This document provides case studies of good practice in volunteering by HE students and staff, funded by the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF). They cover a broad range of activities, and aim to provide a sound resource for practitioners or managers of volunteering in HE. The studies are organised in sections which are relevant to both HEACF projects and other ongoing volunteering activities. This document updates and expands the good practice published in HEFCE 2004/21.

HEACF: case studies of good practice

Projects funded by the Higher Education Active Community Fund; case studies compiled by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre, 2003-04

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HEACF: case studies of good practice, 2003-04

Introduction

The Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) enhances the key role played by higher education institutions (HEIs) in their local communities. The HEACF funds institution-wide co-ordination and generation of volunteering activity within HEIs, and encourages collaboration with established volunteering organisations.

Volunteering helps to promote a fairer, more cohesive society in which individuals feel they have a stake. It also helps to build bridges between communities and local organisations such as HEIs. Increasing the involvement of HEIs with their communities should help staff and students to gain new perspectives, enable students to develop employment skills, and help to enhance the quality of life in disadvantaged sections of the community.

These case studies of good practice in student and staff volunteering funded by the HEACF cover a broad range of activities. They aim to provide a sound resource for practitioners or managers of the fund. Contributors come from the spectrum of HEACF practitioners, including students' unions, volunteering units, careers services and cross-university collaborations.

Case studies have been compiled and edited by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC). CRAC is an educational charity, whose purpose is to advance the education of the public, and young people in particular, in lifelong career related learning for all.

The HEACF is administered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and is part of the Government's wider Active Community initiative. In phases 1 and 2 of the fund, HEFCE is a partner alongside the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Home Office. The HEACF commenced in March 2002, and it is due to end in August 2006.

Notes on contributions

HEACF practitioners within HEIs were asked to submit case studies of good practice as part of the HEACF Student Volunteering Awards Programme.

Guidance on submissions was provided; this can be downloaded from www.heacf-awards.ac.uk.

Institutions were first invited to submit case studies for selection in autumn 2003, based on the following criteria:
- relevance to HEACF
- transferability
- subject diversity
- quality of entry.

In some cases, contributions were not selected due to the sheer volume of entries on a particular subject.

In autumn 2004 HEIs were again invited to submit case studies; this time on specified themes that were under-represented among the 2003 contributions.
Case studies are organised in thematic sections according to their main focus of activity (see 'Overview of contents'. The cross-reference guide acts as an index of subsidiary subjects, to

enable users to explore themes further, in case studies that have more than one focus of interest.

Case study titles indicate whether they were submitted in 2003 or 2004.

The following submissions were selected by the editorial team as exemplars, and were invited to present and exhibit at the HEACF Student Volunteering Awards Ceremonies in December 2003 and December 2004:

- **Case study AV4: Innovative Learning in Action (2004)**
  University of Salford
- **Case study C4: Promotion of volunteering as an opportunity for students (2003)**
  London Metropolitan University
- Case study ES3: Project Leaders Scheme (2003)
  University College London
- **Case study ES4: A Blueprint for Sustainable Volunteering (2003)**
  University of Sheffield
- **Case study ES6: Sheffield Volunteering Hub (2004)**
  University of Sheffield
- **Case study R1: Manchester Student Volunteers Taster Sessions (2003)**
  University of Manchester and UMIST
- **Case study R4: 'Just Do It' Recruitment Event (2003)**
  University of Northumbria at Newcastle

- **Case study R6: Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme - It matters to you. It matters to them (2003)**
  Staffordshire University Students' Union
- **Case study R7: TVU Volunteers - Volunteering Awareness (2003)**
  Thames Valley University
- **Case study SS2: Active Student and Project V (2004)**
  University of Brighton and University of Sussex
- **Case study SV1: Best Practice in Staff Volunteering (2004)**
  Kent Union, University of Kent

The following submissions were selected by the editorial team as 'highly commended':

- **Case study P3: University and Students' Union Partnership (2003)**
  University of Plymouth
- **Case study T1: Involve (2003)**
  University of Birmingham

Overview of contents

Case studies are divided into the following thirteen sections according to the main focus of activity.

Accreditation and volunteering in the curriculum There is great diversity in the methods used to accredit and recognise the learning or participation of volunteers – from academic credit to award schemes, from in-house tailored certification to optional learning resources. The case studies in this section explore a range of these options. The later section on `Recognition of volunteering' looks at the role of informal methods of recognition and reward.

Communications
These case studies explore the different mechanisms for communicating, in the first instance, with students and staff in order to recruit volunteers or raise awareness in local communities; as well as communicating key messages to all stakeholders during the lifetime of the volunteering programmes.

Devolved projects
This section looks at best practice from institutions where responsibility for setting up volunteering programmes is not usually taken on by the manager of the HEACF, but by individuals or local groups. The HEACF provides funding for the brokerage or initiation of these placements and programmes.

Evaluation and sustainability
Evaluation of successes and failures is essential for HEIs to have a clear plan for embedding and developing projects funded under HEACF. Sustainability is part of this, to ensure that achievements can be built on. These case studies set out methods for conducting evaluation, and indicate areas to explore when devising an evaluation strategy and planning to ensure that projects will be sustainable.

Infrastructure
This section takes on some of the bigger issues faced by HEIs under the HEACF: such as what to do when no volunteering structure exists; how to reorganise volunteering for the whole institution; how to get students to take responsibility for running volunteering programmes; how to introduce monitoring and quality assurance systems.

Links with the community
Links with the community are at the heart of the HEACF purpose: volunteering helps build bridges between communities and local organisations such as HEIs. This section illustrates different ways in which institutions are demonstrating that this commitment is embedded in the university agenda.

Partnerships
Many HEIs have built upon volunteering work already established, and created partnerships with local community stakeholders to deliver HEACF projects. These case studies look at the different kinds of partnerships developed with, for example, Student Community Action, local councils, charities, and beneficiary organisations such as hospitals, schools and prisons.

Recognition of volunteering
One route to rewarding and valuing student commitment to volunteering is through award schemes and celebratory events. These may be stand alone or part of broader strategies for recognising effort and achievement by students and staff. This section illustrates different

approaches to organising successful initiatives that recognise, promote and celebrate volunteering.

Recruitment
These case studies explore both the promotional and practical aspects of recruitment. Key information on Criminal Records Bureau checking, volunteer registration and assessment of opportunities sits alongside the planning and execution of promotional and targeted campaigns to attract volunteers and generate volunteering opportunities.

Safety and security
Ensuring the safety and security of HEACF volunteers and beneficiaries is clearly of prime importance. While universities are already experienced in some policies and procedures, there may still be scope for learning from the approaches developed for HEACF in other institutions. The case studies in this section enable HEIs to compare their own processes for safeguarding volunteers and vulnerable participants with those illustrated.

Staff volunteering
When university staff take part in projects with and for local people, their involvement exemplifies universities' commitment to engaging with all sections of the community. Staff volunteers are thus important ambassadors for university outreach programmes. This section examines ways in which the university sector can develop a volunteering culture among its staff.

Training
It is crucial for volunteers to have access to robust and transferable training and resources. This section explores the different forms that these can take: task-related training by outside organisations; recruiting a qualified trainer to develop and deliver courses for volunteers; creating detailed, accessible resources for volunteers' reference. It also provides information on training for staff in running volunteering programmes.

Vulnerable and non-participating groups
Current political, economic and social conditions have led to major areas of development in volunteering, focusing on marginalised groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, school students at risk of disengagement, and offenders. These case studies focus on the special needs of projects working with such vulnerable groups.

List of projects

Accreditation and volunteering in the curriculum

AV 1: Making it count – in the long term (2003)
London Metropolitan University
AV 2: Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award (2003)
Middlesex University
AV 3: HEACF Volunteering Module (2003)
University of Derby
AV 4: Innovative Learning in Action (2004)
University of Salford
AV5: Online Learning Material for Volunteers (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University
AV6: Imperial Volunteer Centre: Accreditation (2004)
Imperial College London

Communications

C1: Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) Website (2003)
University College London/UCL Union
C2: Points of Contact (2003)
University of Huddersfield
C3: "I Want More…" Project (2003)
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
C4: Promotion of Volunteering as an Opportunity for Students (2003)
London Metropolitan University
C5: The CommUNIty Newsletter Project (2003)
University of Northumbria and University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Devolved projects

DP1: STAX (Students Taking Action for Community Change) (2003)
Oxford Brookes University
DP2: Running a Grant Scheme (2003)
University of Cambridge
DP3: HEACF and Community Brokerage (2003)
University of Gloucestershire
DP4: The Community Volunteers Project; Innovation Fund (2003)
University of Teesside
DP5: Building a Bridge into the Community (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University

Evaluation and sustainability

ES1: Measuring Community Activities (2003)
University of Cambridge
ES2: Participatory Evaluation of Volunteering with Community Groups (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University
ES3: Project Leaders Scheme (2003)
University College London/UCL Union
ES4: A Blueprint for Sustainable Volunteering (2003)
University of Sheffield
ES5: Leeds University Community Initiative (LUCI) (2004)

University of Leeds
ES6: Sheffield Volunteering Hub (2004)
University of Sheffield

Infrastructure

IN1: Volunteer Management (2003)
Imperial College London
IN2: A Framework to Manage Volunteering Projects (2003)
Lancaster University
IN3: Quality Standards (2003)
London Metropolitan University

Links with the community

LC1: Trash Splash (2003)
University of Liverpool
LC2: Mentoring and Guidance Project (2003)
London South Bank University
LC3: Building Community Links, Training Event (2003)
Oxford Brookes University
LC4: Live Guides (2003)
Kent Institute of Art & Design
LC5: Community Engagement (2003)
University of Leeds
LC6: Up Your Street Project (2004)
University of Leeds
LC7: Mentoring Refugees into Employment (2004)
Leeds Metropolitan University
LC8: TVU Volunteers (2004)
Thames Valley University

Partnerships

P1: University of Liverpool HEACF Project Team (2003)
University of Liverpool
P2: Gateside Festival Mentoring Project (2004)
 Goldsmiths College Students' Union
P3: University and Students' Union Partnership (2003)
University of Plymouth
P4: Sports Volunteer Scheme (2003)
University of Manchester

Recognition of volunteering

RV1: A Celebration of Volunteering (2003)
University of Salford
RV2: Annual Celebration of Volunteering (2004)
University of Exeter Guild of Students

Recruitment

R1: Manchester Student Volunteers Taster Sessions (2003)
University of Manchester and UMIST
R2: Kaleidoscope Fair (2004) University of Manchester
R3: University of Warwick Volunteering Fair (2003)
University of Warwick
R4: 'Just Do It' Recruitment Event (2003)
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
R5: Quality Checks on Volunteers and Volunteering Opportunities (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University
R6: Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme (2003)
Staffordshire University
R7: TVU Volunteers; Volunteering Awareness (2003)
Thames Valley University
R8: Interviewing Volunteers (2003)
University of Brighton
R9: Recruitment of Volunteers at a Freshers' Fair (2003)
University of Lincoln
R10: Mentoring Project: promotional approach to enhance volunteer recruitment (2003)
York St John College
R11: Using HEI and HEACF resources to overcome a barrier to volunteering (2003)
University of Liverpool
R12: University of Leeds Refugee Support Network: encouraging students to volunteer (2003)
University of Leeds

Safety and security

SS1: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers (2003)
University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University
SS2: @ctive Student and Project V: the Placement Visit Process (2004)
University of Brighton and University of Sussex

Staff volunteering

SV1: Best Practice in Staff Volunteering (2004)
University of Kent

Training

T1: Involve (2003) University of Birmingham
T2: Specialist Volunteer Training for HEI staff (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University
T3: Lancaster University Volunteering Unit; Volunteer's Handbook (2003)
Lancaster University
T4: MMU Volunteers' Handbook (2003)
Manchester Metropolitan University
T5: Student Mentoring – Training (2003)
University of Bath

Vulnerable and non-participating groups

VN1: Inmates; Prison Visiting Volunteers (2003)
Goldsmiths College, University of London
VN2: Mentoring at Campion Catholic High School for Boys (2003)

Liverpool Hope University College
VN3: The Befriending Project (2003)
University of Hull
VN4: Volunteer Recruitment Fair (2004)
University of Bristol
VN5: KAIROS: Working with Disenfranchised Groups (2004)
Coventry University
VN6: Easter and Summer Schools (2004)
Surrey Institute of Art & Design

Cross-reference guide

This section acts as a subsidiary subject index. All case studies are coded according to the main subject headings. This section records case studies that have a secondary subject. It will also help users who are looking for more specific information.

