowledge and best practice between members. However, beyond the few individuals directly involved in such forums the level of knowledge between countries was restricted. Indeed, when questioned about the relationship with the other home countries, one respondent stated: 'There is no real relationship, as we have done it so differently'. In particular the different levels of funding between countries was found to have caused tensions.

7.21 Respondents accepted that developing a unique country identity to the programme was important in ensuring MV is 'designed and delivered to meet local needs'. However, some felt that there should be more joint consultation, especially when it came to introducing major policy changes to the programme: 'It is a gentlemanly agreement. But, England comes up with new ideas and thinks of pushing them through and suddenly thinks of consulting the other home countries', complained one respondent.

Scotland is currently undertaking its own review of the MV programme with discussions being held on wide-ranging changes to the programme. As one respondent commented: 'Scotland is increasingly going its own way, for example, when they are reviewing now in Scotland they are not involving England in that'.

7.22 The extent to which MV was perceived to have become embedded within wider policy agendas was variable. MV was generally seen to be integral to two wider initiatives. Firstly active citizenship. 'Young people volunteering means they are seeing and thinking beyond themselves which is active citizenship. The question is how to understand all the connections', was how one respondent put it. But MV was also seen to fit into the community development agenda. According to one respondent, 'It is about changing the mindset and trying to recreate communities... it is part of a much wider initiative that changes our outlook on how we integrate into the community and links to draw us together'. Additionally, in Wales and England in particular, efforts had been made to enhance the link between MV and citizenship education in schools. However, it was felt

that these agendas did not explicitly make the link with MV and that more could be done to enhance the status of MV with government.

Overall Assessment

7.23 The evaluation suggests that the programme has been largely successful in building partnerships, both between participating agencies and the wider voluntary sector and between MV projects themselves, although there appears to be scope for greater sharing of good practice between projects. Far less has been achieved in building partnerships with the statutory and private sectors. Some statutory bodies such as schools and hospital trusts have been involved but in general the statutory sector has proved reluctant to embrace MV. So too the private sector which, despite a few examples of small-scale financial support for projects, has not engaged significantly with the programme. The evaluation suggests that despite the generally good working relations between the projects and the management agencies in the four home countries more needs to be done (especially in England and Scotland) to build trust and support for the programme within the participating projects and the wider volunteering movement.

Recommendations

- To explore ways of facilitating a greater sharing of good practice between different MV projects.
- To explore ways of increasing the involvement of the statutory sector in the programme, both as MV delivery agents and partners to MV projects.
- To explore ways of raising awareness of, and building commitment to, MV among private companies.
- To develop closer links between the projects and the national management agency England to help build trust and support for the programme within participating projects and the wider volunteering movement.
- To secure additional investment for the management of MV, particularly in Scotland and Wales, to facilitate closer links between projects and management agencies and enable greater support.
- To explore ways of enhancing systems for consultation, decision making, and for sharing practice between countries to ensure the programme continues to offer UK-wide recognised certificates (one of its selling points).

8 Volunteer benefits

Key UK Findings

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.
- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.
- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people. The audits showed that 84% of MVs agreed that their confidence had increased, 78% were more willing to try new things, and 80% were more aware of the needs of others.

- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment. 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.
- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with 68% of respondents agreeing that they had become more committed to volunteering owing to their involvement in MV.
- One of the great successes of the MV programme has been the benefit accruing to the volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to the young people's lives.

Introduction

8.1 Although not explicitly one of the nine principles, within the overarching principle of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved. The evaluation considered the impact of MV on the young volunteers in terms of their personal development, human capacity building, employability and development of citizenship.

The benefits to volunteers

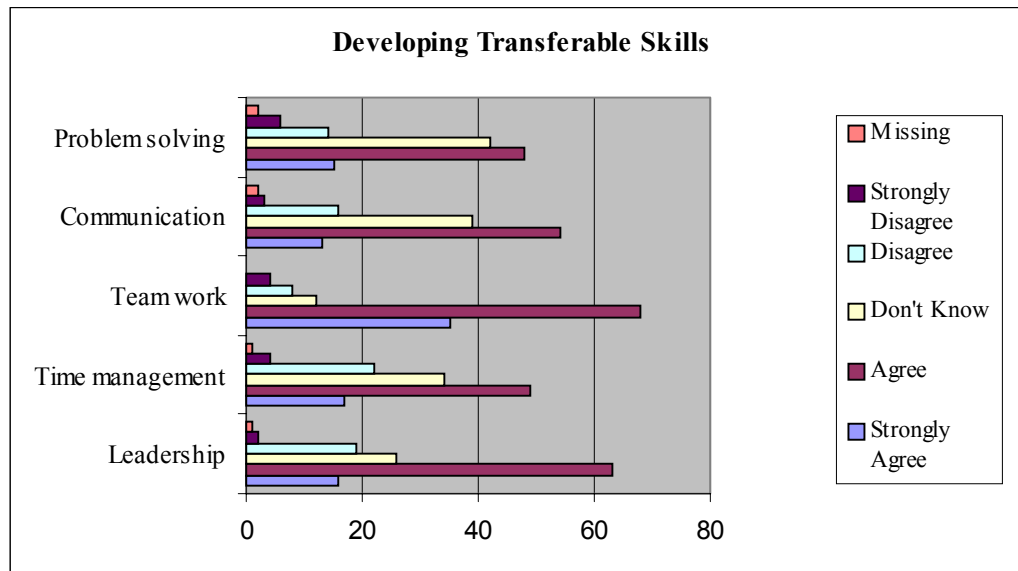
8.2 During all stages of the evaluation MVs, staff members and community representatives alike spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers, highlighting the quality of the experience gained through the programme. The benefits to volunteers were wide ranging and included the accumulation of skills, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, and enhanced employability.

8.3 The impacts on volunteers were clearly relative to their starting point and to their life experiences. For some volunteers there was a huge reported quantifiable personal gain, for example through developing certain skills or finding out which career path they wished to follow in the future. For others, the effect was felt to be most significant in terms of them proving their self-worth or increasing their self-confidence. For those who had experienced social exclusion it was suggested that even the slightest gain in self-esteem or confidence could have a significant impact.

8.4 In terms of personal development participation in MV proved a huge boost for many young people. Results from the impact audits show that 84% of MVs agreed that through being a MV their confidence had increased. Similarly, 78% said that since becoming an MV they were more willing to try new things, 78% said that they were happier meeting and mixing with others, and 80% felt that they were more aware of the needs of others. Indeed, one respondent commented: 'At school personal development education shouldn't be delivered through teachers. This [MV project] is a good model'.

8.5 Beyond learning about themselves and others MVs also gained an array of skills through their volunteering. These ranged from the more hard-edged, vocational skills, such as computing or environmental conservation, to the softer, more generic skills such as public speaking and teamwork. It is apparent that MV has been instrumental in a considerable increase in human capital among those young people who have been involved.

Figure 6



The impact audits showed a strong agreement from the MVs that their participation in MV had led to a development of transferable skills. 62% agreed that they were more likely to take charge of a situation; 52% that that they were better at organising their time; 81% that they were better at working with others; 53% that they were better at getting their point across; and 50% that they were better at problem solving.

8.6 Linked to the development of new skills (or the enhancement of existing ones) respondents spoke of the contribution MV could make to an individual's search for paid work. As one respondent noted: 'MV gives first hand practical experience of potential careers'. 60% agreed or strongly agreed that MV had helped to develop future career plans and 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employment.

'It's opened a couple of doors for me - I've promoted myself through the radio [MV project].' (MV, England)

'After volunteering on my placement at [X organisation] I gained suitable experience to access the area of work I wanted to pursue as an Occupational Therapist Assistant.' (MV, England)

'One of our MVs is now a special needs nurse. Through her experience in [a respite care project] she decided she wanted to – she said she didn't realise the patience she had.' (Project staff, Northern Ireland)

'There's a good rate of MV leading to employment. MVs can base their application and interview on real experience.' (Project staff, England)

8.7 In addition to help with employment MV was also seen as a route to further education, both directly through those MV projects which had linked into national accreditation

programmes such as N/SVQs, but also indirectly through the increase in confidence, knowledge and interest generated through volunteering as an MV which had enabled them to move into further education.

- 8.8 Among MVs there was also a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities. 61% of MVs responding to the impact audits said that through MV they got to join in lots of social activities. 41% agreed that through MV they had made friends with people mainly different to themselves, while 50% agreed that they had made friends with people mainly similar to themselves. Beyond their immediate friendships, young people also felt more integrated locally, with 57% agreeing that since volunteering they had felt more included in the community, and 39% agreeing that they had become more trusting of people. When combined, these indicators suggest that young people's participation has contributed towards the development of social capital within their local communities.
- 8.9 For some young people the value of MV was more personal. It was enjoyable and fun and made them feel better about themselves. Volunteering through MV had engendered a sense of satisfaction within 93% of respondents. 76% of respondents felt that they had made a difference through being involved as MVs, and 95% agreed that being an MV had been enjoyable. As one MV said: 'I love doing it and you keep learning new things all the time. You see if you can achieve something and when it's done you feel good.'
- 8.10 The evaluation offers evidence that MV is also contributing to the development of citizenship among young people. 68% of respondents agreed that since becoming MVs they have become more committed to volunteering, and a majority indicated that they were likely to continue volunteering after their 200 hours (indeed many were already doing so). Further, 48% of respondents stated that they had inspired other people to volunteer due to their experience as MVs.

'I've always said that it is not the money but the physical reward of work, and since with MV this all makes it very true and I have told this to many a person.' (MV, England)

'Made me feel positive about things I am doing, recognised - a foundation for doing other things, and becoming involved in the community.' (MV, Wales)

'I continued volunteering after 200 hours but once I gained employment and due to other commitments I have ceased volunteering. However, it is definitely something that I would consider in the future.' (MV, England)

- 8.11 There was a general feeling that MV was important in empowering young people, enabling them to take control of their lives and enhance the sense of their own capabilities. This was especially true when projects were involving service users or when MVs had been involved in youth-led initiatives where they were given responsibility for shaping the programme.