Main heading codes
AV: Accreditation and volunteering in the curriculum
C: Communication
DP: Devolved projects
ES: Evaluation and sustainability
IN: Infrastructure
LC: Links with the community
P: Partnerships
RV: Recognition of volunteering
R: Recruitment
SS: Safety and security
SV: Staff volunteering
T: Training
VN: Vulnerable and non-participating groups

Secondary headings

Asylum seekers/refugees
DP2 – University of Cambridge: Running a Grant Scheme
R12 – University of Leeds: The Refugee Support Network
VN3 – University of Hull: The Befriending Project
LC7 – Leeds Metropolitan University: Mentoring Refugees into Employment

Branding
AV1 – London Metropolitan University: Making it count in the long term
C4 – London Metropolitan University: Promotion of volunteering as an opportunity for students
R6 – Staffordshire University: Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme
T3 – Lancaster University: Lancaster University Volunteering Unit; Volunteer's Handbook

Certificates
AV3 – University of Derby: HEACF Volunteering Module
RV1 – University of Salford: A Celebration of Volunteering
AV5 – Manchester Metropolitan: Online Learning Materials for Volunteers
C4 – London Metropolitan University: Promotion of Volunteering as an opportunity for students
IN1 – Imperial College London: Volunteer Management
IN3 – London Metropolitan University: Quality Standards
P3 – University of Plymouth: University and Students' Union Partnership

Communications
R10 – York St John College: Mentoring project: promotional approach to enhance volunteer recruitment

Coping with the unexpected
P2 – Goldsmiths College Students' Union: Gateside Festival Mentoring Project

Criminal Records Bureau checks
C1 – University College London: Voluntary Services Unit Website
DP3 – University of Gloucestershire: The Active Community Fund and Community Brokerage
DP4 – University of Teesside: The Community Volunteers Project; Innovation Fund
IN1 – Imperial College London: Volunteer Management
R11 – University of Liverpool: Using HEI and HEACF resources to overcome a barrier to volunteering
R12 – University of Leeds: The Refugee Support Network
SS1 – University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers
R8 – University of Brighton: Interviewing Volunteers
T5 – University of Bath: Student Mentoring – Training
VN3 – University of Hull: The Befriending Project

Curriculum
AV1 – London Metropolitan University: Making it count in the long term
DP3 – University of Gloucestershire: The Active Community Fund and Community Brokerage
P1 – University of Liverpool: HEACF Project Team

Evaluation
IN3 – London Metropolitan University: Quality Standards
R5 – Manchester Metropolitan University: Quality checks on volunteers and volunteering opportunities

Handbooks
C4 – London Metropolitan University: Promotion of Volunteering as an opportunity for students
ES3 – University College London: Project Leaders Scheme
IN1 – Imperial College London: Volunteer Management
IN3 – London Metropolitan University: Quality Standards
R5 – Manchester Metropolitan University: Quality checks on volunteers and volunteering opportunities
T3 – Lancaster University: Lancaster University Volunteering Unit; Volunteer's Handbook
T4 – Manchester Metropolitan University: MMU Volunteers Handbook

Infrastructure
ES6 – University of Sheffield: Sheffield Volunteering Hub

Links with the community
C5 – Universities of Northumbria and Newcastle upon Tyne: The CommUNIty Newsletter Project
DP1– Oxford Brookes University Students' Union: STAX (Students Taking Action for Community Change)
DP3 – University of Gloucestershire: HEACF and Community Brokerage
DP5 – Manchester Metropolitan University: Building a bridge into the community
ES2 – Manchester Metropolitan University: Participatory Evaluation of Volunteering with Community Groups
ES5 – University of Leeds: Leeds University Community Initiative (LUCI)

Mentoring
AV2 – Middlesex University: Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award
DP3 – University of Gloucestershire: The Active Community Fund and Community Brokerage
IN3 – London Metropolitan University: Quality Standards
LC2 – London South Bank University: The Mentoring and Guidance Project
R10 – York St John College: Mentoring Project

T5 – University of Bath: Student Mentoring – Training
VN2 – Liverpool Hope University College: Mentoring at Campion Catholic High School for Boys

Online resources
AV2 – Middlesex University: Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award
AV3 – University of Derby: HEACF Volunteering Module
AV5 – Manchester Metropolitan: Online Learning Materials for Volunteers
C1 – University College London: Voluntary Services Unit Website
C3 – University of Newcastle: 'I Want More…' Project
C4 – London Metropolitan University: Promotion of Volunteering as an opportunity for students
IN1 – Imperial College London: Volunteer Management
IN2 – Lancaster University: A Framework to Manage Volunteer Projects
P4 – University of Manchester: Sports Volunteer Scheme
SS1 – University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers
R6 – Staffordshire University: Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme
T4 – Manchester Metropolitan: MMU Volunteers Handbook

Partnerships
R3 – University of Warwick: University of Warwick Volunteering Fair

Press/media
C5 – Northumbria and Newcastle Universities; The CommUNIty Newsletter Project
RV2 – University of Exeter: Annual Celebration of Volunteering
R12 – University of Leeds: The Refugee Support Network
R7 – Thames Valley University: TVU Volunteers; Volunteering Awareness
R9 – University of Lincoln: Recruitment of Volunteers at a Freshers' Fair

Prisons
VN1 – Goldsmiths College: Inmates; Prison Visiting Volunteers

Recruitment
C2 – University of Huddersfield: Points of Contact
ES4 – University of Sheffield: A Blueprint for Sustainable Volunteering
IN1 – Imperial College London: Volunteer Management
SS1 – University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers
VN4 – University of Bristol: Volunteer Recruitment Fair

Religion
LC2 – London South Bank University: The Mentoring and Guidance Project

Sports volunteers
AV2 – Middlesex University: Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award
DP3 – University of Gloucestershire: The Active Community Fund and Community Brokerage
P4 – University of Manchester: Sports Volunteer Scheme
R10 – York St John College: Mentoring Project
SS1 – University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers
R7 – Thames Valley University: TVU Volunteers; Volunteering Awareness

Staff volunteering
AV6 – Imperial College London: Imperial Volunteer Centre

ES6 – University of Sheffield: Sheffield Volunteering Hub
LC7– Leeds Metropolitan University: Mentoring Refugees into Employment
T1 – University of Birmingham: Involve
T2 – Manchester Metropolitan University: Specialist volunteer training for HEI staff
VN5 – Coventry University: KAIROS

Taster sessions
R1– University of Manchester & UMIST: Manchester Student Volunteers Taster Sessions
SS1 – University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sports Volunteers

Training
AV5 – Manchester Metropolitan: Online Learning Materials for Volunteers
ES3 – University College London/UCL Union: Project Leaders Scheme
IN2 – Lancaster University: Framework to Manage Volunteer Projects
LC2 – London South Bank University: Mentoring and Guidance Project
LC3 – Oxford Brookes University: Building Community Links, Training Event

Vulnerable and non–participating groups
LC7– Leeds Metropolitan University: Mentoring Refugees into Employment
LC2 – London South Bank University: Mentoring and Guidance Project
R12 – University of Leeds: The University of Leeds Refugee Support Network

Resources on the web

National resources

Active Community Unit: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/inside/org/dob/direct/accu.html

Community Service Volunteers: www.csv.org.uk

Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC): www.crac.org.uk

HEACF Student Volunteering Awards: www.heacf-awards.ac.uk

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE): www.hefce.ac.uk

Institute for Volunteering Research: www.ivr.org.uk/

National Union of Students (NUS): www.nusonline.co.uk

Student Volunteering England: www.studentvol.org.uk

Volunteering England (formerly National Centre for Volunteering): www.volunteering.org.uk/

Local resources

University of Brighton: http://student.bton.ac.uk/studserv/Careers/vol.htm and www.brighton.ac.uk/volunteering

University of Bristol: http://www.bris.ac.uk/cms/ppo/outreach

Coventry University: www.horizonvolunteering.org.uk

University of Derby: www.derby.ac.uk/careers/StudentVolunteering.htm

University of Exeter Guild of Students: www.ca.ex.ac.uk

Goldsmiths College Students' Union: www.gcsu.org.uk

Imperial College London: www.imperial.ac.uk/volunteering/

Kent Union: www.kentunion.co.uk/main/activities

Lancaster University: www.luvu.org.uk/

University of Leeds: www.leeds.ac.uk

Leeds Metropolitan University: www.lmusu.org.uk/calm

University of Lincoln: www.lincoln.ac.uk/volunteering/

University of Liverpool: www.liv.ac.uk/volunteering/index.htm

London Metropolitan University (City Campus): www.londonmet.ac.uk/cityvolunteering

London Metropolitan University (North Campus):
www.londonmet.ac.uk/employability/projects/cityvolunteering/

University of Manchester and UMIST: www.manchesterstudentvolunteers.org.uk

University of Manchester Sports Volunteering: www.sportsvolunteer.man.ac.uk

Manchester Metropolitan University: www.communi.mmu.ac.uk/

Middlesex University: www.mdx.ac.uk/www/icdl

University of Northumbria: http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/stud_serv/volunteer/

University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University: www.sport.ox.ac.uk/outreach/

University of Plymouth: www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=7126

University of Salford: www.edu.salford.ac.uk/volunteering/

University of Sheffield: www.sheffieldvolunteering.info

Staffordshire University: www.staffs.ac.uk/sponte/

The Surrey Institute of Art & Design: www.surrart.ac.uk

Thames Valley University: www.tvuvolunteers.co.uk

University College London: www.uclunion.org/volunteer

University of Warwick: www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/community/volunteers/

Accreditation and volunteering in the curriculum

Accreditation and curriculum integration are two areas that universities are increasingly looking at in their drive to encourage more students into volunteering activity. Formal recognition of the volunteering effort is also an important reward to offer students who are already volunteers, to mark their hard work and (often substantial) contribution.

Accreditation may be 'stand alone', based on assessment of generic skills, or it may be subject-based, whereby the university (typically a volunteering co-ordinator working with academic staff) develops placements with local community groups or charities relevant to the area of study. Successful completion of the practical and theoretical work based on the placement then earns the student academic credit.

Expanding volunteering within the curriculum can be particularly effective in attracting, and benefiting, student groups under-represented in volunteering at university: for example, mature and part-time students, who have little time for extra-curricular activities.

Volunteering has long been acknowledged as a key vehicle for the development of transferable skills. While a volunteer may not get involved in volunteering activities purely for the development of their skills, it is certainly a useful by-product that HEIs, careers services and students' unions have identified to students, employers and other stakeholders.

Developing students' employability is central to HEACF. *Funded activities should lead to recognisable benefits for the volunteer as well as for the community, including the development of generic skills (although not necessarily linked directly to course curriculum) and hence improved employability.*[1] The decisions to be made are concerned with how far the institution wishes to invest resources in developing accreditation or curricula, both very labour intensive aspects of volunteering management. The aim of this section is not to provide an answer on whether or not activities should be accredited or formally recognised, but rather to provide information for those who may be interested in diversifying their practice in these areas.

There is great diversity in the methods used to accredit and recognise the learning or participation of volunteers – from academic credit to award schemes, from in-house, tailored certification to optional learning resources. The case studies within this section explore a range of these options; the later section `Recognition of volunteering' looks at the role of informal methods of recognition and reward.

All of the case studies recognise or accredit the learning involved in volunteering, and do not take the 'turning up and taking part' approach. This is a crucial distinction, as substantial effort has been put into developing systems by which students' learning from the volunteering experience can be assessed.

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[1] HEFCE 2004/19

Case study AV1 (2003)
Making It Count – in the long term
London Metropolitan University (city campus[2])

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www.londonmet.ac.uk/cityvolunteering

Context

Alongside addressing the wider aims of the Active Community Fund, the volunteering project at city campus explicitly set out to link volunteering activities into existing widening participation and HE Reach Out to Business and the Community (HEROBC) initiatives. These initiatives promote community involvement through a variety of activities such as student placements. The HEACF project, as well as developing community links, aimed to develop students' employability.

The volunteering project is based in the Employability Unit, which has responsibility for the development and implementation of optional, subject-based, accredited placements. It has complementary projects in most strategic areas such as HEROBC, the Higher Education Innovation Fund, widening participation, learning and teaching, and employability and placements development.

Programme development

London Metropolitan University has a high proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds, the majority of whom must work to support themselves and, often, their families too; they have little time for extra curricular activities. Also, London Metropolitan students generally identify most strongly with their subject. As part of the project the volunteering team (comprising the Project Manager, Helen Archer, and the Volunteering Officer, Sarah Davison) has sought to establish an effective and cost efficient method of promoting and supporting volunteering by embedding opportunities within the curriculum. The team has therefore:

- worked with academic departments to develop optional, subject-based student projects with voluntary and community groups
- identified existing opportunities for students to opt to accredit their volunteering work – to make it contribute towards their degree
- contributed to the development of and provided placement support for a new foundation degree for the voluntary sector.

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[2] London Metropolitan University was formed by a merger between London Guildhall university (now city campus) and the university of North London (now north campus). At the commencement of the HEACF the merger was yet to be completed, therefore London Metropolitan University runs two HEACF programmes.

Programme detail

Subject-based projects: The volunteering team met with academic staff to outline the HEACF aims and to discuss possible suitable volunteering projects for students. Formal proposals were then submitted by students giving:

- information on project aims and rationale
- course details
- expected outcomes
- project organisation and management
- project timetable
- dissemination methods
- continuation
- budget details.

Agreed projects were monitored and each project produces a final report. Projects included redesigning signage for a local voluntary group, producing a sensory garden for people with special needs, taking art into local hospitals, working with local schools, supporting an arts festival, a video project with a local church and several more.

Accrediting the experience: Many students can take an optional, subject-based short placement in their final year, and the work (unpaid) can be assessed and accredited towards their degree. Many of these students opt to work in the voluntary sector and with local schools. In addition to this there are opportunities:

- at all other undergraduate levels where students can choose to have their volunteering accredited
- in the voluntary sector foundation degree (see below). This has a module which accredits voluntary experiences at year 1 level
- for Psychology students at Masters level to opt to accredit voluntary work as part of their course.

Independent and Community Empowerment Foundation Degree: This has been introduced for those involved or interested in community work. The HEACF Project Manager at London Metropolitan was involved in its development and now advises and guides students seeking placements. Students can opt to develop many of the degree outcomes within their existing organisations, or they can explore new areas of volunteering.

Developing employability: Research on London Metropolitan's volunteering activities has demonstrated that even a short, final year placement can have a beneficial effect on students, by increasing their confidence, skills, and career awareness. When students opt to have their volunteering work assessed they are required to reflect on their experiences and to identify the skills they have developed, and other learning. This is especially important for non-traditional students as it has been shown that they can tend towards a lack of self-awareness – an essential component of employability.

A diversity of approach: Of course, London Metropolitan is also undertaking many other actions to promote volunteering that will be familiar to most institutions. The university is trying to provide a flexible range of opportunities accessible in a variety of ways. For example the volunteering team also:

- advertises volunteering opportunities in the Job Shop
- holds guidance and advice drop-in sessions
- offers CV and reflection-on-experience workshops and training sessions
- has stands at Freshers' Fairs and holds a Volunteering Fair
- advertises in local newspapers to attract new opportunities
- provides 'branded' goods - pens, mouse mats, post-its

- has posters, flyers, bookmarks, postcards, and a volunteering guide
- uses e-publicity methods. A major publicity tool is a website (www.londonmet.ac.uk/cityvolunteering) where students can search for the organisations or work using drop-down menus.

Future development

London Metropolitan is keen to sustain the accredited element of volunteering, but recognises that these methods are resource intensive and tend to attract relatively small numbers of students. By embedding volunteering activities into the curriculum it is ensured that students have a realistic choice about getting involved in and committing to volunteering, thus benefiting the local community, voluntary organisations, and, in the long term, themselves.

Hints and tips

- Know what motivates your students.
- Encourage and support academic staff in embedding volunteering in the curriculum.
- Link funding to agreed outputs – both academic and those of the HEACF.

Project example: a new heart for Bow

St Paul's Church, situated in the heart of Bow in London's East End, has been under-used for several years. After many years of fund-raising events and with lottery grants and other funding, the church is now being converted into a community centre. The centre will offer a range of activities and include a fitness club and a café for the local community. The finished centre will also contain a spiritual space, available for use by all religions.

Staff and student volunteers from the Mass Communications department are supporting the project by producing a video of the physical conversion. The video will include the views of local people about the project work, and their memories of the church over the past decades.

Vicar, Phillipa Boardman, believes: *'It'll be wonderful to have a lasting record of the centre development when we've been working towards this project for more than eight years.'*

The video will be shown at the launch of the centre in mid-2004. Students working on the project can opt to accredit the work as part of their degree.

Case study AV2 (2003)
Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award
Middlesex University

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Context

With HEACF funding, Middlesex University piloted a new Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award in 2002-03. The award programme is now being widely promoted to increase its profile across the university. It is believed that the award will be an important incentive to encourage a wider range of new students to get involved in volunteering, and for students who are already volunteering to gain formal university recognition for their hard work.

The Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award offers students the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and understanding needed for leadership and citizenship, and to achieve a 'certificate award' which provides evidence of their achievement for employers, and graduate and professional programmes.

Programme detail

Underlying the award programme is a concept of leadership that is based on:
- personal development
- reflective practice
- managing change through learning
- active citizenship through service to the community ('service-learning').

All award holders will become 'Associates' of the programme and they will be invited to attend guest lectures and seminars involving community, corporate and political leaders whilst they are students, then afterwards as graduates of Middlesex University. The first guest lecture took place on 8 December 2003 and it was given by Amobi Modu, the Deputy Director of the Active Communities Unit of the Home Office.

To take part, students need to complete:
- 2 day programme of workshops
- 10 hours (minimum) of voluntary service to the Middlesex University community: e.g. being a Student Rep, running a society, sports captains, writing for MUD (Middlesex Union Direct magazine), Nightline, helping with open days, student induction and other events
- 35 hours (minimum) of volunteering in local or regional communities
- short reflective skills report.

A total of 49 students registered for the award in 2003; out of these, 12 students have received the award. The award is currently being promoted across the university in order to register more students for 4 rounds of training sessions.

Promotion of the award: The Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award is managed through the Community Volunteering Programme. This is one of a number of new 'community partnership programmes' on offer to students at Middlesex University. Other programmes include the Mentoring in Secondary Schools Programme, Student Associates Scheme, SHINE (one-to-one support in primary schools) and sports coaching.

Middlesex University is trying to bring consistency to how these programmes are delivered to students. In terms of promotion, a more 'joined up' campaign is being run using the following methods:
- a series of promotional leaflets and posters with similar design styles that are easily recognised
- outreach to key skills modules for first years
- outreach to core modules for second years
- personal development portfolios for all new first years, which highlight the importance of volunteering
- website for volunteering programmes
- links to other sites in the university
- newsletter articles
- presence at key events, such as societies and volunteering fairs for first years.

Students who are involved in specific volunteering programmes (such as the Mentoring in Secondary Schools Programme) are also being encouraged to register for the Leadership, Enterprise and Citizenship Award as they are already meeting part of the requirements for the award.

An important feature of the programme is that there has been a lot of interest from Business School students, many of whom are international students. Volunteer recruits tend to be from other schools, so the challenge here is to be able to provide enough volunteering opportunities relating to these students' interests so that they will feel motivated to complete the award. Through the new sports volunteering opportunities now offered, the programme is also attracting more male students, including sports captains.

Registration for the award: HEACF funding has been used to develop an online registration form and website for the Community Volunteering Programme. All students involved in the Leadership Award must be registered with programme. The registration form provides background information, including any current or previous voluntary work, plus details about volunteering interests. This information is used to help students registered for the award to find volunteering opportunities. Once they have registered, they can receive up-to-date listings of local, north London opportunities.

Evidencing volunteering: To gain the award, students must complete:
- project confirmation form – this is signed by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and provides confirmation of any volunteering undertaken and the number of completed hours
- skills report – this is completed by the student, who must reflect on their experiences as a volunteer and the skills and qualities developed through volunteering.

The paperwork involved for both the student and the organisation is kept to a minimum on the award programme, although it is recognised that some form of formal confirmation of voluntary work is necessary.

Students can work towards the award throughout their studies and there is no set time-limit for submitting these forms. Any type of voluntary work undertaken is recognised, as Middlesex students, who are from all areas of London, could be participating in a wide variety of unpaid activities which may not appear on the Community Volunteering Programme

listings. In fact, it is hoped that by encouraging students to register for the award, more potential volunteering opportunities for other students may be sourced.

Training: The training workshops take place over two days and students are actively involved in four sessions. These are on the themes of:

- Student Leadership and Enterprise
- Active Citizenship and Student Leadership
- Reflective Practice and Project Management
- Beyond Student Volunteering – Community Leadership and Social Enterprise.

These sessions are interactive, with students engaged in group work. They are facilitated by Professor John Annette, Helen O'Donnell, a Students' Union Officer and by Dr Philip Frame, a national ILT[3] Fellowship award winner from the Business School. Students are given a training pack and are also trained to use the NUS Skills Planner and the new university 'Personal Development Portfolio' which has been produced in partnership with the Careers Service.

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[3] Institute for Learning and Teaching, now part of the Higher Education Academy, www.heacademy.ac.uk

Case study AV3 (2003)
HEACF Volunteering Module
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Context

The University of Derby felt that the best way to promote volunteering to non-participating students was to include an optional Volunteering module on courses, which can be as diverse as BSc in Zoology, BA in Business Management and HNC in Civil Engineering. Students benefit by having their volunteering experience recognised in the form of credits which count towards their targets for HE qualifications. The development and inclusion of the Volunteering module was piloted in the first year of the HEACF and is now being rolled out across many more areas, including Sports Science, Hospitality and Art and Design.

A database of new volunteering opportunities has been created and students have worked on projects with small mental health self-support groups and large organisations such as the National Trust, contributing skills and expertise gained from their degree programme.

Programme detail

Accreditation: The decision to offer accreditation has presented challenges to staff and university systems, but has proved very attractive to students.

The module specifications encourage students to explore not only their contribution to their hosting organisations and the transferable skills gained from the experience, but also the nature and importance of organisations that rely heavily on volunteer support and labour. Students can volunteer with an organisation to gain experience of an area of work relevant to their career aspirations, or they can try out something completely unrelated; the accreditation recognises the transferable skills and experience acquired, not subject-specific content.

Students have the satisfaction of having their skills and status as aspiring professionals acknowledged by the organisation and are encouraged in the production of a portfolio to reflect on aspects of the experience. Students have already proved so useful to host organisations that they have been offered part-time or future full-time employment. Foundation programme students have used the credits achieved to secure places on competitive HE programmes such as social work and teaching degrees.

*Delivery***:** Staff have been innovative in the delivery of the module as this has required joint working across the institution for the benefit of students. For many staff this is their first experience of delivery which requires off-site support of students and assessment of skills applied in the workplace. The Student Volunteering Officer has worked closely with students and tutors to identify appropriate regional opportunities and to match these to individual students. Joint lectures have been delivered using experts from the voluntary sector. Generic staff and student handbooks have been produced, resulting in experience and materials shared. Furthermore, a website has been developed and online/CD ROM resources are available to Foundation students.

Evaluation: Research and evaluation is being undertaken on the value of the volunteering module to students from groups that are under-represented in HE. Early findings seem to indicate that this opportunity to have applied skills and experience recognised for accreditation significantly increases the confidence levels and aspirations of such learners.

The University of Derby feels that its approach has enabled students to gain credit for volunteering, and this has significantly raised the profile and increased the credibility of this activity as a vital aspect of the student employability agenda. The promotional event organised last year was very well attended by students, university staff, representatives from the voluntary sector and employers such as Rolls Royce, who emphasised how seriously employers take evidence of successful participation in volunteering.

The achievements of the project will be sustained as the modules are now embedded in many HE programmes. The ultimate aim is to have volunteering as an optional module for most University of Derby students, particularly on programmes such as Foundation Degrees, and to be able to offer HE Certificates in Volunteering to community workers as an online qualification through the university's Learning Through Work platform.

Hints and tips

- Never underestimate the time needed to get changes to programmes though validation processes.
- Recognise that the voluntary sector has a significant role to play in developing the employability skills of your students.
- Work closely with those responsible for supporting students in choosing modules.
- Pilot delivery of the volunteering module with keen staff and one or two groups, then use the case studies and examples of good practice to encourage other staff to participate.
- Be prepared to be amazed by the range and variety of skills your students may be able to demonstrate.

Case study AV4 (2004)
Innovative Learning in Action – Enhancing student diversity, progression and achievement through volunteering

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Context

At the University of Salford the HEACF funds the generation, co-ordination and evaluation of volunteering activity, and works towards increased collaboration with established volunteering organisations. Over the first two years of the project, Volunteering @ Salford has created links with over 200 voluntary organisations; worked with over 100 volunteers, both students and staff; and part funded five voluntary projects that were led by volunteers from the university community. Projects have ranged from one- off events, to projects requiring considerable weekly commitment for the volunteer. We have also been involved in national and international volunteering projects. The students have, for the most part, desired and been allocated opportunities that are related to their course or future employment wishes.

Based in the university's Careers Service and managed by Jane McDermott, the Network Project is a multi-partnership project that aims to develop employability, to raise awareness of career options and provide access to quality work experience opportunities. Established for over three years, one aspect of the project's activities is to address the skills gap identified between labour market requirements and outputs from the education system. Within the current climate, employers demand more than academic knowledge and expect a high level of skill, ability and experience. Students are entering into a competitive and fast-moving job market. Furthermore, the introduction of The Excellence Challenge by the Government in 2000 highlighted the desire to increase participation in higher education and ensure students entering higher education were representative of the population as a whole. Therefore, competition for jobs at the point of graduation will inevitably intensify and the nature of that competition will change.

The impact on student life as a whole has never been more intense. It is vital that the university enables students to make the most of their experience of HE. Through providing a range of work experience opportunities to promote the development of employability skills (reflection, team working, problem solving) the Network Project ensures that Salford's students are able to experience a more holistic education, promoting the successful progression through higher education and into full-time employment.

Programme detail

It is with this in mind that Volunteering @ Salford came together with the Network Project to offer students the opportunity to develop employability skills through volunteering. The two projects have been operating in partnership for the past year, piloting the Network Work Experience Award (WEA). Students undertake volunteering projects as part of the elective

independent learning module in ESPaCH[4], facilitated by Dr Elaine Baldwin (School of Sociology and Chair of the Volunteering @ Salford Steering Group), Andy Kay (Careers Service) and Rory Daly (Project Manager for Volunteering @ Salford). The students work with a wide range of organisations including Partners of Prisoners, Barnardo's, Age Concern and Fairbridge. Academics and representatives from the Careers Service and the Education Development Unit assess the students' workbooks, reports and presentations. On completion of the module, students receive credits towards their degree and a certificate from the University Careers Service and Volunteering @ Salford.

The outcome has been extremely positive, with students demonstrating learning and development through the unification of theory and practice, and being rewarded for their achievements. This also served to meet one of the needs of the Volunteering @ Salford project; that of offering volunteers some form of certification while allowing the Network Project to pilot the WEA and ensure its applicability in a range of voluntary and community settings.

Hints and tips

Be very wary of proposing to add to an academic's workload. Academics who support HEACF activities will often be supporting other non-curricular student issues such as welfare and student unions. It is important not to make too many demands on their goodwill.

The future

The WEA will now be offered to all volunteers at Salford, and all concerned are determined to maintain the links between Volunteering @ Salford, the Careers Service and schools and faculties. This will ensure that volunteers continue to have a positive impact on the local community, while developing a range of employability skills to enable successful progression into the employment market.

Since October 2004 a further 20 students have commenced the WEA as part of the independent learning module in the School of Community, Health Science and Social Care.

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[4] The university's School of English, Sociology, Politics and Contemporary History.

Case study AV5 (2003)
Online Learning Material for Volunteers
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Context

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) wanted to help volunteers to make the most of their volunteering experiences in all kinds of ways, especially in terms of their personal development and employability. It considered different ways of offering some training or accreditation that would enable them to reflect upon their activities for their future benefit.

A key consideration was the pressure most students are under to manage their time. The majority of students have term time and holiday jobs as well as academic demands to meet, and MMU felt it was unrealistic to expect them to complete the portfolios that are required for formal accreditation schemes. Equally, the limited guaranteed time-scale of the HEACF funding at the outset meant that there was a danger of students starting accreditation processes that could not be completed or assessed during the lifetime of the project. Many students would not be able to commit themselves to long-term volunteering and, indeed, might only be able to offer a few hours, possibly only on a casual or one-off basis.

For these reasons, MMU rejected existing formal accreditation. Training sessions in groups, or possibly on a one-to-one basis was also considered in order to help students prepare for, and reflect upon, volunteering activity. Again, it was felt there were practical problems in arranging times for such sessions, in dealing with small numbers of students starting activity at different times in the term or holidays, and in them having sufficient motivation or free time to attend.

The university concluded that what was required was a range of materials which were flexible, and could be used or not as required. To this end a volunteering handbook was produced, complemented by online learning material and, in conjunction with Student Volunteering England, certificates of recognition.

Programme detail

Rosie Ford, a careers adviser and qualified teacher with experience of voluntary work, was employed on a project basis to write the materials. Her first task was to discuss the content and style with the coMMUni team. It was decided to reject academic rigour in favour of a light hearted 'fun' approach, which did not appear too demanding to the student, and to arrange the material so that it could be dipped into as desired. There are three sections:
1. Choosing and preparing for voluntary work.
2. Making the most of voluntary work and developing skills.
3. 'Beyond volunteering', which looks at how to use the experience in CVs, application forms and interviews.

The material can be accessed via the website: www.communi.mmu.ac.uk/ontrainprog.htm
It has been written in Web CT, increasingly used in higher education to offer online course material to students. One of the advantages is that it can be edited or added to relatively

easily by coMMUni staff who do not need to have specialist skills in the use of HTML, although some training is required in the use of Web CT. It was fortunate that two volunteers, one a trainee teacher, came forward to produce some cartoon-style illustrations which have since been adopted by the coMMUni project and used in the marketing material, making a more cohesive image and, hopefully, a more youthful appeal.

The material incorporates quizzes, worksheets, links to relevant websites and sources of further help and advice, for example the Careers Service, Skill, and the Connexions service. The last section includes templates for constructing CVs, which should encourage students to produce something tangible.

Recommendations

Staff and students at MMU can access the online material and utilise all or only relevant parts, as they best fit. This provides the volunteer with control over their time and reasons for accessing the training. It has been designed using Web CT to allow staff to track the usage and value of the course. It has been opened up as a live course from the start of this academic year and will be evaluated as the year progresses.

As the coMMUni project is very much about strengthening ties with the local community it was felt that these materials might be useful to community organisations engaging with volunteers, therefore they should be made widely available. The content was tweaked so that it was relevant for adults other than students, and some additional information was included, for example, a skills-based CV template which was appropriate for someone with substantial work experience rather than degree-based education. Community organisations or individuals outside the university will need to request a user name and password to use the material, but otherwise, it will be openly accessible.