Overall Assessment

- 8.12 One of the great successes of MV has been the benefit accruing to the young volunteers themselves. Throughout the research MVs spoke passionately about the value of the experience and the difference it had made to their lives. For some MVs participation in the programme had offered a passport to higher education or to paid employment. For others

the benefit was about less tangible (but equally valuable) notions of personal development, confidence building and empowerment.

Recommendations

- To look for ways of highlighting the significant contribution MV is making to the personal development and employability of young people through such mechanisms as press releases, ministerial speeches and advertising literature.
- To work with employers to raise awareness of the value of MV in enhancing the skills and employability of young people.
- To develop additional mechanisms to enable young people to reflect on the personal benefits accruing from involvement in MV.

9 Community Benefit

Key UK Findings

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of and be of benefit to the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra financial and human resources; increased service capacity; different approaches to involving volunteers (for example, recording of hours and safety checks); the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: enhanced access to services, peer support, social contact and improved quality of life.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work).
- On the whole projects continue to find the concept of community benefit difficult to grapple with, and measurement was a difficult task. In Northern Ireland a number of projects have implemented the MV Self-evaluation framework. Projects in other home countries are predominantly using informal measurement methods.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. However, the continuing difficulties for projects to measure community impact suggest the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Introduction

- 9.1 One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of, and be of benefit to, the community. While ‘community’ can be defined by the project according to the activities they are undertaking, each project must evaluate the impact that they are having. The evaluation considered the issue of community benefit through assessing its impact on the development of economic capital, project outputs, human capacity and resources and social capital for a range of stakeholders – organisations, service users and the wider community. The successes and challenges of measuring community benefit were also evaluated.

Benefits to the delivery and placement organisations

9.2 Organisations hosting MV projects and those providing external placement opportunities for MVs experienced a wide range of impacts. However, it was noted by projects in Wales, that the impacts on organisations were more limited for them, given the limited nature of the funding which they received.

'We have benefited tremendously. A) because we have had a reliable workforce, people who do MV do it because they want to and we benefit from their enthusiasm. B) it is an opportunity for other volunteers to see young people and that they have got a real heart, they see that they know what real work is. It is great to see these youngsters being involved, they are really getting along and the older ones give them encouragement as well. It is a good positive experience. And (C) personally, it gives an opportunity to see how youngsters are combining studying, volunteering and living on a meagre student grant.' (Project staff, Scotland)

9.3 Using notional figures for both number of hours volunteered and total investment, cost-benefit analysis across a number of MV projects shows a reasonable level of economic return. The notional economic value of volunteering within MV varies between and within countries. Full details of the following results can be found in appendix five and six. The following discussions should be read in line with the comments made in the appendices on the assumptions behind the notional values and the limitations of such calculations.

9.4 At a national level, results from the four home countries show a total investment in the programme of £40,649,000 for 1998-2002, or for each of the 59832 MVs registered in the UK in the same time period an average of £679 each. Based on a notional calculation of hours volunteered by MVs to date and using the national average hourly wage rate of £10.66 per hour, the notional economic value of MV is £65,250,127. Based on these assumptions, we see a total return balance (investment – value) of £24,601,127 or £411 per volunteer. The ratio of investment to value across the UK is 1:1.6; in other words, for every one pound that has been invested in MV at a national level an average of one pound and sixty pence is returned. If all MVs who have started the programme completed their 200 hours, the ratio would increase to 1:3.1 (Appendix five expands upon these findings, particularly the differences between countries).

9.5 At the individual project level, results from 13 selected projects in England produce a notional economic value (calculated by estimating hours volunteered multiplied by average wage rate) of £7,810,582 based on the £10.66 wage rate. Total investment (funding direct from MV Unit) within the 13 projects stands at £2,698,495, giving an average investment cost of £595 per volunteer. Adopting the £10.66 wage equivalent the total return balance (investment minus value) within the 13 projects totals at £5,638,158, giving an average return balance of £1,174 per volunteer. The ratio of investment to value averages at 1:3 – i.e. for every one pound invested in MVs within these 13 projects, an average return of value of three pounds is generated. Different averages and different ratios are generated if we use different wage equivalents (see appendix six).

9.6 However, the above figures do not show the actual investment made in MVs – for example, additional funding received by projects to support their MV programmes are not considered. Within England, the relatively large contracts received means that MV projects are often self-sustaining and, while the financial investment made by external placement organisations varied greatly, it tended to be relatively low. The impact audits indicated that (if the one outlier is removed) on average £1,578 per annum (£2.45 per MV hour) was being invested by each external placement (£9,021p.a and £50.57p.h if the outlier is

included). By comparison the small amounts of funding available in Scotland, Northern Ireland and especially in Wales meant that both parent organisations and the external placement organisations often had to invest considerable finances into running an MV programme. The impact audits showed the average investment made by external placement organisations in Scotland and Northern Ireland to be £7,116 per annum (£5 per MV hour) and £5,175 (£4 per MV hour) respectively.

In Wales the extremely small amounts of money received for MV meant that each organisation inevitable contributed a large proportion of their own finances to the programme. As such the economic returns for each organisation is diminished (but the added value to the MV programme is obviously greater). Each organisation must put in a considerable amount of work, which was both time consuming and demanding, for small financial benefit (in regard to money received from MV). As one respondent said: 'its easy money but we have to work extremely hard for it'.

Matchmaker projects in Scotland often only cover volunteer expenses incurred by the MVs visiting them, not every day expenses. The external organisations themselves must cover volunteer expenses and similarly they provide a majority of the volunteer support, placing a considerable financial burden on some organisations. As one external placement provider commented: 'We see the benefit of it, but we are having to fund raise in order to be able to participate in this, so it is far from MV resourcing us'. One matchmaker co-ordinator stressed that the lack of funding to support those organisations that offer placements to MVs in Scotland 'made it hard to sell MV to organisations'. Even when funding was available to cover volunteer expenses, the 'need to meet expenses is nothing compared to staff time'.

In England, external placement providers stressed the value of MV in providing resources for them to cover volunteer expenses and to provide volunteer training. As one respondent said: 'I don't operate best practice in terms of expenses as we have no funds ... [the MV project] are wonderful to bring in young people and to have expenses.'

9.7 Beyond the differences between countries it is also evident that there are differences between different types of organisations and delivery models within countries. The economic balance/ratio is affected by the nature of organisation, its structure and its ethos. For example, organisations that work intensively with socially excluded young people are likely to incur higher costs as the demands on staff time for volunteer support will be much greater. Further, previous research into the economic value of volunteering has suggested that small, volunteer based organisations are likely to receive lower return ratios, as the costs of the organisation are not separated out from the costs of involving volunteers. Finally, the value of volunteers is considered here purely in economic terms, it says nothing of the value brought to the organisation in terms of human capital, publicity, prestige or other such benefits.

9.8 Beyond generating notional economic returns for those organisations involved, the MVs also provided additional human capacity. The impact audits showed that 81% of respondents agreed that MV had led to an increase in their organisation's volunteer numbers. The external placement organisations had involved on average 21 MVs over the past year, with one placement having involved 130. For the external placement organisations on average MVs represented 38% of all the volunteers that they had involved in the past 12 months (one organisation indicated that they had only involved MVs).

9.9 Drawing on this additional human capacity, voluntary and community organisations were able to provide a range of services. In some instances MV had led directly to the creation of new services. Within the impact audits, 73% of organisations agreed that MV had

enabled them to extend the range of activities or services they offer. In other cases MV had been instrumental in enabling organisations to maintain and improve existing services. For example, a local community radio station in England reported that they could not have kept going without MVs. In the audits, 77% of organisations reported that through MV they had been able to improve existing services, with just two organisations disagreeing. Similarly, 58% agreed that MV had enabled them to provide for more service users.

In a summer play scheme in Northern Ireland the MVs were helping to make it possible to provide places for 250 children a day.

In a food distribution project in Scotland MVs, along with other volunteers, were helping to increase the organisation's targets from distributing two tons of food per week to five tons.

A local wildlife trust in England reported a three-fold increase in the amount of hours they could dedicate to environmental work due to MV: 'As a voluntary group the work done so far without the MVs would be practically non-existent. Due to numbers. The average number of MVs is 12, other volunteers is 4. So the amount of work achieved in a four hour session/month is quite evident – i.e. there is 16 hours work non-MV, 48hours with MV, the amount of work done in this MV 48hours makes the whole project worthwhile'

9.10 For some organisations MV also brought more diverse volunteers. Indeed, 77% of the respondents to the impact audits agreed that through MV they now draw their volunteers from a more diverse group. For example, one organisation in Wales said: 'our volunteers are more qualified ... we've had a much better range of volunteers'.

9.11 For some projects MV had been instrumental in enabling the inclusion of their service users within volunteering activities, as 46% of organisations responding to the impact audits agreed. The additional resources for staff time available through MV was the key, but available support, the encouragement of youth ownership, the extra motivation for volunteers generated by the awards and recognition, and being part of a bigger organisation were all identified as encouraging more service users to participate.

One project in Scotland, which provided support for abused young people, discussed how MV had been instrumental in developing service user involvement and youth ownership: 'MV made it more possible for that to happen – we got a paid worker. There was previously the ethos there, but there was no one actually there to support them. Lots of people are very socially excluded and it would be hard to get them involved, having a paid worker was what allowed us to do that.' The project stressed that having the option to become volunteers had made an important impact on service users, who were now able to visit the centre 'not to get something but to give something back – the difference is incredible'.

9.12 All organisations agreed that in general the MVs have been enthusiastic volunteers, with 54% agreeing strongly with this notion. Some projects commented that MVs tended to be more motivated as they were working towards their hours. As one external placement organisation said, MV has 'made all the difference - volunteers committed to a whole year, we know they're going to come, most excellent'.

9.13 There was evidence that some organisations had been developing their policies and practice on volunteer involvement to bring them into line with MV. For example, the impact audits showed that 46% of organisations agreed that MV had changed the way in which they manage volunteers. Examples included:

- Opening up previously restrictive practices – for example, lowering the age range for their volunteers.