Case study AV6 (2004)
Imperial Volunteer Centre - Accreditation
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www.imperial.ac.uk/volunteering

Context

The Imperial Volunteer Centre offers opportunities for both staff and students to interact with the wider community through volunteering. Volunteering has long been acknowledged as a key vehicle for the development of transferable skills; thus accreditation greatly supports the Volunteer Centre's operational strategy. Also, the current external environment, such as the existing best practice guidelines, suggest that external accreditation should be part of any effective volunteer management strategy.

Accreditation offered by other universities is generally used to enhance students' employability. Imperial Volunteer Centre however wanted to offer something flexible enough to suit both student and staff volunteers. Currently this type of external accreditation programme is being piloted, and during the academic year 2005-06 it will be made available to everyone. Thus volunteering will become part of the college's longer-term strategy to offer an increasing variety of development opportunities for staff and students.

Programme detail

Imperial Volunteer Centre chose to use the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network's (ASDAN's) Certificate in Community Volunteering (CCV). This certificate recognises the general skills and good practice that volunteers need to show and consists of the following units:

- Unit 1: Preparing to volunteer
- Unit 2: Skills for self-management
- Unit 3: Dealing with meetings
- Unit 4: Working to good practice standards
- Unit 5: Understanding needs, issues and responses

Volunteers need to complete any four out of the five units to gain the full CCV certificate. It is also possible to gain certification for the achievement of individual units. Volunteers need to register with the Volunteer Centre before they can participate in the accreditation programme. Once volunteers have registered they receive information about the programme. Volunteers will then attend a one-to-one meeting with the Volunteer Centre staff, during which the volunteers receive their portfolio and sign an agreement.

The volunteer then starts to build up their portfolio by collecting the necessary evidence. The existing Volunteer Centre procedures, and for example the Volunteer Handbook, can be used as evidence on this occasion. In this way the administrative burden on the external organisation is kept to the minimum.

The volunteer can decide how much time to spend on each unit and whether to complete all units or only some. This flexibility is especially important for staff members who usually only have limited time. This accreditation programme is also available to those who have already volunteered for a longer period or have just started volunteering.

All volunteers must generate evidence to the standard specified by the assessment criteria set by ASDAN. Each unit's portfolio will be internally assessed and moderated before it is sent to the external moderator. The volunteer receives a certificate after each completed unit and once the volunteer has successfully completed any four units out of five, the full CCV certificate will be issued.

Volunteers are asked to fill in an exit questionnaire after each single unit or/and after they have received the full CCV certificate. This feedback ensures that lessons can be learnt from the piloting period before the programme is made available to everyone.

The Volunteer Centre organises a once yearly volunteers' celebration party. During this event all volunteers receive an in-house certificate, regardless of their participation in the accreditation programme. Those who have completed their accreditation programme will also receive a special certificate from the Volunteer Centre.

The accreditation programme requires a lot of work to run effectively. The Volunteer Centre uses its existing procedures to support it. In order to successfully attain accreditation, volunteers need planned opportunities to identify their learning needs and acquire the know-how. If the accreditation programme is introduced and implemented effectively, volunteers will be better managed and more new volunteers will be recruited as the accreditation will be an extra bonus.

The Volunteer Centre will also continue discussions with the Staff Development Unit as the accreditation programme can also be used as part of an effective staff development programme.

Hints and tips

- *Customer service* – the accreditation programme must be simple, user-friendly and practical. All details must be planned throughout, for example it is important to have electronic versions of all relevant forms to speed the evidence collection process.
- *Volunteer Centre staff* – staff need to receive the necessary training and support so that high quality customer service can be provided to volunteers.
- *Responsibility areas* – simple flow charts help to summarise everyone's responsibilities as it is important to make clear what is expected from volunteers, from the Volunteer Centre and from the external organisations.
- *Procedures* – using existing procedures and practices reduces the administrative burden. For example, all volunteers must attend an induction session, when they receive the Volunteer Handbook which can be used as evidence in their portfolio.
- *Feedback* – regular feedback needs to be collected by existing methods, such as customer surveys, online feedback forms and 1-2-1 meetings. Regular feedback should be used to improve the programme delivery.
- *Review* – it is important to critically review the programme before it is made available to everyone. The feedback should be used for this purpose. It is also a good idea to keep a log book during the pilot period to record lessons learnt and as a basis for future action.
- *Celebration* – those who have been involved in setting up, running and developing the programme should be rewarded. This gives everyone a chance to see what has been achieved and to feel valued.

Communications

Communicating with both the internal world (university departments, students' union, careers service, staff and students) and the external world (local media, the public at large, potential volunteering partners) is of vital importance to the HEACF. Firstly, without clear and accessible information available to all potential volunteers, there would be no volunteers. This is heightened by the inclusion of staff as a target group of the HEACF.

Alongside this is the need for volunteering on an internal basis to be accepted and understood by a number of parties:

- ***personal tutors***: their acceptance and understanding of tutees participating in volunteering activities gives students more encouragement to get involved. The skills the students will subsequently gain from these activities will also give personal tutors more information on which they can base reports and references for their tutees
- ***departmental heads***: acceptance and understanding on the part of departmental heads will support the work of personal tutors in encouraging participation in volunteering
- ***potential partners***: it is particularly beneficial to the HEACF if departments of the university which offer external voluntary opportunities are aware of the work of the HEACF team. This enables a coherent approach, both to promoting the opportunities to students and to building the relationship with the local community
- ***communications and public affairs unit***: it may be difficult for the HEACF team to develop relations with this unit, given the 'newness' of the HEACF and the need to build credibility in order for attention to be drawn to their work.

Internal communication in this sense plays a lobbying role within the HEI.

Secondly, and building on the last point, one of the key objectives of the HEACF is to improve the relationship between HEIs and their local communities. While the instigation of a number of valuable or far-reaching community-based projects is admirable, it is unlikely on its own to improve relationships on a scale great enough to constitute the amelioration of the university/community relationship. Communication plays a vital role in reinforcing the positive messages to be drawn from the university's involvement in the local community.

This section explores the different mechanisms for communicating, in the first instance, with students and staff in order to recruit volunteers or raise awareness in local communities, as well as to continue the communication of key messages to all stakeholders during the lifetime of the volunteering programmes.

Case study C1 (2003)
Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) Website
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www.uclunion.org/volunteer

Context

The internet was found to be one of the most powerful tools in reaching and communicating with students and staff members. It was a priority from the beginning to create exciting, informative web pages where students and staff could find out about the services offered. In the first year of operation, a large number of volunteers found out about the VSU through the website.

Programme detail

VSU website structure:

- *Introduction* – This page introduces prospective volunteers to the unit and lists some of the benefits of volunteering.
- *Getting in touch* – It was important to establish a welcoming tone and encourage anyone interested in the activities to get in touch with the VSU at any point.
- *Project Directory* – The Project Directory is by far the most used one on the VSU web pages. Students and staff members who are interested in volunteering usually want to know what types of activities they can get involved in before booking an appointment. Prospective volunteers can browse all the projects, listed under headings such as Administration, Animals, Befriending, Environmental Work and Fundraising.
- *Newsletter* – It is published monthly, listing upcoming one-off volunteering events, new projects, training opportunities, and other bits from the world of UCL Volunteering.
- *Volunteer profiles* – The VSU recognises that the best way to find out about volunteering is from people who have volunteered themselves. This page features interviews with six students who talk about their different volunteering experiences, which range from helping out at an urban farm to coaching football to homeless people.
- *Support for volunteers* – The VSU wants prospective volunteers to be aware of the support offered, so they know what to expect from the unit and so that they are not forgotten once they start volunteering. Students are also asked if there is any other form of support they would like.
- *Training and accreditation* – Here students can find out about the Training Programme, the new UCL Volunteer Development Award scheme and the VSU Award Ceremony.
- *Grant scheme* – The VSU offers small grants to enable students, staff members and partner organisations to set up new volunteering projects involving the UCL community. This section lists the basic criteria for applying and how to get an application form.
- *International students* – Through dealing with many international volunteers, the unit realised that it would be useful to address them on the website – particularly if they happened to look at it before leaving for UCL.
- *Mature students and UCL staff* – The VSU is trying hard to recruit staff members and mature students, and has a page with information specifically for them.

- *Library* – There is a small library from which volunteers or prospective volunteers can borrow books related to volunteering, fundraising, project management and child protection, to mention a few.

Why is this good practice?

Removing barriers: The introductory page highlights the fact that students and staff members can get involved even if they don't have much spare time on their hands, and that out-of-pocket expenses such as travel costs are reimbursed. The VSU has established a welcoming tone and emphasises that people can get in touch at any point. Contact details are easily found, and the unit provides different ways for people to get in touch (phone, e-mail, visit in person or fill in a form online).

*Ease of locating information***:** The Project Directory describes all the projects on the books, including the different volunteer roles offered and the time commitment required, which is often a deciding factor when searching for suitable volunteering opportunities. It is easy to use as students/staff members can go straight to the area in which they are interested and see all the options offered. The VSU Newsletter, Training Programme and Library List are downloadable from the web page and students and staff can subscribe to the e-mail version by completing a short form online. Students find this useful, as they can find out more about the unit before they decide to become involved as volunteers.

*Widening participation and inclusion***:** Volunteer profiles not only give the volunteers' perspective, but also show that people from different backgrounds get involved in voluntary activities. To help international students get involved in volunteering, the web pages give information that will speed up the process relating to references and Criminal Records Bureau checks. This is especially important if the students are only here for a short while. The web pages also emphasise that mature students and staff members are not excluded from volunteering and that there are opportunities particularly suitable for them.

Hints and tips

- Let students know that **even if they only have very little time to spare***,* they can still get involved in voluntary activities (such as one-offs).
- **A Project Directory** which lists the different projects under appropriate headings with short descriptions of the opportunities available is a great help for students getting an idea of all the things they can do as volunteers.
- **Photographs** of students engaged in different voluntary activities make the web pages more visually exciting and interesting.
- Organise a **'photo week'** where you agree with some volunteers to visit them on their projects and take their picture.
- Ask everyone in a photograph to sign a **Data Protection Consent Form,** detailing where you are planning to use the images. This can be tricky at large events, and it is a good idea to indicate on the sign-in list at a larger function that you may use photographs from it in your publicity. If guests do not wish to have their photo published, they can indicate this by their name.
- **Update all information regularly** – this may sound obvious, but it can be easy to forget to update every little change in descriptions in the Project Directory (for example if the time of a project has changed or a specific volunteer role has been filled).

Case study C2 (2003)
Points of Contact
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www.hud.ac.uk/out_there/index.htm

Context

The University of Huddersfield's HEACF projects are divided into eight areas: six are located within academic schools and services, one in the students' union and one is located centrally for co-ordination and monitoring. The second point of contact idea was a collaboration between the co-ordination and monitoring section and the Students' Union.

Programme detail

The students' union at the University of Huddersfield is home to the Hands On Volunteering Project, the volunteer bureau. All staff and students are invited to contact the Hands On Volunteering office for information and advice about volunteering and finding suitable placements. However, it was discovered that particular groups of people were not using the facilities of the Hands On Volunteering Project. These included staff, Asian and mature students. It was thought that the main reason for this was because the Hands On Volunteering office was located in the students' union. Many Asian students do not go into the union because of the bars, and many staff and mature students did not feel comfortable there.

At the same time, Voluntary Action Kirklees, a local volunteer bureau, reported that they were receiving several enquiries from Asian and mature students at the university.
It was decided that an extra point of contact could be created at the university to target these particular groups and allow them to access information about volunteering without having to enter the students' union.

With the links already established between the university and Voluntary Action Kirklees , a stand was put in a central location on campus once a week during term time for a few hours, giving students and staff the opportunity to 'drop-in' and find out about volunteering. A member of staff from Voluntary Action Kirklees was also on hand to give help and advice.

Many of the potential volunteers who have visited the stand have been Asian or mature students and staff. The stand has helped to raise the awareness of volunteering opportunities through the university to these groups. The stand was piloted in the final term of the last academic year, and due to its success, continues this year.

Case study C3 (2003)
I Want More… Project
University of Newcastle

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Context

Newcastle University's HEACF money has paid for a full-time Active Community Co-ordinator. Based in the students' union, this post has co-ordinated the 'I Want More…' project through the Student Development Network (SDN). The SDN was established in 1999-2000, and forms a body of university and students' union services at Newcastle that provide development opportunities for students. The group consists of the following members:

- Student Community Action Newcastle (SCAN)
- 'Students into…' (a project that establishes volunteering placements in educational settings for students)
- Athletics Union
- Student Jobshop
- University Careers Service
- The Courier (Student Newspaper)
- Newcastle Student Radio
- Language Centre
- Enterprise Centre
- student societies.

The 'I Want More…' project gives a focus to a variety of different opportunities that students are presented with at Newcastle University. By promoting everything under one banner everyone has easy access to the information available. Volunteering opportunities are an essential element of the SDN. By placing them among a wide range of other opportunities, the message reaches a greater number of students who had maybe not considered volunteering as an option before.

Programme detail

The concept of the 'I Want More…' project came out of the SDN group's need to have a distinct identity across campus that would appeal to students. This would enable promotion of all the opportunities under one banner and raise awareness among staff. The project was set up at the end of period one in 2001 with the following aims and objectives in mind:

Aims:
- To integrate volunteering into a more holistic group of opportunities so it becomes one of a series of options students can access.
- To give the existing SDN a distinct external identity and reunite the group to create an internal identity and goal.
- To make the wide-range of opportunities more accessible to students.
- To work collaboratively across the university establishing new working partnerships to benefit both students and community.

Objectives

- To create an integrated visual identity by using the 'I Want More…' logo and concept.
- To establish a website that holds information on all the opportunities and experiences available to students.
- Work with heads of schools in the university to create an outlet for 'I Want More…' project within the academic environment.
- To work on community focused projects within the SDN and academic schools.

Since 'I Want More…' was established, 11 projects have been set up that involve SDN members working together. Those that specifically promote volunteering as an opportunity include:

- Skills workshop: this incorporates the Student Jobshop and the 'I Want More…' opportunities, promoting them as a means to gain employability.
- 'I Want More…' stalls. These have so far been present at 10 events around campus, talking one-to-one with students about volunteering and other opportunities that they can get involved with.
- 'I Want More…' postcards. With the logo on the front and all the contact details of the different opportunity providers on the back, these are placed in all SDN members areas as well at key events around campus.
- Increasing awareness within the group to internally promote each other's opportunities. For example, the SCAN team gave a presentation to the Careers Service detailing what volunteering opportunities they worked with; this could then be related to students visiting the Careers Service who were looking for work experience.
- The 'I Want More…' website. This was developed over summer 2003. Not only does the website contain all the SDN members' information but it has also absorbed other community projects such as making university facilities more accessible to members of the community, and other student development opportunities such as an on-line language exchange. The University Computing Service also agreed to put a link from the main university page so students can instantly access the website when they log onto the university's computers. The URL is www.i-want-more.net

Future development

While time between the end of period one in late 2002 and September 2003 was largely used to develop the concept of 'I Want More…', the rest of the academic year 2003-04 will involve embedding the concept into the wider university's conscious (students and staff). An SDN Outreach Worker is to be recruited who will be responsible for promoting the project around the campus. This post will pick up on groundwork that was undertaken in summer 2003 which gathered support for the project from the heads of academic schools.

Evaluation

Achievements of the 'I Want More…' project so far:

- 'I Want More…' has been featured in the university's Employability Strategy Statement 2003-04.
- The number of volunteers registering with SCAN has gone up this year. Anecdotally they claim that the greater promotion of their voluntary opportunities from the 'I Want More…' project has had a definite impact on this increase.

- The 'Students into…' team have found that the number of students registering with the project has risen from 350 in 2002 to over 500 so far in 2003. They report that the 'I Want More…' project played a significant role in this increase.
- There have been 11 projects coming out of the SDN group since the start of the HEACF fund, with 5 of these centring on promotion of opportunities.
- In September 2003 alone there were 198 distinct users of the new website and 62 registered users of the Language Exchange.

Hints and tips

- Work hard at making contacts within academic schools or departments; this can lead to new projects and also can provide support to promote opportunities within the school.
- Be prepared to turn up and promote yourself at any event.
- Make sure there are clear advantages for other opportunity providers to participate in the project e.g. their service can be promoted under one banner therefore they don't need to provide staff at every event.
- Try to create visual impact in various locations such as the other project members' offices and in communal student areas by themed displays relevant to the area.

Case study C4 (2003)
Promotion of volunteering as an opportunity for students
London Metropolitan University

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Context

This case study will cover the whole of the ACF project, not just one project within the funded area. The aim is to stress the importance of creating an identity and then to promote volunteering through it, ensuring that the materials are appropriate for students.

Branding: The fish symbol first came on the scene within the university in 1997 through students' union leisure activities. He was then a rough, unnamed drawing and was withdrawn two years later with a change of elected officers. The Student Development Service (SDS) submitted a bid in the summer of 2001 knowing that branding would be essential to the future of volunteering. SDS wanted to launch volunteering in National Student Volunteering Week semester B 2002, prior to funding streams coming on line, and had struggled to promote volunteering in the previous months.

A strong image was needed both to engage sponsors and to excite potential student volunteers. A brand identity was sought that had no established cultural or political significance and as such StAN (Student Activities Network) was perfect for use with a student body as diverse as that of London Metropolitan. The fish was resurrected, named 'StAN', redesigned and employed as the symbol for the whole of the SDS. The strap line: 'Get a life, not just a degree!' was added and StAN swam forth into the university.

Marketing: The SDS was very closely related to the Careers Service and had been moved into Careers during the funding period. The volunteering emphasis has been very much on employability, work experience and academic-related opportunities, as the majority of students do not have the money or time to volunteer for purely altruistic reasons. With a high proportion of students on low income, and the demands of balancing study and making ends meet whilst developing the extra skills that their future employability will rely upon, it is vital that students have a volunteering service that they can both contribute to and benefit from. Projects have been carefully selected to require minimal time commitment and to reward/accredit in various ways to encourage students. StAN gives a 'fun and funky' image to the serious business of promoting volunteering in a structured and professional manner, creating an inclusive and available brand concept with real depth of service. Though standard practice in marketing circles, this approach within student development was hitherto unknown.

Materials: Long-term research of statistics and various papers related to volunteering have been incorporated into these materials. Available materials have been adapted (e.g. Student Volunteering England's 'The Art of Crazy Paving') in order to make them suitable to local requirements. Existing materials were generally related to white British students, with few quotes from ethnic minority students at older universities. To make volunteering accessible to students, images and quotes that were relevant to London Metropolitan's ethnic profile were needed. Time was spent interviewing student volunteers and compiling digital images for case studies reflecting the London Metropolitan experience. The need for sustainability,

adaptability and responsiveness within tight financial constraints has led to materials that can be readily modified with significant impact in terms of relevance and longevity. Materials can be updated each semester, adding new case studies and other documents.

Materials inventory

Handbook: Loose leaf, adaptable, comprehensive, with images and case studies from the university.

Newsletters: Several student newsletters, a staff newsletter and a voluntary organisations newsletter for those whose opportunities are promoted.

Event materials: 6ft StAN complete with bubble machine; laminated case studies and photographs; inspirational banners with quotes from Dr Zeuss, Mother Teresa, Anne Frank, Ibsen, Gandhi; StAN balloons; rolling PowerPoint presentation and display screens balancing research and user-friendly bullet-pointed information on opportunities.

StAN branded giveaways: These are very popular at events such as the Freshers Fair and attract students to the stand. They are also used as prizes for competitions and as an incentive to students to give regular updates on their placements:

- baseball caps
- bags
- pens
- mugs
- pens
- erasers
- keyrings
- jellybeans
- stress balls
- clocks
- mouse mats at all the computer stations (770) in the technology building.

Flyers/posters: Tailored to relate to subject areas such as journalism and law, with an informal style (e.g. 'Law students: Can you make it from the classroom to the bar?'). These are put on notice boards in each faculty. The subject-related flyers have information on the academic-related opportunities for those students.

Methods of promotion: Induction talks in lectures at the beginning of term
- Freshers Fair and staff inductions
- Volunteering Fair
- National Student Volunteering Week
- stands in the cafes for summer opportunities
- StAN awards – a certificate for a minimum of 20 hours volunteering presented at an award event
- TV screens with rolling presentation in foyer/welcome areas.

Other methods of promotion, such as login messages, are in use, with constant evaluation of where students saw opportunities, leading to a highly responsive service. Areas not directly promoted (e.g. peer referrals) can be monitored effectively.

The Student Welcome Team: T-shirts have been essential when raising the profile, with staff and students wearing them at events. StAN appears on the T-shirts of the Student

Welcome Team during induction week as they are run through the SDS and at Freshers Fairs.

Text messaging: Used to remind students of interview/training times for their projects. The message comes from StANtheFish.

Website: www.londonmet.ac.uk/student-services

Hints and tips

- Get yourself an image. It raises your profile and grabs attention. StAN appeared on Carlton TV for a year with the same students, wearing T-shirts, interviewed on student debt. Islington Council provided funding for a two-year project on the grounds that they had seen StAN on the website and so felt it had the image to promote the work in schools. StAN now appears in local schools and the local FE college, and is proving equally popular there.
- Develop case studies, an image library and continually interview students whenever you get the opportunity.
- Run lunchtime stands in a busy part of the university for a week. It really boosts interest outside of freshers' weeks.
- Constantly evaluate your materials and methods and adjust your work appropriately.

Case study C5 (2003)
The CommUNIty Newsletter Project
Joint submission by the Universities of Northumbria and Newcastle upon Tyne

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Context

The CommUnity newsletter project evolved as a result of the HEACF allocation to the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria, in March 2002. The universities are located in the heart of the city of Newcastle and therefore have a shared community. The HEACF funding offered them an opportunity to establish and build links within the local community through collaborative projects.

In order to reach the local community the idea of developing a joint community newsletter evolved. The two universities carried out extensive market research in the autumn of 2002 and the results indicated that the community would benefit from a twice-yearly newsletter. The first edition was published in March 2003 and the second edition will be published in November.

Programme detail

The aim of the CommUNIty project is:-

- to publish an informative and interesting newsletter for all community members
- to break down barriers between the universities and the local community
- to advertise any activities and events that members of the public can access at both universities
- to promote the activities of student volunteers in the community and how this could become a resource for other local projects
- to provide a cost-effective means of promoting and raising awareness of the universities' facilities to the local community.

The newsletter is presented in four easy to access sections:
- Community Projects
- Volunteer Viewpoint
- What's On Guide
- Community Learning

Building links with the community: The CommUNIty project uses a low-tech approach, giving people information in an easy to access format. It draws together relevant services

and activities from each university into a single accessible format. The four sections of the newsletter aim to benefit the community in different ways:

- Community projects section raises awareness of the universities' involvement in community-based projects. Fifteen new organisations contacted Northumbria University as a result of the first edition; the number of new opportunities for volunteers this has provided is still being realised. Clearly this section will inspire ideas of how the universities might collaborate and benefit other community projects.

This section also includes researched articles on places around the university that people can identify with. For example, the latest edition includes some research undertaken at Newcastle University involving the setting up of citizens' juries. The article explains how important it is for everyone to have their opinion heard and it includes information on how groups and individuals can create their own citizens' juries.

- Volunteer Viewpoint has two aspects providing an insight from community project workers, describing how student volunteers have helped their projects and articles written by volunteers themselves, about their experience with a community project in Newcastle. It is anticipated that this will raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering to both community organisations and students.

- The What's On guide includes information on galleries, museums, public lectures, concerts and other entertainment available to try and encourage more community involvement. Many of the activities are free, as are several workshops that community groups and individuals can participate in.

  The rationale behind promoting these facilities to a wider audience is to open up the universities and widen participation, not just in a learning capacity. This is a very cost-effective way of promoting the institutions, as publicity budgets for areas such as galleries and museums are typically quite low.

- Community Learning focuses attention on the short courses available at the universities. Contact details are included to encourage readers to get in touch with ideas, suggestions and project initiatives.

Sustainability

The distribution list is made up of external projects, community groups, workers and members of the public; it currently stands at 282 contacts. The list is increasing through growing interaction with the community and will ensure the universities have a greater involvement around the city.

The strength of the project is clearly in the partnership approach; the costs and duties are shared between both institutions. The Newcastle University press office and senior managers have also been collaborating with the production of the second edition, to ensure that articles are relevant and the information is up to date.

Professor Christopher Edwards, Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University said:
 'I think this is an excellent enterprise and a most impressive publication. Not only does it help the local community find out what is going on at Northumbria and Newcastle Universities, but it also indicates the wide-ranging activities of volunteers from the two universities.'

The significance of this project is that it can be replicated in different formats, costs and scales. Its flexible nature could offer other universities with small networks and budgets the

opportunity to do something equally useful as larger institutions, adapting the format as circumstances change.

Summary of successes from the first edition of 'CommUNIty'

- The development of a model of good collaborative practice.
- Demonstrates to community members how universities can benefit as individuals and the organisations they work with.
- Fifteen new contacts from the first edition led to an increase in the number of volunteering opportunities offered to students.
- Distribution list of 282 contacts.
- A greater awareness across the universities has increased the level of support for subsequent publications.
- Free publicity for areas of the universities with small promotional budgets.
- Improving the public's awareness of the universities' community-focused work.

Hints and tips

- Internal awareness of the project is as important as external awareness.
- If you are working in a students' union it is important to get the university management team on board – there is far more going on that might benefit and interest the community than you will be aware of.
- Your university press office already has material on projects and local interest stories that they might be willing to include – this saves time in chasing up articles from various sources. They are experts on printing and layout.
- Keep the articles relevant and stick to your agenda – there must be some benefit or interest to the community in any article submitted.

Devolved projects

While many HEIs have welcomed the HEACF as a method for directly developing new volunteering projects, a number of other institutions have opted to run slightly different models of programming. The devolved route, or 'bureau' model, plays very much on the relationship-building aspect of the HEACF, with the bureau being perceived as a bridge between the HEI and the local community. The bureau also enables funds to be directly devolved, allowing students or student/community partnerships to form at the most fundamental stage of the project process – its inception.

Other reasons are given for the establishment of such a model:

- already a great diversity of projects in the local area
- HEI offers volunteering opportunities across many different departments, and the bureau is the single promotional arm for these
- builds on existing community programmes, but opens placements to students for the first time
- enables student-led projects
- enables partnerships to be formed from the outset of projects
- places emphasis of local HEACF on building the relationship between HEI and community.

This section looks at the best practice from institutions where responsibility for setting up volunteering programmes is not usually taken on by the manager of the HEACF, but by individuals or local groups. The HEACF provides funding for the brokerage or initiation of these placements and programmes.

Case study DP1 (2003)
STAX (Students Taking Action for Community Change)
Oxford Brookes University Students' Union

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Context

Prior to the HEACF, volunteering activity at Oxford Brookes was limited to referring interested students to a local Millennium Volunteers project. The funding has enabled a project to be set up based in the students' union. Staffed by a full time volunteer co-ordinator and part-time administrator, line management is undertaken by the student development manager. The project reports overall to a management committee made up of both student union and senior university staff.

The first task was to undertake a mapping exercise of the voluntary activities currently being carried out by Brookes' students. This revealed involvement in a diverse range of projects not concentrated in any particular area. A further mapping exercise identifying needs in the local community revealed a large number of community groups offering an extremely wide variety of opportunities, all in need of further support.

As a result it was felt that rather than attempt to set up a further single project the best use of the HEACF in the Oxfordshire area would be to offer students a range of opportunities. The team was also keen to ensure the funding developed and built upon existing voluntary activity. By setting up a specific project they could be seen to be reinventing the wheel, possibly competing with existing volunteer groups. It was therefore decided to follow an agency model, to act as a bridge between potential student volunteers and local community groups.

Programme detail

During the summer of 2002 the Volunteer Co-ordinator undertook an extensive needs analysis amongst local community groups. This included establishing the following:

- nature of the organisation
- type of volunteer opportunities offered
- training opportunities offered
- policies in place to include health and safety, insurance cover, confidentiality and further examples of best practice.

The exercise introduced the project to community groups and invited them to register. Opportunities could then be advertised to the student population. Issues of establishing realistic expectations on behalf of both parties could also be addressed at this stage. Each group registering with the project is given an information pack containing background information and policy documents.

Policy development: The development of realistic and comprehensive policies was seen as a priority for this project. The agency model means that students will be volunteering in a variety of organisations and locations. As staff will not have day to day access to the student volunteers, the responsibility of addressing and introducing volunteering best practice is

extremely important. Therefore alongside the initial mapping process was the development of policy documents. The importance of having clear policies was reinforced as contact with community groups grew. It became obvious that these groups are run and resourced in many different ways and do not always have the opportunity to cover policy development and implementation as comprehensively as they would wish. A useful spin-off has been for the project staff to share information on policy development with the community groups and the team has provided some welcome support in this area.