- Involving volunteers in management structures – 50% of projects said that they had increased volunteer involvement in organisational decision making.
- Developing volunteer management strategies – for example, one organisation said their MVs were the first to have appointed supervisors but now all volunteers have them.
- Undertaking formal health and safety checks – for example, one organisation had developed a health and safety and risk assessment policy based on a model given to them by the MV co-ordinator.
- Changing staff attitudes towards young people and their needs as volunteers.

‘It has really changed us...when MV came along our whole structure changed.’ (Project staff, Scotland)

‘It keeps you focused and the volunteers focused about why they are here and what they are doing.... For some volunteers they can loose their train of thought about why they became volunteers – this is reflexive and makes them really think about what they get out of it and what others get out of it.’ (External placement, Scotland)

9.14 Some external placement organisations had benefited from the support provided by the co-ordinator in their associated delivery organisations. In England, in particular, some MV co-ordinators were undertaking parts of the recruitment, induction, training and support for those volunteers placed in external organisations, enabling the organisations to involve volunteers whereas previously they had not been able to due to resource constraints.

9.15 MV also impacted on the profile of organisations. In the impact audits, 65% of organisations agreed that through MV their organisational profile had increased. As one respondent said: ‘It has helped to raise the profile of [this organisation] – it has made people realise that we are more than just being about traditional volunteering’.

Benefits to the service users

9.16 Beneficiaries, MVs, co-ordinators, and community representatives alike spoke of the positive impact MV had had on service users.

9.17 Services users were held to have benefited from an increase in access to services arising out of MV. Examples included: a youth café, a food service for homeless people, holidays and day-care for disabled children, peer-education on drug and alcohol misuse, victim support, support and counselling phone lines, advice on a whole range of issues, and hospital radio stations. In addition, some projects noted that service users particularly benefited from having young volunteers, as ‘young people relate better to other young people’.

‘The people from the youth group – I can help them with the computers.’ (MV, Northern Ireland)

‘I lead a group of children (aged 7-13) in my local community therefore they have benefited from my volunteering.’ (MV, Northern Ireland)

‘Older people have benefited. I am now organising the shopping trips, without that they would have nothing in the fridge. With older people living on their own, who else is going to come and buy food for them? We are creating a fantastic service for older people.’ (MV, England)

9.18 For some respondents the key value of MV was that it had helped to enhance the quality of life of those individuals in receipt of services provided by MVs. For example, one young

mother who had been befriended by an MV reflected on what the visits from her MV meant to her: 'It's made a difference because I have had someone to talk to and I can trust more than anything. We talked a lot'. In another case, the co-ordinator of a residential project for homeless young people spoke of the increased self confidence engendered in residents through MV: 'It will sustain people for years some of the things MV might have purchased for them'.

9.19 The social interaction that had been facilitated between volunteers and service users was identified by some respondents as an important impact. In one project respondents noted how MVs who had acted as befrienders had developed lasting friendships with their befriendees. Again, this was particularly true when MVs had been providing peer-support for other young people. As one respondent said: 'A lot of people prefer young people to see them. I would prefer someone my own age coming to see me'.

9.20 Beyond the services users themselves, some respondents commented upon the benefits to service users' friends and family. For example, some projects provided respite care for carers and family. There were also benefits to the parents of the MVs, particularly when they themselves had previously been services users. According to one respondent 'the families are so proud so that is an ongoing effect of MV'.

Benefits to the wider community

9.21 A number of projects reported having been successful in getting the community to identify projects that they felt needed to be implemented. Results from the impact audits report that 89% of projects and placements agreed that MV projects reflected the needs of the local community.

After spending two years of developing local challenge events and devoting considerable efforts towards encouraging local communities to come forward, one project reported successfully generating a backlog of initiatives requested by communities by 2000.

Another project reported that a local community association had approached the organisation with a proposal for MVs to develop a sensory themed seating area as part of a wider European funded redevelopment of their local park. Such an initiative was reported to have multiple impacts as the community would benefit, there would be environmental enhancement, and it would enable members of the local community to work alongside young people.

9.22 MV can also be seen to have contributed to an improvement in the physical environment as a wide range of environmental initiatives had been undertaken by MVs, including: developing sensory gardens, dry stone walling, hedge laying, tree planting, work with local Wildlife Trusts, murals at bus stations or in schools, footpath creation schemes, beach cleans, beach survey work, litter picks and redeveloping local car parks project.

9.23 There is much discussion in the social science literature at the present time about the role that volunteering can play in building trust, confidence and reciprocity between individuals within communities; together such indicators are known as 'social capital'. Respondents pointed to the value of volunteering in helping (albeit in a very informal and localised way) to build links between different sections of the community, particularly by breaking down the stereotypes towards young people. For example, one respondent said that 'when young people go into a community people see young people in a different light, they see them as someone with a brain and see them doing something in the community'. Other respondents discussed how MV had improved intergenerational relations: 'The older generation are not as trusting of young people as they could have been. We can prove that not all young

people are breaking into cars and robbing’, said one respondent. However, many respondents pointed out that challenging such assumptions was a slow process and that the impact of MV to-date was inevitably quite limited.

For one project in Scotland, the involvement of volunteers with learning difficulties as MV had challenged the stereotypes of disabled young people. As one respondent said: ‘For our youngsters they were seen as receivers and not givers. This has only just nibbled at the edge of this but it has just a little bit – it has helped to see that these people could contribute, so that was the beginning of a breakthrough’.

Similarly, another project in Scotland working with homeless people stressed the benefits of involving service users as MV in terms of breaking down stereotypes and attitudinal barriers within society: ‘Our clients were providing a service rather than receiving funds and they were making decisions about how a service is provided. And the local community is coming out all the time and seeing the work that those volunteers are doing.’

In Northern Ireland MV had facilitated closer interactions between different faiths, reportedly assisting the peace process. For example, a community centre established through MV was a neutral meeting place for people and was seen as creating ‘pockets of trust in the community’; another MV group organised a ‘Right to Hope’ conference and held meetings to make cross community and cross border links for young people. As one respondent said: ‘Five years ago the thought of being in the same room as a person [of the other faith community]! It’s unbelievable. Now they go to residential together, they’re just friends, they’re just people’.

9.24 There is also evidence that MV has engendered elements of citizenship among young people. For many respondents MV was not seen as an end in itself, rather as a vehicle through which young people could be encouraged to get involved in the community in other ways. ‘If folks are volunteering as MVs I believe that they will go on to volunteer for the rest of their lives – it becomes part of their life style’, commented one respondent.

9.25 However, some respondents were keen to point out that MV was not revolutionary. Although MV had had an impact on the community it tended to be at a very local, small-scale level; ‘more in terms of lots of small communities existing within one big one’ as one respondent noted. ‘Locally it is certainly very strong, but harder to pin down on a bigger area’, said another.

9.26 Similarly, some respondents stressed that a significant proportion of the benefits identified derived from volunteering by young people per se, or from the work of the organisation, rather than from MV specifically. Many MVs would have volunteered anyway, they felt, and many organisations were already delivering services. This was especially so for respondents in Scotland and Wales.

Issues in measuring community impact

9.27 Measuring community benefit was seen to be a difficult task. In the first round of evaluation only a small number of groups had developed anything approaching a systematic process for measuring community benefit; 47% of projects in Scotland undertook measurement, 29% in Wales, 22% in Northern Ireland, and 5% in England. Subsequent stages of evaluation showed that measurement continues to be a problem, although subsequently in Northern Ireland all projects were given a tool to help evaluate community impact.

9.28 Most measurement systems which had been developed were informal. For example, some projects had been gathering feedback from volunteers, beneficiaries, community members,

placement providers and other organisations. Many projects had also been collecting together press cuttings and keeping photo diaries of volunteer activities.

- 9.29 A minority of projects had developed more formal methods. For example, a few projects held exit reviews with placements, and others ran residentials with their volunteers during which they worked through evaluation exercises. One group in Wales, and a couple in England, had attempted to calculate the economic value of their MVs. A group in Scotland had undertaken an ABCD (Achieving Better Community Development) evaluation and another project had worked together with the local authority to pilot a SCAT (Social Competence Attainment Test) which looks at personal and community benefits.

To help projects with the task of evaluating their performance a Self-Evaluation Framework was developed for use across the UK. However, only in Northern Ireland were all projects encouraged to use the framework. The Agency has been supporting project co-ordinators in applying the evaluation, providing training and more general assistance, although the evaluation highlighted a continued apprehension and bafflement among project co-ordinators.

- 9.30 In general, projects were daunted by the task of undertaking formal measurement and lacked the time and resources to develop and implement such measures. The benefits to the community as a whole were found hardest to pin down and the quantifiable outputs were found to be far easier to assess than more qualitative outcomes. The problem of assessing the long term benefits of a short term programme were also highlighted.

- 9.31 Some respondents stressed that they felt it was more important (and indeed easier) to measure the impact on the individual volunteer than on the wider community. As one respondent said: 'It is important that there is a wider impact but it is not the be all and end all – the benefit is to the young people who it is very important to'.

- 9.32 Many projects in England and some in Scotland reported that they felt that, when assessing individual projects, the DfES or VDS were not interested in anything other than hard statistics. As one respondent commented: 'The DfES quarterly returns do have a section for case studies, so technically they are looking at it, but I don't think that they even look at that.'

Overall Assessment

- 9.33 Over and above the benefits accruing to the volunteers themselves, the evaluation suggests that MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. Whilst difficult to pin down scientifically the total audits point to a positive impact on a wide range of beneficiaries, from service users and placement agencies, to the broader community. The evaluation, however, also highlights the difficulties faced by projects in trying to measure community impact and suggests the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Recommendations

- To highlight the significant contribution MV is making to the community through press-releases, ministerial speeches and the like.
- To build on the work begun by The Institute for Volunteering Research with their Impact Audits to develop user-friendly self-evaluation tools for projects for measuring community impact.
- To run regional workshops to assist projects in measuring community benefit.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

A Successful Start

- 10.1 The evaluation suggests that MV can be judged a success on a number of counts. Over 50,000 young people have taken part in the programme, over 10,000 Awards have been issued and tens of thousands of new volunteering opportunities have been identified, spanning a wide range of areas of interest, from the environment and human rights to peer mediation and anti-bullying. It is not only in numerical terms that the programme can claim success. Against each of the key principles of MV successes can be identified.
- 10.2 On quality the majority of projects had set up systems to ensure that volunteers receive a good volunteering experience and the evaluation found little evidence of any problems with placement agencies.
- 10.3 On youth involvement many projects had taken steps to involve young people in the operation of the projects and most young people felt that they had been given adequate opportunities to get involved.
- 10.4 On sustained personal involvement many volunteers and projects expressed support for the 200 hours requirement and MVs were particularly enthusiastic about the Certificates and Awards.
- 10.5 On diversity over half of all MVs had never volunteered before and a good mix had been achieved in terms of ethnicity.
- 10.6 On partnerships projects had integrated themselves well into the broader volunteering landscape and most were found to be in regular contact with other MV projects.
- 10.7 On benefits MVs were felt to be benefiting in terms of personal development and the acquisition of new skills; organisations were felt to be benefiting from the additional volunteering resource which had been forthcoming; and the broader community was seen to be reaping the benefits of improved services and a more involved and committed group of young people.

Areas for Improvement

- 10.8 Despite these successes the evaluation has identified a number of areas for improvement.
- 10.9 Notwithstanding the success of MV in involving many first time volunteers and achieving a good mix in terms of ethnicity (especially in England), the programme has some way to go before it can claim to be a truly inclusive programme. In particular more effort is needed to attract young men into the programme and those in paid work.
- 10.10 More attention is also required to make youth ownership a reality. Many organisations have interpreted youth ownership to mean offering young people a place on the management committee and there has been little imagination shown in developing more innovative methods of involvement.
- 10.11 Part of the explanation for the failure of some organisations to move ahead on the diversity and youth ownership agendas may be a lack of resources. It may also be due to a tension between the different aims of the programme. MV is both about numbers and about diversity and youth ownership. And yet it appears that insufficient mechanisms have been

put in place to resolve the inevitable tensions which have arisen in trying to deliver on these very different outcomes.

10.12 There is a need for the programme to be more flexible to deal with the fact that 200 hours may be outside the range of some young people, particularly within a 12 month time limit.

10.13 There is also a need for MV to do more to attract the interest of statutory agencies, such as the benefits agency and the NHS. The failure of statutory bodies to engage with the programme may be partly a consequence of MV's low national profile but also the result of the competing demands upon these agencies of other (higher profile) government programmes such as the New Deal.

10.14 There is also a need for the programme to do more to raise awareness among employers. The failure of employers to embrace MV is a significant barrier if it is to fully deliver on its 'MV on your CV' promise to young people.

10.15 Despite the fact that many projects were in regular contact with other MV projects it is clear that more could be done to encourage joint working and sharing of good practice. This would seem to be particularly valuable in helping to broaden the range of volunteering opportunities on offer in a locality and in dealing with the problem of what to do with volunteers who have achieved their 200 hours.

10.16 The programme has struggled in its aim of encouraging all projects to set up evaluation systems to measure community benefit, with the exception perhaps of Northern Ireland. Many projects found the concept of measuring community benefit difficult to get to grips with and a distraction from the main focus of their work.

10.17 In Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland most projects have developed relatively strong relationships with the lead body responsible for administering MV and most were satisfied with the support provided by the agency's staff. Projects in England were markedly less satisfied with the performance of the MVU and more attention needs to be given to developing trust and support for the programme in England given the lack of a devolved voluntary sector delivery mechanism.

Recommendations

- To look for ways of extending the youth-led element of the programme.
- To look for ways of exchanging practice between youth-led projects and more traditional placement provider projects.
- For government to recognise the potential tension between youth ownership and overall numbers and to give greater recognition to those projects which are adopting innovative approaches to the involvement of young people, even where this impacts on meeting targets.
- To give greater recognition to the reality that sustained personal commitment may mean different amounts of time for different people.
- To recognise that different activities enable young people to clock up their hours at different rates.
- To look for ways of introducing staggered awards at say 25 and 50 hours to recognise the contribution of volunteers who may not reach 100 and 200 hours.

- To look for ways of supporting volunteers who want to stay on after 200 hours, for example through encouraging projects to share best practice or holding regional workshops.
- To put more resources into a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the programme among key stakeholders, particularly employers.
- To build into the programme greater scope for reflection and self-assessment by young people, linked to a greater recognition that the programme is as much about personal development as it is about community benefit.
- To build on the existing (rather limited) success of tying MV into external accreditation systems by identifying what works and why and how to overcome barriers to further development.
- To give greater recognition to the difficulties of involving young people from harder to reach groups.
- To look for ways of making MV more attractive for young men and for those in the older age range of the 16-24 bracket.
- To work with employers at a national and regional level to encourage young people in employment to get involved in the programme.
- To review the design of the Volunteer Plan to make it more relevant and easier to complete by the young people.
- To facilitate a greater sharing of practice between MV projects in the ways in which MVs are supported and the quality of opportunities guaranteed.
- To facilitate closer working between projects in the same locality to widen the range of available opportunities on offer to volunteers.
- To explore ways of facilitating a greater sharing of good practice between different MV projects.
- To explore ways of increasing the involvement of the statutory sector in the programme, both as MV delivery agents and partners to MV projects.
- To explore ways of raising awareness of, and building commitment to, MV among private companies.
- To develop closer links between the projects and the national management agency England to help build trust and support for the programme within participating projects and the wider volunteering movement.
- To secure additional investment for the management of MV, particularly in Scotland and Wales, to facilitate closer links between projects and management agencies and enable greater support.

- To explore ways of enhancing systems for consultation, decision making, and for sharing practice between countries to ensure the programme continues to offer UK-wide recognised certificates (one of its selling points).
- To look for ways of highlighting the significant contribution MV is making to the personal development and employability of young people through such mechanisms as press releases, ministerial speeches and advertising literature.
- To work with employers to raise awareness of the value of MV in enhancing the skills and employability of young people.
- To develop additional mechanisms to enable young people to reflect on the personal benefits accruing from involvement in MV.
- To highlight the significant contribution MV is making to the community through press-releases, ministerial speeches and the like.
- To build on the work begun by The Institute for Volunteering Research with their Impact Audits to develop user-friendly self-evaluation tools for projects for measuring community impact.
- To run regional workshops to assist projects in measuring community benefit.

Appendix one – England

An individual summary country report for England

Introduction

- The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK wide government supported initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-24.
- MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality, and recognition.
- In England an additional target was set to involve 100,000 young people as MVs by 2004. Equivalent targets were not set in the other home countries.
- Beyond the nine principles, MV has different operational and delivery structures in the four home countries. In England MV runs directly from the MV Unit within the Department for Education and Skills, through contact managers to a range of relatively large projects known as Delivery Partners which generally provide both internal and external placement opportunities.

Ownership by young people

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. While a distinct young person-led programme strand has not been developed in England, all Delivery Partners are encouraged to develop individual young person-led projects within their overall programmes.
- At a regional and national level the MVU in England has established Youth Forums to encourage MVs to get involved in planning MV. Locally, however, while all projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between projects.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles, with 74% saying they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, a minority of projects in all countries reported challenges in involving young people. These included: lack of resources and time (managers and MVs) and a lack of interest on behalf of young people in serving on committees. In England, the pressure to meet targets was also identified as a barrier to youth involvement.
- The evaluation pointed to confusion within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and youth led.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle and a majority of MVs expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects has remained elusive.

Sustained Personal Commitment

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours within a year.
- In general there was support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. However, there were differing views over the desirability of the 200 hour requirement.
- Many MVs and projects welcomed the 200 hours. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment. Others, however, felt that it was a barrier to involving young people, particularly from marginalised communities with little tradition of volunteering.
- For some projects the problem was not so much the 200 hour requirement per se, but the rigid 12 month time-frame within which the volunteering had to be completed. This was identified as being particularly problematic for young people from marginalised communities, but also for those from universities where volunteering activities had to be fitted in around other commitments.
- Concern was expressed as to what happens after volunteers have completed their 200 hours. Many MVs wish to continue their volunteering and projects often want to continue supporting them but were faced with limited resources and had no mechanisms by which to recognise their extra effort.
- The programme has been generally successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people. Many projects were happy with the 200 hour commitment. However, a sizeable majority saw the requirement as inflexible and unwieldy and as working against attempts to be inclusive.

Recognition

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours of volunteering and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, enhancing one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other rewards. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people, regardless of hours.
- There was general support for the idea of introducing a 50-hour marker and for placing less emphasis on the 200-hours Award.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with just 28% in England having set up an accreditation system.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.
- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation, particularly with regards to recognition from employers.

- Overall the programme has been highly successful in meeting its aims of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Personal Profiles being well received. However, there is scope for more national publicity of the programme, particularly among employers.

Inclusivity

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- In England, 38% of MVs were male and 62% female.
- As in all home countries, MVs in England were drawn mainly from the 16-18 year old age group, with 46% of volunteers aged 16-18, 32% aged 19-21 and 23% aged 22-24.
- England has been particularly successful in ensuring the ethnic diversity of MV, with 80% of MVs being white, 5% black, 9% Asian and 6% other. This compares to the GB population profile for 16-24 year olds of 93% white, 2% black, 5% Asian and 1% other.
- 7% of MVs in England were identified as having a disability and/or health problem.
- In England 68% of MVs were in education, 3% in other forms of training, 13% were employed, 11% unemployed and 4% were engaged in other activities.
- England has been particularly successful in attracting young people who had never volunteered before, with 59% of volunteers identifying themselves as such. However, several projects made the point that young people may underestimate their previous involvement.
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering within individual projects across England employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included: minority language constraints; lack of financial resources and time for outreach work; and tension between investing in inclusivity and achieving numerical targets.
- The programme has clearly made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove barriers to participation, in particular the tension between inclusion and targets needs to be addressed.

Variety and Quality

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing opportunities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities. Single-issue projects were by definition less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation's existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the centrality of young people, youth-leadership, recognition, and the structured approach of MV.
- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work – but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health and safety checks, supervision, and one-to-one support for volunteers.