Project and volunteer management: The STAX (Students Taking Action for Community Change) project was launched to students at the start of the academic year in 2002 and has just completed its first year. There are a total of 170 community groups registered, offering 203 different types of volunteer opportunity. These include:
- conservation groups
- children's charities
- projects based in primary and secondary schools
- support groups for elderly people
- carnival and event organisation
- support groups for people with disabilities
- advice and guidance projects
- mental health support groups
- roles in local hospitals
- roles with refugee groups
- roles in urban redevelopment projects.

Volunteer matching process: All the volunteer opportunities registered with STAX are displayed on notice boards in the STAX office. The office is open throughout the year as a drop-in service. Staff are on hand to assist with enquiries. Once interest has been established, every volunteer has an interview with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. This is a vital part of the process; it is an opportunity to discuss expectations, time management issues, policy and best practice, and match volunteers to an opportunity. Volunteers are registered with STAX and issued with a student pack. The pack contains the following:

- background info on STAX
- policy documents
- health and safety information
- disclosure information
- personal development form.

The next stage after matching has taken place is to arrange a meeting with the community group, attended by a representative from the community group, the volunteer and the Volunteer Co-ordinator. The meeting acts as an introduction and once again establishes expectations on both sides. This is confirmed in the signing by all parties of a placement agreement form, which details the rights and responsibilities of all concerned.

Induction and on-going support: STAX is aware that a significant factor in successful volunteering placements is providing on-going support. Each active volunteer is invited to an induction session held on campus. This has several benefits, covering formal training such as health and safety and establishing further training needs. Volunteers are asked to contribute feedback on the role of STAX and provide input into its running and organisation. These sessions also give volunteers the opportunity to meet one another and share experiences. Further formal contact is maintained through the use of volunteer progress sheets and follow up meetings throughout the volunteer experience.

***Social events*:** Social interaction is an extremely important aspect of volunteering. Volunteering should be fun and a great way to meet people, therefore there are a variety of social events, such as meals out, barbecues, music nights and open mike evenings.

Benefits

The benefits of developing the STAX project as an agency model supports initial research into what student volunteers were interested in doing and into answering local community needs.

***Volunteers*:** The variety of experiences offered through the project is an advantage as it can provide solutions to many of the recognised barriers to volunteering, for example it answers a number of motivations:

- personal interest
- previous experience
- course related
- career related.

The variety of opportunities also allows for a very flexible level of commitment. STAX can offer opportunities that require weekly commitment, one-off projects or on an 'as available' basis. This helps in attracting a more diverse range of volunteers.

***Community groups*:** The project has supported many local groups by offering access to previously under-used resources at the university, as follows:

- provision of volunteers
- STAX volunteers are recognised as contributing fresh insight into many of the projects through both personal and educational experience
- STAX has developed very positive relationships locally through sharing resources and information i.e. assisting groups with policy development
- many of the groups have visited the campus and have a more positive image of the university and an insight into the student experience.

Possible pitfalls

Staff and resources: The agency model can be demanding of both staff and resources. Displaying a wide range of information and supporting materials requires adequate space. The information also requires frequent contact with community groups to keep it up to date and organised. Keeping track of and maintaining contact with volunteers and groups in such a variety of locations is very time consuming.

Community groups: Community groups can have high expectations. All parties need to be aware of exactly what is being offered. STAX has to ensure groups understand there is no guarantee of finding volunteers: it depends upon students' interests and availability.

Case study DP2 (2003)
Running a grant scheme
University of Cambridge

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Context

One of the ways in which the University of Cambridge has chosen to increase volunteering opportunities for its students and staff is by running a grant scheme. The grant scheme is known as the 'Active Community Fund' and is open to both university projects and external voluntary organisations. Eligible projects must create new volunteering opportunities for students and/or staff from the university.

Programme detail

In 2003-04 there is a small stream of up to £5,000 and a large stream of up to £20,000. Applicants to the Active Community Fund go through a formal process, filling in an application form, with reference to the guidelines provided. All potential applicants are encouraged to talk to the Community Relations Co-ordinator first, so that their applications can be checked for eligibility. This is particularly important for external organisations, who are less familiar with the scheme and with the university.

There are three deadlines each year. Once the forms have been received, they are scored by the Community Relations Co-ordinator and a colleague. All applications are scored using the same criteria. For example, projects receive more points if they involve ongoing use of volunteers, and if the project is crucial to the well being of the community. Based on these scores, the university's Committee on Community Activities decides which projects should be granted funds. In the case of the larger stream (up to £20,000), the committee sees the full application form and the scoring system is more sophisticated.

If projects are not successful, they are given feedback and encouraged to apply again in the next round. Successful projects are asked to fill in an evaluation form, which also asks for feedback on the grant giving process, which can then be adapted as appropriate. Successful projects are also asked whether they need help in recruiting their new volunteers – some do and some don't. The team tries to set up long-term sustainable links with external voluntary organisations, which hopefully remain once the grant is finished. For example, a link was set up between departments in the university studying Alzheimer's, and the local branch of the Alzheimer's Society, which was looking for volunteers for a new drop-in centre and music therapy group.

Benefits

The grant scheme has been a huge success because:
- it has fulfilled its primary aim of creating new volunteering opportunities
- opening up the scheme to external voluntary organisations, as well as to university projects, has led to excellent publicity for the university
- it has led to the establishment of mutually beneficial links between the university and the voluntary sector. It looks as though these links will far outlive the funding received by the organisations through the grant scheme

- it has substantially raised the profile of volunteering by university students and staff – external organisations have often not considered the potential of tapping into the voluntary resources held in the university until their attention is caught by the grant scheme
- it is seen by projects in the university as a fair and transparent way of distributing ACF funds
- the larger stream of up to £20,000 will lead to large collaborative projects promoting extensive new volunteering opportunities for students and staff. At the time of writing, grants are yet to be decided for this round, but applications include:
  - a joint bid from the university's 10 museums, gardens and galleries, to look at developing new projects with volunteers, to reach out to excluded people in the local community
  - a bid from Student Community Action and Cambridge Volunteer Centre, to target university staff and postgraduates, with particular emphasis on volunteering which uses their academic and professional skills
- a great variety of things have been funded, leading to diverse new volunteering opportunities. For example, funded projects include:
  - engineering students volunteering for an international project, developing a grain mill in Haiti
  - students going into schools to help teachers with science and technology lessons
  - volunteers running workshops in India for refugees from Tibet
  - students and staff volunteering for the Cambridge Chinese School.

Hints and tips

- The grant fund should be as transparent as possible, with all information available as widely as possible, including information on previous successful applications.
- Potential applicants should be encouraged to contact the relevant person at the HEI before they submit an application. This should ensure that bids are eligible and properly planned.
- It is preferable for the grants to be decided by a committee of appropriate representatives (rather than an individual).
- Unsuccessful applicants should be given feedback and encouraged to apply again where appropriate.
- Evaluation of the funded projects is absolutely essential, as is asking for feedback on the grant-making process

Case study DP3 (2003)
HEACF and Community Brokerage
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Context

At the University of Gloucestershire the HEACF is managed by the Community Development Team from within the External Relations Directorate. The Community Development Team Manager acts as lead officer and is responsible for convening a HEACF project steering group made up of representatives from the students' union (Student Community Action), academic staff and partner agencies.

The team's objective can be summarised as: 'To create volunteering opportunities around each university campus in order to strengthen our relationship with local stakeholders by developing activities which are valued by local people and students.'

In delivering these programmes the focus has been on:

- skills transfer to voluntary sector organisations to assist in capacity building
- building partnerships within existing initiatives, e.g. Student Community Action
- mapping community activity to ensure they complement each other and avoiding displacement of existing projects
- the creation of personal development opportunities for staff and students.

Delivery of the HEACF supports the university's widening participation strategy and provides added value to a range of community development activities.

Programme detail

Why community brokerage? The university has numerous links with local stakeholders. Examples include the Compacts programme, which offers opportunities to increase awareness of higher education among local schools, colleges and community groups. Academic schools have a tradition of offering subject enrichment days, master classes etc, on an outreach basis. Students gain experience of work in community settings as part of their academic studies and increasingly through paid employment. A number of volunteering initiatives pre-date the HEACF, including those programmes delivered through a number of established Student Community Action projects.

To build on and co-ordinate this existing work, and to develop the institution's capacity to support volunteering in the longer term, a 'community brokerage' approach was adopted to deliver the HEACF. Put simply, the university acts as a broker of volunteering opportunities by bringing together a group of volunteers and a number of community partners. The key advantage to this approach is that it focuses on the development of sustainable relationships with community organisations. Organisations wishing to offer placements are often too busy to support groups of individuals on a one to one basis who might be engaged in a variety of activities. By acting as a broker the university can manage its HEACF programme to provide support for projects that engage a group of volunteers on a specific piece of work.

Between August 2002 and July 2003 this approach achieved the following results:

- generated 20 volunteering opportunities
- engaged 65 volunteers
- supported 8 community partnerships.

What makes brokerage work? A genuine willingness between partners to work together is essential for a successful brokering relationship. More specifically, there needs to be a clear understanding and agreement concerning:

- the needs of each partner and an ability to produce outcomes that meet these needs, while reflecting a shared ownership of the work
- recognition of sources of local expertise, for example in working with a particular client group or of a specific community issue
- the aims and objectives for each project, to include monitoring and evaluation of delivery against outcomes
- agreement on resources, timing, time-scales, etc
- procedures and protocols to support and supervise volunteers, including Criminal Records Bureau checking, training, reimbursement of expenses
- an agreement to communicate difficulties (and successes) honestly among the parties involved.

Programme case study

Sports Coaches and Volunteers Scheme
The University of Gloucestershire's Sports Coaches and Volunteers Scheme is an example of community brokerage in action. The university wished to establish an action plan for the development of sports coaching and volunteering. The need for such a programme was demonstrated by the lack of a systemised approach to the recruitment, training, deployment, mentoring and monitoring of students in community settings. There was a clear need to establish pathways for students to develop as coaches or volunteers within their existing academic programmes. A further need was to create a framework of values or 'mission statement' to guide the actions of students and the institution in these contexts.

A steering group was formed of university and students' union staff together with representatives from partner organisations. The steering group agreed a mission statement and set of core values to underpin the programme of work. The proposed system, rolled out during 2003-04, offers a 'one stop shop' for coaches and volunteers. Sports Officers (staff members) will manage the education and training aspects of the programme and ensure it is linked to the curriculum. Two outreach workers employed by the Chaplaincy – but managed by the Director of Sport – have responsibility to manage the links with external partners and for placing students and mentoring. Students will be encouraged to develop their individual 'pathway'. This process will include a training needs analysis and an assessment of current qualifications held/previously acquired experience. All participants are asked to sign up to the code of conduct that underpins the programme.

The brokerage element of the programme involves negotiating with a number of key agencies to create a sustainable system of student placements. This will avoid ad hoc engagement by the university, ensure the long-term viability of individual projects and ensure that existing good practice is identified and disseminated. Examples of the agencies engaged or 'brokered' with include:

- youth clubs/youth service
- Youth Sports Trust

- Football in the Community
- Christians in Sport
- Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects
- Gloucestershire Sports Partnership
- schools
- Gloucester Education Achievement Zone
- university Chaplaincy and local churches.

At the end of year 1 the experiences of 15 students placed during the year will be assessed by dedicated MA evaluation projects.

For more information about the Sports Coaches and Volunteers Scheme contact Andy Pitchford, Course Leader MA Sports Development, e-mail apitchford@glos.ac.uk.

Case study DP4 (2003)
The Community Volunteers Project: Innovation Fund Projects
University of Teesside

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Context

The University of Teesside received funding from the HEACF in February 2002 and has since established its Community Volunteers Project (CVP).

The project aims to develop volunteering opportunities for staff and students, and to establish volunteering as an integral part of university culture. In order to help meet project objectives, it has made available an Innovation Fund to enable schools and central units to bid for funding to develop new or existing initiatives.

Programme detail

Innovation Fund bids are submitted to the HEACF Steering Committee which consists of members of staff from both academic school and central units, along with representatives from the students' union and the University of Teesside Prince's Trust HE Programme. One of the strengths of the committee is the sense of ownership that is given to the university as a whole. The committee receives support from the university's Vice-Chancellor's Executive and this helps to ensure that the CVP is fully integrated throughout the university.

Innovation Fund bids must demonstrate aims and objectives, activities and time scales, existing/planned links that will be developed and also a planned profile of expenditure for the project. These bids are then submitted for consideration to the Steering Committee. The committee has representatives from across the university and the students' union, thus ensuring that a varied and innovative range of projects are given full consideration and support. To date, 14 projects have been funded, with six commencing in November 2003.

Another strength of the Innovation Fund is that a range of monitoring procedures has been identified to help support staff to develop volunteering projects.

Recruitment of volunteers: Innovation Fund opportunities are promoted throughout the university campus to ensure that they are available to all students. Students who participate in these projects are automatically registered with the CVP, therefore giving them a wider support network and the chance to share experiences with their peers, as well as enabling them to receive information about other voluntary activities. All students participate in the CVP Induction Programme, which covers issues regarding Criminal Records Bureau screening policies, health and safety, and the roles and responsibilities of volunteers. This is then followed by induction sessions for Innovation Fund projects, including specific training for the project and developing volunteer skills such as communication and organisational skills. All volunteers on Innovation Fund projects are matched with appropriate opportunities and interviewed to assess their suitability to work on the project. If a position is not available to them, the CVP Volunteer Co-ordinator is able to advise on other projects which may be suitable.

Training of volunteers: The Steering Committee is particularly keen to fund projects that ensure that all volunteers are appropriately trained and supported. Training of volunteers varies between specific projects. However, all projects develop the volunteers' awareness of issues such as child protection, equal opportunities, health and safety, and codes of ethics and conduct.

Projects are particularly encouraged to offer volunteers additional recognition for volunteering either through accredited training, or national recognised programmes such as Millennium Volunteers.

Financial management: Innovation Fund Project Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that the funding allocated is spent appropriately. They work closely with the relevant academic school manager who co-ordinates all financial management within an academic school. This helps ensure accountability for expenditure. Overall project spend is closely monitored by the Steering Committee and there is a provision to 'claw-back' unspent funding.

Following the recruitment of volunteers to the Innovation Fund projects, over 50 students are now participating in voluntary activities, with another 90 volunteers to be recruited for newly funded projects.