- A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors both within placements and in the main MV organisation, review meetings, feedback from placements, and peer-support. The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed throughout the evaluation.
- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support that could be offered by MV project staff and there was some concern expressed that the push for numbers could cut into quality.
- The audits highlighted the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, with just 10% of MVs reporting that they had not received as much support as they would have liked.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were met with mixed enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers.
- Overall the programme has been successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Partnerships

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects and the programme managers to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were found to be a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping volunteer opportunities. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support.
- Most projects had also developed partnerships with other MV projects in their area. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support. However, some projects felt that there could have been more emphasis on drawing out examples of best practice during the early days of the programme.
- The initial phase of the evaluation in England showed some evidence of competition between MV organisations. However, these turf wars were less evident in subsequent evaluation phases which highlighted increasing evidence of projects working effectively together to divide up the territory geographically and/or thematically (officially and unofficially) to avoid such conflicts and to maximise resources.
- Overall reports on the relationship between MV projects and MV management in England were mixed. Some groups were favourably disposed towards the MVU; others were critical. Some of this dissatisfaction may be explained by the distance between projects and the MVU that existed partly as a consequence of the size of the country and the programme and partly due to the lack of a voluntary sector intermediary between the government and projects.
- Overall, MV has been largely successful in building partnerships between participating agencies and the wider voluntary sector, but less so with the private and public sector and work still needs to be done to improve the relationship between MV projects and the MVU.

Volunteer benefits

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.

- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.
- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people. The audits showed that 84% of MVs agreed that their confidence had increased, 78% were more willing to try new things, and 80% were more aware of the needs of others.
- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment. 60% of MVs felt that MV had helped them to develop future career plans and 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.
- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with 68% of respondents agreeing that they had become more committed to volunteering owing to their involvement in MV.
- One of the greatest successes of the MV programme has been the benefit accruing to volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to young people's lives.

Community Benefit

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of, and be of benefit to, the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra financial and human resources; increased service capacity; different approaches to involving volunteers (for example, recording of hours and safety checks); the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: improved quality of life, enhanced access to services, social contact and peer support.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work).
- On the whole projects continue to find the concept of community benefit difficult to grapple with, and measurement was a difficult task. If any attempts at measurement had been made, they were predominantly using informal measurement methods.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. However, the continuing difficulties for projects to measure community impact suggest the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Appendix two - Northern Ireland

An individual summary country report for Northern Ireland

Introduction

- The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK wide government supported initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-24.
- MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality, and recognition.
- Beyond the nine principles, MV has different operational and delivery structures in the four home countries. In Northern Ireland the Volunteer Development Agency (the Agency) has responsibility for managing and implementing the programme, with guidance from an advisory group. A range of Delivery Partners have been established to deliver the programme at the local level.

Ownership by young people

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. While a distinct young person-led programme strand has not been developed in Northern Ireland, all Delivery Partners are encouraged to develop individual young person-led projects within their overall programmes.
- At a regional level, the Agency has established a small group of MVs, known as VOYCE, to facilitate young people's involvement in the review and development of MV. Locally, however, while all projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between projects.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles, with 74% saying they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process through mechanisms such as youth forums.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, some projects reported challenges in involving young people. These included: lack of resources and time (managers and MVs) and a lack of interest (and confidence) on behalf of young people in serving on committees.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle and a majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects remained elusive.

Sustained Personal Commitment

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours within one year.
- In general there was strong support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. In Northern Ireland MVs and projects regarded the 200 hour requirement positively. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment.

- Minor issues around the 200 hour commitment included: fitting it into academic term times for students and the reality that for those with special needs 200 hours represents a relatively larger commitment.
- The issue of what to do after 200 hours was of greater concern with young people keen to continue to be recognised and claim expenses but with limited resources within organisations.
- The programme has been successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people.

Recognition

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, enhancing one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other trophies. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people or that a separate Award could be presented for the completion of a specific project, regardless of hours.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with just 22% of groups in Northern Ireland having set up an accreditation system. The key reason identified for not having established accreditation was a lack of demand.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.
- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation.
- Overall the programme has been successful in meeting its aims of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Personal Profiles being well received. However, there is scope for more national publicity of the programme.

Inclusivity

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- In Northern Ireland, 34% of MVs were male and 66% female.
- As in all home countries, MVs in Northern Ireland were drawn mainly from the 16-18 year old age group, with 48% of volunteers aged 16-18, 27% aged 19-21 and 25% aged 22-24.
- Northern Ireland has been successful in ensuring the ethnic diversity of MV, with 89% of MVs being white, 1% black, 6% Asian and 4% other. This compares to the GB population profile for 16-24 year olds of 93% white, 2% black, 5% Asian and 1% other.
- 9% of MVs were identified as having a disability and/or health problem, indicating that Northern Ireland had been particularly successful in involving disabled people.

- In Northern Ireland 56% of MVs were in education, 5% in other forms of training, 11% were employed, and 28% were unemployed. Compared with figures for employment status of 11-24 year olds, MV in Northern Ireland has been disproportionately successful in involving young people in education and particularly unemployed young people, but less successful in involving young people in employment.
- 42% of MVs in Northern Ireland had no previous experience of volunteering.
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering with individual projects across Northern Ireland employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- In Northern Ireland a key issue of inclusivity was the balance of young people from the two traditions or communities. In general, the evaluation suggests that there has been considerable success in this area.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included minority language constraints and a lack of financial resources and time for outreach work.
- The programme has clearly made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove remaining barriers to participation, particularly encouraging young people who are in employment to become involved.

Variety and Quality

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing activities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities. Single-issue projects were by definition less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation's existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the diversity of placements on offer, the centrality of young people, youth-leadership, recognition, and the structured approach of MV.
- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work – but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health and safety checks, supervision, and one-to-one support for volunteers.
- A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors both within placements and in the main MV organisation, review meetings, feedback from placements, and peer-support. The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed throughout the evaluation.
- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer.
- The audits highlighted the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, with just 10% of MVs reporting that they had not received as much support as they would have liked.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were generally met with enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers, although the case study phase identified a call for the format of the Plans to be revised to make them more user friendly.

- Overall the programme has been very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Partnerships

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects and the Agency to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were found to be a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping volunteer opportunities, making them more interesting and flexible for young people. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support.
- The case study evaluation phase identified the key role of individual project co-ordinators in drawing on their personal resources to ensure the success of partnership development.
- Most projects had also developed partnerships with other MV projects in their area, particularly through the MV delivery partners network. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support.
- The reports on the relationship between MV projects and the Agency were unanimously positive. The administration of the programme by the Agency should be regarded as offering a lesson in good practice of working with a well-based knowledge of policy and practice in volunteering.
- At the UK level the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas across countries was found to be fairly limited beyond those directly involved in the national delivery organisational steering group.
- Overall, MV in Northern Ireland has been successful in building partnerships between participating agencies and the wider voluntary sector, and particularly between the projects and the programme managers.

Volunteer benefits

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.
- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.
- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people. The audits showed that 84% of MVs agreed that their confidence had increased, 78% were more willing to try new things, and 80% were more aware of the needs of others.
- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment. 60% of MVs felt that MV had helped them to develop future career plans and 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.

- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with 68% of respondents agreeing that they had become more committed to volunteering owing to their involvement in MV.
- One of the greatest successes of the MV programme has been the benefits accruing to the volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to the young people's lives.

Community Benefit

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of, and be of benefit to, the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra financial and human resources; increased service capacity; different approaches to involving volunteers (for example, recording of hours and safety checks); the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: improved quality of life, enhanced access to services, social contact and peer support.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work). MV was also reported to have aided the peace process.
- A number of projects have implemented the MV Self-evaluation framework, however there was some evidence to suggest that not all projects had successfully used the framework as yet and some projects remain apprehensive and indeed confused as to why there was a need to measure.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. While projects in Northern Ireland had the advantage of being able to use the MV self evaluation framework there appears to be some work left to be done to ensure all are implementing it.

Appendix three – Scotland

An individual summary country report for Scotland

Introduction

- The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK wide government supported initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-25 (in other home countries the upper age limit is 24).
- MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality, and recognition.
- Beyond the nine principles, MV has different operational and delivery structures in the four home countries. In Scotland the programme has been devolved from government to be administered by a Consortium of voluntary organisations with Volunteer Development Agency taking the lead in programme delivery. The programme is delivered through a three-tier structure with matchmaker, placement providers and youth-led projects.

Ownership by young people

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. A distinct young person-led programme strand has been developed in Scotland and in addition all other projects are encouraged to develop individual young person-led projects within their overall programmes.
- At a national level MVs have been involved in the Advisory Group, facilitating young people's involvement in the development of MV. Locally, however, while all projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between projects.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles, with 74% saying they had been given sufficient opportunity to get involved in planning their volunteering.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process through advisory groups and management committees.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, a number of projects in Scotland reported challenges in involving young people. These included: the way in which other people or organisations view young people, lack of resources and time (managers and MVs) and a lack of interest on behalf of young people in serving on committees.
- The evaluation pointed to confusion within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and youth led.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle and a majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects remained elusive.

Sustained Personal Commitment

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours within one year. In Scotland a target of 1,000 young people achieving their Awards by 2002 was established. The target was set up the Scottish Executive.

- In general there was strong support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. However, there were differing views over the desirability of the 200 hour requirement.
- Many MVs and projects welcomed the 200 hours. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment. Others, however, felt that it was a barrier to involving young people, particularly from marginalised communities with little tradition of volunteering.
- For some projects the problem was not so much the 200 hour requirement per se, but the rigid 12 month time-frame within which the volunteering had to be completed. This was identified as being particularly problematic for young people from marginalised communities, but also for those from universities where volunteering activities had to be fitted in around other commitments.
- Concern was expressed as to what happens after volunteers have completed their 200 hours. Many MVs wish to continue their volunteering and projects often want to continue supporting them but were faced with limited resources and had no mechanisms by which to recognise their extra effort.
- The programme has been successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people.

Recognition

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, enhancing one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received, seen as providing a useful reference for potential employers.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other trophies. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people or that a separate Award could be presented for the completion of a specific project, regardless of hours.
- There was general support for introducing a 50-hour marker and for placing less emphasis on the 200-hours Award. There was, however, some concern that if emphasis is completely taken off the 200-hours then that will devalue the achievements made by those who have already achieved their Awards.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with 33% of groups in Scotland having set up an accreditation system.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.
- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation, particularly in Scotland where there had been a limited publicity budget.
- Overall the programme has been highly successful in meeting its aim of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Personal Profiles being well received. However, there is scope for more national publicity of the programme.

Inclusivity

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- In Scotland, 34% of MVs were male and 66% female.
- As in all home countries, MVs were drawn mainly from the 16-18 year old age group, but this was particular so in Scotland with 62% of volunteers being 16-18, 23% aged 19-21 and 15% aged 22-24 years old.
- Scotland has been successful in ensuring the ethnic diversity of MV, with 95% of MVs being white, 1% black, 2% Asian and 2% other. This compares with the Scottish population profile for 16-29 year olds of 98% white, 0.2% Black, 1% Asian and 0.2% other.
- 7% of MVs in Scotland were identified as having a disability and/or health problem.
- In Scotland 62% of MVs were in education, 3% in other forms of training, 15% were employed, and 20% were unemployed. Scotland had been particularly successful in attracting young people in employment, a group that had generally been under-represented in MV.
- While data on previous volunteering experience is not formally collected on the Scottish MV database, the first round of evaluation indicated that 88% of projects felt that they had been successful in involving young people who otherwise would not have volunteered. However, some groups did point out that young people might underestimate the extent to which they were already volunteering.
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering within individual projects across the Scotland employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included: minority language constraints; lack of financial resources and time for outreach work; and tension between investing in inclusivity and achieving numerical targets.
- There seems to be some disconnection over the issue of meeting targets and ensuring diversity.
- The programme has clearly made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove remaining barriers to participation, particularly encouraging young people who are in employment to become involved and those in the older age brackets.

Variety and Quality

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing activities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in matchmaker organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities. Placement provider projects were generally less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation's existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the formal and targeted approach of involving young people, youth-leadership, recognition, and the structured approach of MV.

- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work – but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health and safety checks, supervision, and one-to-one support for volunteers.
- All projects saw support as an integral part of their work with young people. A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors both within placements and in the main MV organisation, review meetings, feedback from placements, and peer-support. The importance of the individual MV co-ordinators in ensuring quality was stressed throughout the evaluation.
- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support that could be offered by MV project staff and there was some concern expressed that the push for numbers could cut into quality.
- The audits highlighted the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, with just 10% of MVs reporting that they had not received as much support as they would have liked.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were met with mixed enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers.
- Overall the programme has been very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Partnerships

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects and the MV Unit within VDS to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies and networks in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were found to be a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping volunteer opportunities. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support, with a majority of projects relying on additional financial support to ensure their success.
- Most projects had also developed partnerships with other MV projects in their area. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support.
- Projects were generally satisfied with the way the programme had been managed, although concern was expressed over the lack of staff resources within the MV Unit within VDS.
- At the UK level the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas across countries was found to be fairly limited beyond those directly involved in the national delivery organisational steering group.
- Overall, MV in Scotland has been successful in building partnerships between participating agencies and the wider voluntary sector.

Volunteer benefits

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.

- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.
- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people. The audits showed that 84% of MVs agreed that their confidence had increased, 78% were more willing to try new things, and 80% were more aware of the needs of others.
- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment. 60% of MVs felt that MV had helped them to develop future career plans and 65% agreed that MV had increased their chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.
- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with 68% of respondents agreeing that they had become more committed to volunteering owing to their involvement in MV.
- One of the greatest successes of the MV programme has been the benefits accruing to the volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to the young people's lives.

Community Benefit

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of and be of benefit to the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra financial and human resources; increased service capacity; different approaches to involving volunteers (for example, recording of hours and safety checks); the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: improved quality of life, enhanced access to services, social contact and peer support.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work).
- On the whole projects continue to find the concept of community benefit difficult to grapple with, and measurement was a difficult task. Those projects that are undertaking evaluation are predominantly using informal measurement methods, particularly through gathering feedback from placement providers, although formal evaluation frameworks had been used in a couple of instances.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. However, the continuing difficulties for projects to measure community impact suggests the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Appendix four – Wales

An individual summary country report for Wales

Introduction

- The Millennium Volunteers programme is a UK wide government supported initiative designed to promote sustained volunteering among young people aged 16-24.
- MV is based on nine key principles: sustained personal commitment, community benefit, voluntary participation, inclusiveness, ownership by young people, variety, partnership, quality, and recognition.
- Beyond the nine principles, MV has different operational and delivery structures in the four home countries. In Wales the programme has been devolved from government to be administered by an Advisory Group with WCVA taking the lead in programme delivery. The programme is delivered through a four-tier structure with local co-ordinating partners, delivery partners, youth-led projects and special development initiatives.

Ownership by young people

- Millennium Volunteers aims to encourage all young people to take ownership of their volunteering. A distinct young person-led programme strand has been developed in Wales and in addition all other projects are encouraged to develop individual young person led projects within their overall programmes.
- Beyond the youth-led projects, while all other projects had signed up to the concept of greater youth involvement the level and the mechanisms for involving young people in the planning and delivery of MV varied between projects.
- Volunteers were generally satisfied with the opportunities they had been given to take on leadership roles.
- A variety of different methods had been employed to facilitate the involvement of young people, ranging from informal consultation to the formal engagement of young people in the planning process.
- On the whole youth involvement was reported upon positively. However, a minority of projects reported challenges in involving young people. These included: lack of resources and time (managers and MVs), a lack of interest on behalf of young people in serving on committees, and the way in which some people viewed young people.
- The evaluation pointed to confusion within some projects over the distinction between projects being owned by young people and youth led.
- Overall the programme has had mixed success in involving young people in leadership roles. While all projects adopted youth ownership in principle and a majority of MVs expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they received to plan their volunteering, real youth ownership for many projects remained elusive.

Sustained Personal Commitment

- To be a Millennium Volunteer young people are asked to make a sustained personal commitment to volunteering that should be no fewer than 200 hours, usually within one year. An extension of the twelve month volunteering period had been allowed to MVs in Wales, providing that sustained and regular volunteering is being carried out by the individual, where no further funding is required, and where volunteering opportunities are limited by personal or regional circumstances.
- In general there was strong support for the concept of sustained personal commitment. However, there were differing views over the desirability of the 200 hour requirement.

- Many MVs and projects welcomed the 200 hours. It was seen as a challenge and an incentive for young people and an important means of recognising and rewarding their commitment. Others, however, felt that it was a barrier to involving young people, particularly from marginalised communities with little tradition of volunteering.
- There was some confusion evident on the rules surrounding the 200 hours, particularly around banking hours and the time period in which they have to be completed.
- Concern was expressed as to what happens after volunteers have completed their 200 hours. Many MVs wish to continue their volunteering and projects often want to continue supporting them but were faced with limited resources and had no mechanisms by which to recognise their extra effort.
- The programme has been successful in its aim of inculcating a notion of sustained personal commitment among young people. Many projects were happy with the 200 hour commitment. However, a sizeable minority saw the requirement as inflexible and unwieldy and as working against attempts to be inclusive.

Recognition

- MV aims to recognise young people's volunteering through presenting them with a Certificate after 100 hours and an Award of Excellence and Personal Profile after 200 hours.
- Most MVs valued their Awards and Certificates. Even those who were at pains to play down their significance as a motivating factor said they were pleased to get them – they were an added value to volunteering, an incentive, enhancing one's CV, and something to be proud of. The Volunteer Profiles were also generally well received. Others, however, were more indifferent to the recognition.
- A number of projects went further than official Awards, with celebration events and other rewards. These were well received by MVs and projects alike and often received local press coverage.
- Some projects offered a lower level of achievement and called for more recognition of quality alongside quantity. For example, it was suggested that the Awards could have some indication of the work completed by young people or that a separate Award could be presented for the completion of a specific project, regardless of hours.
- A number of projects were linking MV with some form of external accreditation, although the first phase of the evaluation showed these were in the minority, with just 33% of groups in Wales having set up an accreditation system.
- Challenges in implementing an external accreditation system included a lack of resources, administrative complexity, and a lack of demand from volunteers.
- A lack of national recognition of the programme was a concern raised throughout the evaluation.
- Overall the programme has been highly successful in meeting its aims of recognising and rewarding volunteers, with the Certificates, Awards and Profile being well received. However there is scope for more national publicity of the programme.

Inclusivity

- The aim of MV is to be inclusive of everyone between the ages of 16-24, but particularly young people who have no previous experience of volunteering and those vulnerable to social exclusion.
- In Wales, 33% of MVs were male and 67% female.

- Wales had been particularly successful (far more so than the other home countries) at drawing MVs from across the 16-24 year old age range. 37% of MVs were aged 16-18, 31% were 19-21 and 33% were 22-24.
- Wales had been partially successful in ensuring the ethnic diversity of MV, with 96% of MVs being white, 1% black, 2% Asian and 1% other. This compares to the GB population profile for 16-24 year olds of 93% white, 2% black, 5% Asian and 1% other.
- 4% of MVs were identified as having a disability and/or health problem.
- In Wales 68% of MVs were in education, 4% in other forms of training, 8% were employed, 17% unemployed and 3% were engaged in other activities.
- Wales had been reasonably successful in attracting young people who had never volunteered before, with 41% of volunteers identifying themselves as such. However, several projects made the point that young people may underestimate their previous involvement.
- There was much evidence of good work being undertaken to broaden the base of volunteering within individual projects across Wales employing a range of methods to increase participation.
- Special Development Initiatives have been introduced to ensure inclusivity by putting extra resources into those areas where there were additional hurdles to be overcome by individuals. Alongside the existing projects which focus on the areas of volunteering by the homeless, by those with learning disabilities, and with physical disabilities, and volunteering through the medium of the Welsh language, an additional SDI to focus on the Somali community has recently been established.
- The existence of at least one MV organisation in each local authority area across Wales has ensured a level of geographical uniformity that is less evident in other home countries.
- Challenges to being more inclusive included: competing demands on young people's time; small population sizes and the area's geography in rural communities; minority language constraints; lack of financial resources and time for outreach work; the requirement for sustained personal commitment.
- The programme has clearly made significant strides towards its aim of opening up volunteering to a broad cross-section of the community. However, some work remains to be done to remove remaining barriers to participation, particularly encouraging young people who are in employment to become involved.