Publicity: As the project is being supported through the HEACF, project co-ordinators are asked to ensure that they promote the fact that the project is funded through the Community Volunteers Project which is supported by the Higher Education Active Community Fund. Publicity has been achieved both internally and externally to the university, increasing awareness of volunteering activities and developing links with external organisations whilst raising the profile of this HEACF initiative.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checking: A range of policies has been developed and approved by the Steering Committee which enables co-ordinators from Innovation Fund projects to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed for all volunteers. This is particularly important for ensuring that all volunteers are appropriately screened, depending on the type of activities in which they participate. As the Innovation Fund supports a wide range of projects, it has enabled the project team to ensure that a full and comprehensive policy on CRB checks is established and that all projects adhere to correct procedures.

Teamwork: The Innovation Fund covers projects throughout the university in both central units and academic schools. Projects are encouraged to work closely with other co-ordinators to maintain a structured programme of activities and avoid duplication of effort. This worked particularly well in co-ordinating activities for National Student Volunteering Week, with the University of Teesside's first full programme of volunteering activities throughout this week. Members of the Steering Committee are committed to ensuring that appropriate support and guidance is provided to all projects, and that the promotion of volunteering opportunities is achieved to a high standard.

Case study DP5 (2003)
Building a bridge into the community
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Context

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) decided to focus the core of its HEACF activity upon one central project entitled coMMUni, which has been established along the lines of a volunteer bureau model.

coMMUni operates from two offices covering an institution of seven faculties in seven locations across Manchester and Cheshire, with almost 40,000 staff and students. There are two full-time and three part-time staff to cover the whole institution. Despite being such a small team, staff have actively sought to join and involve themselves in local voluntary and community sector networks to raise the profile of coMMUni and to understand the needs of the local community.

Programme detail

The core activity is that of a local volunteer bureau that matches a database of opportunities needing volunteers with a database of individuals wishing to volunteer. Each organisation requesting volunteers is vetted (i.e. enquiries are made about policies for health and safety, employer/public liability, confidentiality, equal opportunities, training and induction) and visited. Each volunteer is given advice and choices relating to their specific needs. Often information is passed on when visiting small groups and organisations about how they can access local resources, such as free training and other volunteering support services.

In order to best understand the local voluntary and community sector, key networks and forums have been joined to network coMMUni into the locality. Some of the networks supported include:

- Manchester Compact forum
- Manchester Volunteering and Community Network (and its sub-groups)
- Cheshire Learning Partnership
- Congleton Local Strategic Partnership Forum
- Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (CNCB) Forum
- CNCB Lifelong Learning Forum
- North-West Universities Association HEACF
- North West Workers in Student Community Volunteering group
- Manchester Universities HEACF
- Community Network, Manchester
- Home Office, Active Community Unit
- North West Participatory Evaluation Network
- CNCB Community Engagement Group
- Crewe and Nantwich Voluntary Sector Forum
- Crewe and Nantwich Mental Health Sector Planning Group

- National Centre for Volunteering (member)
- Volunteering England (member).

The steering group also provides an opportunity for members of the voluntary and community sector to become stakeholders in the work of coMMUni. Representatives on the group from MMU are balanced by individuals from local groups and agencies such as:
- Chief Executive's Department of Manchester City Council
- Community Exchange
- Voluntary Action Manchester
- Greater Manchester Community Volunteering Organisation
- Manchester Council for Community Relations
- Congleton Borough Council
- Cheshire Community Council.

This is not a fixed membership list and appropriate representatives are constantly researched in order to join the group.

From such a strong, inclusive platform, one can link into MMU for many non-learning based organisations, for example to contact academics or utilise facilities. The team have built up an extensive understanding of the voluntary and community sector that MMU staff and students can access as a gateway into this sector, such as introducing course tutors to organisations that may provide course-related placements.

Hints and tips

- ***Understanding your local communities is a key aim of HEACF:*** Linking into networks, meeting key agency staff, developing good working relationships with other officers and listening to their needs has meant the service can respond to their requirements and has offered wide-ranging access to local information, community connections and endorsement.
- ***Personalise your service:*** coMMUni's aim is that every person who requests advice or assistance from the service receives the personal touch. Staff are interested in all the community groups they encounter. The team is proactive in contacting them, understanding what they need and in following up enquiries. Staff are equally interested in the prospective volunteers and no time limits are set on any contacts.
- ***Learn to win trust and confidence:*** The voluntary and community sector is used to seeing short-term funding that develops work that is not fulfilled. The HEACF is still short-term in its funding but that does not stop HEIs from having longer-term thinking in their work. Moving into new areas and departing from perceived activities (i.e. teaching and research) will mean other people, other organisations, have to change the way they view these institutions.

Evaluation and sustainability

All HEIs running the HEACF have set objectives for use of their allocation – even if only within the bid for the allocation in the first instance. In order to develop a cohesive and comprehensible strategy for use of the funding, there must be some basic objectives: percentage increase in volunteering opportunities, targeting non-participating students, increase in enquiries, and positive coverage in local media. All of these objectives need to be revisited at key stages during the lifetime of the HEACF in order to evaluate success and/or failure of certain elements of a programme – or the 'distance travelled' by an HEI's volunteering team.

Parameters for the measurement of success need to be set for HEACF practitioners to understand the scale of their achievements, and of their lack of achievement where applicable. It is through simple evaluation procedures that success can be effectively measured.

The HEACF has not ended, but it is vital for HEIs to consider ongoing evaluation (if they have yet to do so) in order to have a clear plan for the continuation or development of volunteering programmes beyond the life of the HEACF. Case studies within this section set out methods for conducting evaluation, and give an indication of areas to explore when devising an evaluation strategy.

Sustainability goes hand in hand with evaluation. For example, although a particular schools mentoring programme may have outstanding success in terms of improved retention and examination results, it is unsustainable if the schools are based 50 miles away from the student mentors, and rely wholly on the HEACF allocation to enable students to travel to attend mentoring sessions. Sustainability in this case may be achieved by applying for new sources of external revenue – maybe from educational trusts or other volunteering charities.

It is also useful to look at the reliance of some HEACF-initiated projects on full-time staff members. Would it be more useful for the longevity of volunteering to give students ownership of projects? Where is the job development and continued job satisfaction for those staff members if their knowledge is not transferred to students?

Finally, a strategic look at sustainability issues can lead to important infrastructure developments within volunteering at HEIs. One of the case studies shows how the creation of a central support service for departmental volunteering projects has helped to improve the profile of activities, provide a forum for development, and ensure a firm foundation for the future through the rationalisation of resources.

This section contains six diverse explorations of the themes of evaluation and sustainability.

Case study ES1 (2003)
Measuring Community Activities
University of Cambridge

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Context

When the HEACF allocation was received, the University of Cambridge thought it essential to set up a mechanism to measure the impact of the university's community engagement.

At the start of 2003, the university undertook a large surveying exercise, based on the London Benchmarking Group model. Cambridge is in the process of working with the Russell Group of Universities to adapt this model for appropriate use in the higher education sector.

The London Benchmarking Group Model is used by many large corporate organisations to measure their community investment. The model recognises that businesses should not simply report how much money they spend on community activities. It accounts for time and gifts in kind as well as leverage over and above monetary contributions. The model also looks at the benefits to the community and the 'business' of the community activities. It eventually aims to look at long-term impacts of community programmes.

Programme detail

The survey was sent to various parts of the university. It asked:

Contribution to the community: Colleges/departments were asked to report on their contribution to the community in terms of:
- cash: such as donations of money to not-for-profits organisations, or costs paid for salaries of posts which are primarily for community benefit
- time: person weeks, days or hours put into a community project
- in kind: gifts of equipment, for example, old furniture or PCs to a charity or use of premises and resources.

Beneficiaries: Who and how many benefit?

Motivation: Why is this activity done? For example, is there an educational benefit, or is it done to promote a specific subject, or to help disadvantaged members of society?

Results

This exercise has led to numerous positive outcomes for Cambridge, which could be shared with other HEIs. Outcomes have included:

Enhanced communication and reporting of community involvement:
- It helped the university to collate information on the community work being done here – a lot of activity was discovered.
- Central information is now held on many of the community activities undertaken in the university. This information is made available internally and externally.

- University staff and students are extremely interested in what is being done in other areas of the university, leading to the sharing of ideas and best practice, and acting as a catalyst for increased activity.

Improvements in internal management and better allocation of resources:
- Better data allows better judgement about appropriate levels of spend, when benchmarked between departments, colleges etc.
- Better data on the immediate output (such as the number of school pupils helped through an education programme) allows judgement about how effective a programme is given the level of input resources. The university can aim to find ways of doing things which have a relatively low input of resources but with a high rate of return.
- It helps to prioritise projects by looking at which projects are likely to lead to the greatest benefits for the university and the community.
- The university is better placed to see where the gaps in provision are.

Hints and tips

- If someone senior endorses the survey, more people will respond.
- Tell people why they ought to respond – how will it help the university and what will they get out of it?
- Encourage people to include as much as possible – they may not think that a piece of information is relevant, but it could be exactly what you want to know about.
- Give people a realistic time to respond and be available to answer their queries.
- Qualitative data is just as important as quantitative data.
- Remember to make the summary results available to respondents.

Case study ES2 (2003)
Participatory Evaluation of Volunteering with Community Groups

Manchester Metropolitan University

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Context

The coMMUni (HEACF) project at MMU aims to be based on the needs and requirements of the community and voluntary organisations with whom the project team are aiming to work. As a result the coMMUni volunteering project, under a seconded Community Fellow, has developed a community-based evaluation of methods which coMMUni is using to engage with volunteers and groups, and to gauge the effectiveness and impact of volunteers.

Programme detail

Community and voluntary organisations in one of the local geographical areas accessed by the university were contacted and invited to become part of an audit team of evaluators. The HEACF is paying 'backfill money' to groups to enable their workers and volunteers to be involved. Money is paid for each session attended and project visit made as part of the information-gathering for the evaluation.

Groundwork Tameside is hosting the evaluation and the training project, co-delivered with one of their co-ordinators who has been trained in participatory evaluation.

The audit team comprises seven members of voluntary groups, mixed in relation to gender, ethnicity and type of group. The groups range from small volunteer-only groups to a large borough-wide organisation. The team is working with a total of 25 groups across Tameside.

The team has drawn up and piloted a questionnaire to find out projects' needs in relation to volunteering, and is using this as a basis for interviews.

As a result of agency contacts, the team is also finding agencies that want to register with coMMUni to offer volunteering opportunities. If a volunteer is placed with the agency, the audit team will evaluate the benefit of the volunteering opportunity for both the agency and the volunteer. In addition the team has discussed the coMMUni volunteer and agency registration forms and made recommendations for improvements.

The team is now in the process of planning a day for all the agencies that have been involved, where it will use a variety of participatory methods to discuss the initial finding of the evaluation and draw out more issues.

To finish the work, the team will jointly draw together the information and produce a report for the coMMUni/HEACF steering group at MMU, and for the participant groups involved in the audit.

The evaluation involves training the community evaluators in community auditing principles and methods. This has included discussions of research and evaluation types, information-gathering methods, ethics, inclusion and mapping, analysis and evaluation. The audit team is

able to undertake this training as an accredited MMU module; three of the participants are registering at MA level and one at BA level.

Hints and tips

- Wherever possible the groups who are involved in an HEACF project should be involved in identifying their own requirements and evaluating the benefits of the HEACF funded work.
- This method of community-based evaluation is not only appropriate in relation to the principles of coMMUni but also is valuable for achieving important outcomes, e.g. networking, identification of community-based issues, building links with MMU that may lead to future co-working and progression to other courses.

Case study ES3 (2003)
Project Leaders Scheme
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Context

The Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) was set up in August 2002, based within UCL Union and supported by UCL, with the aim of increasing the number of UCL students and staff who were involved in good quality volunteering opportunities in the local community. Whilst there had been some department-specific attempts at promoting volunteering around particular themes, there was no general tradition or culture of volunteering within the university. Volunteering was not perceived to be an activity that everyone could take part in.

From the outset, it was decided to develop this new service in a systematic way that enabled the unit to reach as many members of the UCL community as possible. Two barriers to volunteering were identified: a lack of choice, and a lack of advice and information. Therefore, the initial priority was to develop the volunteer bureau service, where student and staff volunteers could be referred to partner organisations in the local community. By the start of June 2003, over 100 voluntary and community organisations had registered, and the VSU had built a database to enable efficient handling of referrals.

Each prospective volunteer is interviewed and every project is visited. This face to face contact has helped make the VSU a great success. There were over 200 volunteers involved in the first year of operation, which easily met the HEACF targets whilst being able to offer a real diversity of volunteering opportunities.

Programme detail

Having established the bureau service, our next step was to enable students to develop and manage volunteering projects themselves.

We wanted to move into this area for several reasons:

- to offer further opportunities for skill development
- to give even greater breadth to the range of volunteering opportunities on offer
- to increase the sustainability of the VSU, by getting more students involved in the development and management of our projects
- to maximise impact upon the community, by developing new projects that would not have happened otherwise
- to create a distinctive UCL identity for volunteering opportunities
- to provide more opportunities for students to volunteer together.

Student-led projects had already been piloted with the 2002 UCL Christmas party for elderly people, and had seen the massive difference that this project had made. This experience helped guide the development of the Project Leader Scheme.

We were aware that in order to make student-led volunteering attractive, a package of support was needed – the Project Leaders Scheme. The package included:

- *comprehensive training*: two courses on project management and fundraising were run after exams had finished in June 2003. Each course lasted a whole day, and both were led by trainers from London Voluntary Services Council. Project leaders can also take part in other training, such as first aid, child protection, or mental health awareness
- *ongoing support*: each project leader team is allocated a member of VSU staff, who meets with them regularly to help with planning, to review progress, and to offer ideas, contacts, and feedback
- *office facilities*: project leaders are given access to VSU office facilities such as computers, phones, photocopiers, and meeting rooms
- *handbook*: a handbook has been created for project leaders, detailing good practice, regulations and procedures
- *project leaders group*: a group has been established to enable project leaders to share ideas with each other and to offer mutual support
- *VSU Small Grant Fund*: this is available to support student-led volunteering. As well as helping support a percentage of the costs of a project, the process of applying for a grant is useful preparation for seeking external sources of funding
- *funding databases*: the VSU has subscribed to the Directory of Social Change's online funding directory, and also has a number of books about funding which are available to project leaders.

Results

The Project Leaders Scheme recognises that student-led volunteering requires an integrated package of support measures. This package not only increases the chances of the success of these projects, but also makes the scheme easier to promote to students. By October 2003 15 project leaders had been recruited, developing 8 different projects.