Variety and Quality

- MV aims to offer a diverse range of opportunities for young people that are an addition to existing activities. MV also aims to ensure quality opportunities and experiences.
- Overall the programme has been successful in generating a wide variety of opportunities available to young people. MVs were generally satisfied with the range of activities on offer and in many cases had been instrumental in developing or suggesting new projects/activities.
- The diversity of activities was most apparent in organisations that delivered MV through a range of internal and external opportunities (e.g. local co-ordinating partners). Single-issue projects were by definition less able to provide a range of opportunities.
- The main differences between MV and an organisation's existing activities, and indeed other volunteering opportunities available locally, were the centrality of young people, youth-leadership, recognition, and the structured approach of MV.
- All groups saw quality control as an important part of their work – but the mechanisms in place to ensure quality varied. The most common mechanisms were placement visits, health

and safety checks, supervision, and one-to-one support for volunteers. Giving responsibility to the MVs and involving them in decision-making was also seen to enhance quality.

- All projects saw support as an integral part of their work with young people. A variety of support mechanisms were in place for MVs, including: training, expenses, named supervisors, review meetings, feedback from placements, and peer-support.
- The evaluation found no specific problems concerning the quality of support on offer, but some concerns were expressed over the level of support that could be offered by MV project staff and there was some concern expressed that the push for numbers could cut into quality.
- Projects adopted different approaches to undertaking the Volunteer Plans and they were met with mixed enthusiasm among project staff and volunteers.
- Overall the programme has been very successful in achieving the dual aims of variety and quality of opportunities.

Partnerships

- MV projects are expected to work, wherever possible, in partnership with other organisations and sectors in their locality and also with other MV projects, local co-ordinating partners and WCVA to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- MV projects had become well integrated into the local volunteering environment, successfully establishing partnerships with other voluntary agencies in their area.
- These partnerships ranged from formal links such as inviting organisations to sit on management/advisory groups to running joint recruitment or training programmes, and to more informal links such as sharing information and best practice.
- Partnerships were of use to MV projects in a number of ways. Local contacts were found to be a key mechanism for recruiting volunteers and shaping volunteer opportunities, making them more interesting and flexible for young people. Partnerships were also used to secure additional financial support, with a majority of projects relying on additional financial support to ensure their success.
- Most projects had also developed partnerships with other MV projects in their area. On the whole projects found these contacts helpful, especially in the sharing of best practice and peer support. However, some projects felt that there could have been more emphasis on drawing out examples of best practice during the early days of the programme.
- In Wales projects were generally satisfied with the way the programme had been managed, although concern was expressed over the lack of staff resources within the management agency and the lack of national publicity for the programme.
- At the UK level the degree of cross-fertilisation of ideas across countries was found to be fairly limited beyond those directly involved in the national delivery organisational steering group.
- Overall, MV in Wales has been successful in building partnerships at all levels.

Volunteer benefits

- Although not explicitly one of the principles of MV, within the aim of community benefit, MV is designed to be of benefit to the young people who become involved.
- MVs and all other stakeholders spoke eloquently about the benefits accruing to the volunteers – this was where the real impact of the programme was felt.
- Projects in Wales were not included in the impact audits, due to their small size and scope. However, the first and second phases of the evaluation showed many benefits to MVs.

- All the projects that were included as Welsh case studies involved some characteristics of being youth-led and this shaped the benefits that the organisations were trying to achieve, with the primary concern being for volunteers' development rather than community impact.
- MV had proved a huge boost for the personal development of many young people.
- Respondents spoke enthusiastically about the contribution that MV could make to an individual's search for employment, both in terms of developing future career plans and increasing chances of employability. MV could also provide an access route into education.
- However, there was some concern that a lack of awareness among employers on the programme was undermining the value of 'MV on one's CV'.
- Among MVs there was a strong feeling that their volunteering experiences had been fun; they had made new friends and got involved in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities and had become active members of their communities.
- There is evidence that MV is contributing to the development of active citizenship among young people, with participation encouraging a greater commitment to volunteering and the development of a greater sense of belonging.
- One of the greatest successes of the MV programme has been the benefits accruing to the volunteers themselves, with considerable evidence of quantitative and qualitative changes being made to the young people's lives.

Community Benefit

- One of the key principles of MV is that it should meet the needs of and be of benefit to the community.
- MV has impacted on a diverse range of stakeholders within the local community from the young people, to the projects and placement providers, service users, the local environment and the local community more generally.
- Benefits to the organisations involved in MV included: extra human resources; different approaches to involving volunteers; the fresh approach that young people brought to an organisation; the development of effective partnerships; and improved public relations. On the other hand, MV was time consuming and demanding, particularly considering the small amount of funding available for MV in Wales.
- Immediate beneficiaries/service users benefited in a variety of ways, including: improved quality of life, enhanced access to services, social contact and peer support.
- The community at large benefited from: new/improved services, increased human capacity, social capital, and changing attitudes towards young people and volunteering more generally (especially in projects that had involved an element of intergenerational work).
- On the whole projects continue to find the concept of community benefit difficult to grapple with, and measurement was a difficult task. Projects were predominantly using informal measurement methods.
- Overall MV has made a significant contribution to the local community. However, the continuing difficulties for projects to measure community impact suggests the need for further work to develop user-friendly self-evaluation models.

Appendix five – National cost benefit analysis

Brief notes on notional national cost-benefit analysis

- Rudimentary cost-benefit analysis across four home countries from 1998-2002 has been undertaken using notional figures for the number of hours volunteered by MVs multiplied by an average wage rate to give a financial value to MV against figures for total national investment in the Millennium Volunteers programme.

Calculating the notional economic benefit of MV

- While no accurate figures exist for the number of hours volunteered by MVs to date, rough estimates can be generated using data on the number of MVs who have started in the programme and the number of Awards achieved (indicating the completion of 200 hours of volunteering). Calculations have been undertaken on the basis of a notional total number of hours volunteered to date, and on the potential number of hours volunteered if all those who had started as MVs completed their 200 hours.
- The total value of volunteering can then be calculated by multiplying the total number of hours volunteered by an average hourly wage rate, producing a wage equivalent value. To provide an alternative values, in the following calculations, the national average wage rate of £10.66 per hour has been used as well as the value of £7.11 per hour (2/3 of the average hourly wage rate, as recommended the government's cross-departmental review of the active community).
- The value brought by MVs varies according to the calculations used to estimate the number of hours volunteered and the wage rate which is adopted.

Calculating the costs of MV

- However, as with all volunteering, the voluntary activity in MV is not free. The cost of MV can be indicated through the governments' investment in the programme. However, while this gives a notional cost for the programme, it does not account for the additional money levered in from host organisations and their partners.

Cost-benefit calculations

- Firstly considering the calculations based on notional hours volunteered to date, based on the assumption that all those who have completed their MV awards have volunteered 200 hours while the remaining MV are assigned a notional 75 hour average:
 - Based on these assumptions, across the UK, with 59,832 young people having started MV and 13,069 having completed 200 we have a notional total of 6,121,025 hours dedicated to MV.
 - If we adopt the national average wage rate of £10.66 to calculate a volunteer wage equivalent, then we see that the notional economic value of MV is across the UK is £65,250,127, or an average of £1,091 per MV.
 - The total investment within the four home countries from 1998-2002 totals at £40,649,000, giving an average investment cost across the UK's 59,832 MVs of £679 per volunteer.
 - Thus, total return balance (value minus cost) of MV across the four home countries totals at £24,601,127, or an average of £411 per volunteer.
 - The ratio of investment to value in individual countries varies, but the UK ratio (value/cost) is 1.6 – for every one pound invested in MVs across the UK a return value of one pound sixty pence is generated.
 - Different averages and different ratios are generated if we use different wage equivalents.

- Secondly considering the calculations based on the potential value if all the registered MVs completed 200 hours:
 - Based on this assumption, across the UK, with 59,832 young people having started MV there is a potential total of 11,966,400 hours dedicated to MV.
 - If we adopt the national average wage rate of £10.66 to calculate a volunteer wage equivalent, then we see that the potential economic value of MV across the UK is £127,561,824, or an average of £1,453 per MV.
 - The total investment within the four home countries from 1998-2002 totals at £40,649,000, giving an average investment cost across the UK's 59,832 MVs of £679 per volunteer.
 - Thus, if we adopt the £10.66 wage equivalent, the total return balance (value minus cost) of MV across the four home countries totals at £127,561,824 or an average of £2,132 per volunteer.
 - The ratio of investment to value in individual countries varies, but the UK ratio (value/cost) is 3.1 - for every one pound invested in MVs, an average return of value of three pounds and ten pence is generated.
 - Different averages and different ratios are generated if we use different wage equivalents.

Caveats

- A number of factors **must**, however, be taken into consideration:
 - The above figures do not show the actual investment made in MVs – for example, additional funding received by projects to support their MV programmes are not considered – this additional funding could be considered as an additional cost to the programme, or an additional value as it represents money levered in.
 - The value of volunteers is considered here based on purely notional figures for the hours contributed.
 - The national average wage equivalents used do not allow the regional differences in wage rates to be reflected in the respective values of MV in each home country
 - The value of volunteers is considered here purely in economic terms, it says nothing of the value brought to the organisation in terms of human capital, publicity, prestige or any other such benefits.
 - No consideration is given here for the different organisational structures and values, which will inevitably impact greatly on the investments and returns in any volunteering initiative.
 - No consideration is given for the differing investments in terms of finances and time for the involvement of volunteers with differing support needs.
 - Considerable variations exist between countries, some of this can be explained by the different operational structures in place in each home country.

All of the above factors would impact greatly on any assessment of the value and investment of MV projects.

National Cost Benefit Analysis

Notional Economic Value – Calculations based on a notional total number of hours completed

	Starts	Awards	Notional hours to date*	Investment = funding allocated 1998-2002 (£)	Cost per MV (£)	Value @ £10.66 multiplied by notional hours to date (£)	Value @ £10.66 per MV (£)	Balance = value @ £10.66 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV based on value @ £10.66 minus investment (£)	Ratio = value @ £10.66 versus investment	Value = @ £7.11*** multiplied by notional hours to date (£)	Value @ £7.11 per MV (£)	Balance = value @ £7.11 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV based on value @ £7.11 minus investment (£)	Ratio = value @ £7.11 versus investment
NI	992	560	198400	780000	786	1539304	1552	759304	765	2.0	1026684	1053	246684	249	1.3
England	53768	11574	10753600	36611000**	681	58409871	1086	21798871	405	1.6	38958179	725	2347178	44	1.1
Scotland	2584	519	516800	2195000	849	2757476	1067	562476	218	1.3	1839179	712	-355821	-138	0.8
Wales	2488	416	497600	1063000	427	2543476	1022	1480476	595	2.4	1696446	682	633446	255	1.6
UK-wide	59832	13069	6121025	£40,649,000	£679	£65,250,127	£1,091	£24,601,127	£411	1:1.6	£43,520,488	£727	£2,871,487	£48	1:1

*Notional hours calculated according to formula: (Awards*200hours)+((Starts-Awards)*75hours). 75 hours represents a notional number of hours for those who have started MV but are as yet to complete 200 hours, it encompasses those who will have exceeded 100hours as well as those who dropped out of the scheme.

** Actual expenditure for 1998-2001 plus forecasted expenditure for 2001-2002

***The formula of two-thirds the average hourly wage rate of £10.66 as recommended in the government's cross-departmental review of the active community

Potential Economic Value – Calculations based on all those who have registered as MVs to date completing 200 hours

	Starts	Awards	Potential hours if all starts did 200 hours	Investment = funding allocated 1998-2002 (£)	Cost per MV (£)	Value @ £10.66 multiplied by notional hours to date (£)	Value @ £10.66 per MV (£)	Balance = value @ £10.66 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV based on value @ £10.66 minus investment (£)	Ratio = value @ £10.66 versus investment	Value @ £7.11 multiplied by potential hours if all complete (£)	Value @ £7.11 per MV (£)	Balance = value @ £7.11 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV based on value @ £7.11 minus investment (£)	Ratio = value @ £7.11 versus investment
NI	992	560	198400	780000	786	2114944	2132	1334944	1346	2.7	1410624	1422	630624	636	1.8
England	53768	11574	10753600	36611000	681	114633376	2132	78022376	1451	3.1	76458096	1422	39847096	741	2.1
Scotland	2584	519	516800	2195000	849	5509088	2132	3314088	1283	2.5	3674448	1422	1479448	573	1.7
Wales	2488	416	497600	1063000	427	5304416	2132	4241416	1705	5.0	3537936	1422	2474936	995	3.3
UK-wide	59832	13069	11966400	£40,649,000	£679	£127,561,824	£2,132	£86,912,824	£1,453	1:3.1	£85,081,104	£1,422	£44,432,104	£743	1:2.1

Appendix six: Cost benefit analysis of 13 England projects

Brief notes on notional cost-benefit analysis

- In addition to the national cost-benefit analysis, calculations have also been undertaken to look at cost-benefit at an individual project level. 13 projects from England that were involved in the case study and impact audit phases of the evaluation have been selected for the calculations. As equivalent data was not available for individual projects from other home countries, these calculations have been limited to England projects.
- The cost-benefit analysis for the individual projects has been based on slightly different assumptions to those at the national level, and as such the following results should be read in line with the descriptions of these assumptions and the subsequent caveats.

Calculating the notional economic benefit

- As accurate figures for the number of hours volunteered to date by MV within the 13 projects do not exist, notional estimates can be generated using data on the targets for MVs completing their volunteer plan (assumed to represent number starting MV), achieving their certificate (100 hours), and their award (200 hours). The following calculation has been used to estimate the potential notional total hours for each project: $\text{hours} = (\text{Awards} * 200 \text{hours}) + ((\text{Certificates} - \text{Awards}) * 100) + (\text{Volunteer Plans} - \text{certificates} * 50)$. As such, it must be noted that the calculation assumes that all those who do not complete the award or certificate, do complete an average of 50 hours (thus averaging across those who drop out after just starting, and those who nearly reach their certificates). Secondly, and most importantly the following cost-benefit analysis is clearly based on the assumption that the targets are met, but not exceeded.
- The total value of volunteering has then been calculated by multiplying this notional total number of hours volunteered by various national average wage rates, producing a wage equivalent value.
- Based on these assumptions, the notional economic value of volunteering within the 13 projects varies from £7,810,582 (average of £600,814 per project, £1,728 per volunteer); £5,209,479 (£400,731 per project, £1,152 per volunteer); £3,802,713 (£292,526 per project, £841 per volunteer); to £3,004,070 (£231,082 per project, £664 per volunteer) depending on whether we adopt the wage equivalents of £10.66 per hour, £7.11, £5.19, or £4.10 respectively.

Calculating the costs

- As with all volunteering, the voluntary activity within MV is not free; investment is needed in terms of volunteer management, equipment, building costs, payment of expenses and a whole host of other associated costs. The cost of MV within the 13 England project has been calculated here purely in terms of the financial investment made in the programme from the MVU. Total investment (funding direct from MV Unit) within the 13 projects totals at £2,698,495, giving an average investment cost of £207,577 per project, or £595 per volunteer.

Cost-benefit analysis

- Based on these assumptions for using notional figures for both number of hours volunteered and total investment, cost-benefit analysis across 13 English MV projects shows a good level of economic return.
- If we adopt the £10.66 wage equivalent, then we see that the total return balance (value – cost) of MV within the 13 projects totals at £5,638,158, giving an average return per project of £433,704, or an average return balance of £1,174 per volunteer.

- The ratio of investment to value varies between two and five, with an average of three – i.e. for every one pound invested in MVs within these 13 projects, an average return of value of three pounds is generated.
- Different averages and different ratios are generated if we use different wage equivalents.

Caveats

- A number of factors must, however, be taken into consideration
 - The above figures do not show the actual investment made in MVs – for example, additional funding received by projects to support their MV programmes are not considered. This additional investment could be seen either as an additional cost to involving MVs in the project, or an additional value to the project in terms of added value to the initial investment made by the MVU.
 - The value of volunteers is calculated on the basis of a notional number of hours volunteered by MVs which is based on a number of assumptions, not least that the targets will be met but not exceeded.
 - The value of volunteers is considered here purely in economic terms, it says nothing of the value brought to the organisation in terms of human capital, publicity, prestige or any other such benefits.
 - No consideration is given here for the different organisational structures and values which will inevitably impact greatly on the investments and returns in any volunteering initiative.
 - No consideration is given for the differing investments in terms of finances and time for the involvement of volunteers with differing support needs.

All of the above factors would impact greatly on any assessment of the value and investment of MV projects.

	Target no. of Plans (A)	Target no. of Certs (B)	Target no. of Award (C)	Notional total number of hours ³ (D)	Notional economic value (£) based on average hourly wage rate @ £10.66	Notional economic value (£) based on 2/3 of average hourly wage rate @ £7.11 ⁴	Notional economic value based on average hourly wage rate for 18-24 yr olds (2000 figures) @£5.19	Notional economic value based on minimum wage @ £4.10	Total funding (investment) (£)	Balance = value @ £10.66 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV based on value @£10.66 minus investment	Ratio – value @ £10.66 versus investment	Balance = value @£7.11 minus investment (£)	Balance per MV ⁵ based on value @£7.11 per hour minus investment (£)	Ratio – value @ £7.11 versus investment
Organisation 1	571	460	423	93850	1000441	667274	487082	384785	392971	1133541	1985	4	274303	480	2
Organisation 2	200	160	150	33000	351780	234630	171270	135300	149747	202033	1010	2	84883	424	2
Organisation 3	255	217	204	44000	469040	312840	228360	180400	159069	309971	1216	3	153771	603	2
Organisation 4	150	120	96	23100	246246	164241	119889	94710	84392	161854	1079	3	79849	532	2
Organisation 5	300	240	230	50000	533000	355500	259500	205000	210002	322998	1077	3	145498	485	2
Organisation 6	410	328	295	66400	707824	472104	344616	272240	299982	407842	995	2	172122	420	2
Organisation 7	300	240	210	48000	511680	341280	249120	196800	204069	307611	1025	3	137211	457	2
Organisation 8	430	375	300	70250	748865	499478	364598	288025	182214	566651	1318	4	317264	738	3
Organisation 9	800	650	560	128500	1369810	913635	666915	526850	426000	943810	1180	3	487635	610	2
Organisation 10	540	432	378	86400	921024	614304	448416	354240	204308	716716	1327	5	409996	759	3
Organisation 11	240	180	150	36000	383760	255960	186840	147600	183732	200028	833	2	72228	301	1
Organisation 12	250	200	175	40000	426400	284400	207600	164000	142010	284390	1138	3	142390	570	2
Organisation 13	75	69	60	13200	140712	93852	68508	54120	59999	80713	1076	2	33853	451	2
Total	4521	3671	3231	732700	£7,810,582	£5,209,497	£3,802,713	£3,004,070	£2,698,495	£5,638,158		Av. 1:3	£2,511,002		Av. 1:2
Ave per project					£600,814	£400,731	£292,516	£231,082	£207,577						
Ave per MV					£1,728	£1,152	£841	£664	£597		£1,174			£525	

³ Based on a nominal calculation of: D= (Awards*200hours) + ((Certificates – Awards)*100) + (Volunteer Plans – certificates *50) NB – a nominal figure of 50 hours has been attributed to those MVs who have completed a Volunteer Plan but have not continued on to complete a Certificate or Award

⁴ The formula of two-thirds the average hourly wage rate of £10.66 as recommended in the government’s cross-departmental review of the active community

⁵ Number of volunteers taken as number of Volunteer Plans