The scheme is one of a number of interlocking services aimed at developing a stronger volunteering culture within UCL. For example, the links developed with community and voluntary organisations allowed the identification of the community needs that student volunteer groups could address. The scheme was not launched until the right package of support had been attained: training, links with community organisations, promotional capacity, and the VSU grants.

The Project Leaders Scheme is at the heart of plans to ensure the sustainability of volunteering at UCL. In time, it is envisaged that a number of self-perpetuating student-run projects will be established that could continue regardless of the future funding of the VSU. This is one reason why external fundraising and student management of these projects have been emphasised.

The scheme is also a model of planned development of a service which has grown from almost nothing in a relatively short space of time.

Hints and tips

- Having strong links with community partners has enabled the VSU to identify the needs that student-led projects can meet.

- Many students who approached the VSU wanted to get involved as project leaders, but were not sure about what they wanted to do. A list of potential projects was prepared, which acted as a good starting point for finding a project that suited each individual student.
- The training was also structured so that students could develop their project ideas further.
- Packaging support in this way should not only result in more successful projects, but also enables the unit to present the Project Leaders Scheme as an attractive option to students.

Case study ES4 (2003)
A Blueprint for Sustainable Volunteering
University of Sheffield

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Context

A grant from the HEACF has enabled the transformation of student volunteering at the University of Sheffield Union of Students. SheffieldVolunteering was launched in October 2002. In the first eight months, it attracted over 920 students, all eager to find out about volunteering – which represents almost 5 per cent of Sheffield's full-time student population and an incredible four-fold increase in the number of enquiries.

To meet demand, almost 400 new volunteer placements were created. These have included:
- 7 new initiatives in partnership with 15 schools
- 'Just Do It' event involving teams of students completing one-off challenges for 9 voluntary organisations
- a mentoring service developed for 8 to 11 year-olds.

In addition, unprecedented numbers of student volunteers have been involved with 50 local charities and voluntary groups. Students have helped to provide services for people of all ages and from all walks of life: children and young people, people with learning disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers, the homeless and the elderly.

In a climate of perceived student apathy and declining volunteer numbers, it has been refreshing to be able to tell a different story.

Programme detail

New volunteering model
A menu of 'pick and mix' volunteer options was created. The programme of one day, short- and medium-term options was designed so that there were opportunities to participate all year round. This enabled new students to get involved in volunteering quickly and to keep volunteers involved in their community throughout the year.

Promoting citizenship
One year on, it has been proved that the volunteering model works. Just three weeks into the new term, 1 in 5 of the students who volunteered in a new SheffieldVolunteering initiative last year have requested a further voluntary work placement.

Local and national recognition
The project has received national recognition (including a feature in *The Guardian* newspaper) as well as high praise from Sheffield schools, charities and local community forums.

Volunteering for all students

The HEACF grant enabled Sheffield to capitalise on a largely untapped market for volunteering. The previous volunteer profile was almost totally female, with 18-21 year-old home students from the arts, law and social science disciplines featuring predominantly.

There is now a cross-section of faculties and year groups as well as marked improvement in representation of male students (22 per cent), mature students (2 per cent) and international students (10 per cent).

Hints and tips

- *Do your research:* The programme was designed and then refined over a 6 month period in preparation for an official launch at the beginning of the new term. The two-stage process of design and testing enabled testing of ideas on prospective student volunteers, local organisations and members of the community. In this way a robust programme could be planned and the volunteering team could be confident about its delivery.
- *Know your market:* In deciding new volunteer roles, tough selection criteria were used. It was decided that opportunities had to offer something quintessentially different from other available volunteer roles. This was important in terms attracting students and building on (but not competing with) the local voluntary sector provision. With this in mind, it was decided that the team should concentrate on developing volunteering opportunities which capitalised on the unique profile of the student body (e.g. languages spoken or area of study). In addition, tasks were ruled out if students could be paid for them (e.g. administration, marshalling, distributing flyers or shop work). The final selection criterion was simple: the opportunity must fulfil the developmental needs of students whilst at the same time meeting a genuine need in the community.
- *Offer choice:* Students were able to select from a wide range of 1 day, 6 week, 3 month or 1 year placements. A range of opportunities was offered all year round and multiple rounds of recruitment were organised, training and placements for popular activities. This approach enabled new students to try volunteering in bite-sized chunks, fit it easily around study or paid work commitments, and progress to more responsible or time-intensive roles when they had built up their experience.
- *Be practical:* Once the creation of roles was decided upon, it was important for the volunteering team to work out how best to make placements both useful and sustainable. The factors taken into consideration included times of day/week, number of hours, travel routes and transport costs. For example, in the schools initiative the aim was to involve the staff and pupils that most needed volunteer support. A list of schools in the most deprived wards of the city was drawn up, which also included neighbourhoods where large numbers of student residents had a direct impact on the local community. Travel options were then researched from popular student neighbourhoods to each of the schools, seeking out the quickest and most direct route. The final list included a couple of placements within walking distance of student neighbourhoods, lots of placements where regular tram or bus routes took volunteers virtually door-to-door, and a few placements where volunteers would need to change bus/tram in town or travel as a group by taxi. This approach helped to attract and retain volunteers as well to keep transport costs manageable.
- *Make it personal:* With transport times kept to a minimum, schools were invited to decide the amount of time that they needed volunteers, within a prescribed range of 1 to 2.5 hours per week. This meant that individual staff felt involved in the scheme, could better plan for a volunteer's involvement in lessons and be confident about what they would get out of the extra time that they had invested. When students asked about schools initiatives, they could look through the placements folder themselves. This meant that they had ownership of their placement from the start and were able to choose the best role, day, time, and location for them. This approach has been a critical factor in

helping the retention of volunteers, maintaining commitments to staff and establishing excellent working relationships with local schools.

Case study ES5 (2004)
Leeds University Community Initiative (LUCI)
University of Leeds

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Context

Leeds University Community Initiative (LUCI) was piloted during the 2003-04 academic year as a grant scheme available to students and staff from the University of Leeds. It attracted a considerable amount of interest and a total of £6,632 was awarded to 11 successful applicants. The project aimed to generate interest among staff and students to deliver their own innovative and engaging projects to support the communities in which they live. Sustainability was a key factor, with funding being used to pump prime activity which could then continue beyond the funding period. Funding would therefore provide resources and capital purchases to support activity but would not pay revenue costs.

Through setting eligibility criteria the university targeted the more deprived wards of the city to ensure that projects supported hard to reach communities. The projects that received funding were diverse – from fashion design for the homeless to healthy food co-operatives – and enabled students themselves to run a small project that would make a difference. The overwhelming success of the programme has led to a continuation of the scheme for 2004-05 and indeed expansion using external funding to support activity in one of the city's neighbourhood renewal areas.

Programme detail

The project began with research into small grant schemes to identify any potential pitfalls. Publicity of the scheme was key to ensuring that there were sufficient applications and a variety of methods were employed. Screensaver advertisements were displayed on the PC clusters, posters and leaflets distributed throughout the Leeds and Wakefield campuses, and mail shots were sent to the community relations database and to staff with an interest in volunteering. Scheme details were hosted on the internal web-site accessible to all students and staff.

A selection panel was set up to approve and score the bid proposals, made up of people with experience of delivering volunteering activities. Panel members were provided with scoring criteria to enable all projects to be assessed on an equitable basis. They also provided useful advice that was fed back to all applicants. The decision made by the panel was formally ratified by the HEACF Volunteering Steering Group.

A separate account was opened and dealt with the funds for all projects so that successful applicants could obtain part of their grant in advance (so that they would not be out of pocket). All payments were made by either reimbursing petty cash on production of receipts, or through payment to external organisations who were asked to invoice the university directly.

Ongoing support and advice was provided by the City and Regional Office. Successful applicants used this service to receive assistance in claiming expenses, give feedback on their project or seek general advice.

All successful applications provided significant numbers of volunteers and benefited many individuals and organisations, some of which had not had any previous contact with the university or its students.

All applicants were offered the same level of support with some requiring more than others. Most commented on the benefits of having this help available, and many dropped in on a regular basis to give feedback or raise new questions.

There was considerable variation in the applicants' experience in organising and delivering projects. Some experienced more difficulties than others in realising their idea. For example, one applicant commented on the difficulty in organising the project and getting the people involved to understand the level of work necessary to make the project happen.

Applicants described the help they received from the City and Regional Team as: 'brilliant – and the support was always on offer when required'; 'the format suited all my requirements and from my view could not have been better'; 'very helpful and supportive, ensuring that we received the money with as little difficulty as possible and helping to explain procedures'; 'I appreciated the unobtrusive approach that was adopted overall as it allowed us to be creative with how we spent the money'.

One of the eligibility criteria was to address sustainability of projects beyond the funding period. One applicant used LUCI to pilot a project (fashion design with homeless people) and is planning to develop the concept with the 'Big Issue' magazine. It was felt that funding from LUCI had been 'invaluable' in instigating this now sustainable project idea.

Hints and tips

- Ensure sustainability is a key eligibility criterion in the application form.

- Set the deadlines in mid-November, mid-February and June to take account of exams and term times.

- Allow a minimum of nine months for applicants to deliver their project, and include a question on timing in the application form.

- Use existing publicity methods and seek innovative new ways of advertising the project funds.

- Establish the project as a readily identifiable initiative (e.g. create a logo).

- Invite experienced project deliverers to form the selection panel.

- Organise compulsory training for successful applicants and create a handbook containing all the information. Training should assist with ensuring sustainability is addressed throughout the project.

- Set up a finance system where applicants understand which forms they have to fill in (provide an explanatory handout) and ensure good records are kept.

- Ensure that the person delivering the project has signed and understands the terms and conditions, and attends a compulsory training session.
- Ask all grant beneficiaries to ensure that capital purchases are used beyond the funding period, or revert ownership to the university to use in further projects.

Case study ES6 (2004)

Sheffield Volunteering Hub

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Context

The launch of the HEACF captured the imagination of staff and students across the University of Sheffield. Under HEACF 1, three new initiatives were created. The providers were Sheffield Volunteering (based at the students' union) and two different academic departments.

As the work progressed, opportunities arose to work more closely together and a needs analysis of the three initiatives identified strategies for making better use of available resources and expertise. It was agreed that in addition to organising its own volunteer opportunities, Sheffield Volunteering would provide support to the two departments who also co-ordinated HEACF activities. Examples included the development of resources (e.g. application forms), recruitment activities, volunteer screening and an end of year PR/showcase event.

As a development of this work, the university and the students' union formed a partnership to provide a single administration to support the development of all volunteering initiatives.

The model is known as 'the Hub' and brings together proven expertise in managing volunteering initiatives at Sheffield Volunteering and specialist knowledge within academic departments. In the past 12 months, four departments have used the services of Sheffield Volunteering to enable them to provide volunteering opportunities.

Programme detail

Departments can choose from a 'pick and mix' menu of support services. This means that support is tailored to meet departmental needs.

- *Consultancy:* If new project managers are supported to implement their ideas (e.g. by sourcing specialist advice or training) they are more likely to be successful.
- *Resources:* If standardised resources (e.g. volunteer application forms and policies) are made available to use or adapt, then new initiatives can be developed quickly and efficiently.
- *Recruitment:* If more than one opportunity is profiled, recruitment activities can attract a wider audience, offer the volunteer choice and be made more cost effective.
- *Screening:* Centralised screening means that records (e.g. personal details and references) can be taken up once for each student – making it easier for them to get involved in more than one activity.
- *Training:* Provision of basic training to all volunteers (e.g. on child protection) means that standards can be maintained and properly evaluated.
- *Monitoring:* Data collection (e.g. equal opportunities monitoring) is made more effective if a standard format is applied and used to build up an institutional profile.

- *Evaluation:* Institutional standards for quality can be set and monitored across all programmes.
- *Administration:* Regular tasks (e.g. printing of certificates) are most cost effective if done in bulk.
- *PR/recognition:* End of year celebrations/annual reports can be organised to reflect volunteering achievements across the institution.

Benefits

The benefits of providing a centralised support service include:
- *Best practice:* The centralisation of systems provides an opportunity to promote best practice.
- *A pro-active approach to community engagement:* The model enables the university to pro-actively support academic staff who are eager to use their expertise to benefit the local community; and at the same time to enhance the learning opportunities provided to students and staff.
- *Removing barriers to engagement:* Individual departments are more likely to choose to provide volunteering opportunities to students and staff, if properly supported. By removing barriers such as administrative burdens, departmental resources are put under less strain and busy academic staff can concentrate on the development of the volunteer activity.
- *An investment in sustainability:* The establishment of a central support service can help to embed the culture of volunteering within an institution. It can improve the profile of such activities, provide a forum for development and, most importantly, can ensure a firm foundation through rationalisation of the resources required.
- *Customer focused:* Volunteers benefit from being able to take part in more than one activity without having to fill in multiple application forms. The wider community also benefits from having a central point of access to information and recruitment services within the institution.
- *Active citizenship:* Access to a central support service can encourage contributions from individuals as well as departments. This means that individual staff and students who do not have access to other resources can be supported to organise an event or activity.
- *Cost-effective:* Funding streams should be a catalyst for positive change but can sometimes prove to be a divisive factor in institutions if departments are in competition for the same resources. This collaborative work is proof that useful and cost effective solutions can be found.
  In addition to obvious cost-savings (i.e. administrative personnel only need to be employed by the central department), there are further savings to be made if the duplication of work across the institution is minimised.

Hints and tips

- Stay customer focused. A centralised service should not make it more complicated for departments or volunteers.
- Complete an inventory of skills/expertise in your team and then make realistic decisions about which services to offer.
- Decide which services need to be standardised so that you can set institutional targets (e.g. equal opportunities monitoring), and which can be adapted so that departments can use the service in a way that suits them (e.g. screening procedures).
- Create generic resources (e.g. forms, protocols) in universal formats which can easily be adapted.
- Draw up service contracts so that arrangements are clear and resources can be allocated to the work.

- Organise your own programme so that it is a fully accessible resource. For example, training topics can be delivered separately so that departments can build their own programme from the options available.

Infrastructure

The HEACF was for some institutions an open opportunity to put into place volunteering programmes that had not previously existed. It was also an opportunity for those HEIs with volunteering programmes to expand, to reorganise and to apply quality procedures for which there had previously been little time or funding.

Many HEIs and students can take for granted the existence of the volunteering culture and volunteering opportunities, purely due to the longevity of volunteering programmes available on campus, or through the students' union, or even in the institution's own outreach and widening participation programmes. For some HEIs, this wealth of opportunity simply did not exist before the HEACF. For others, such diversity of opportunity led to a lack of cohesion in communicating with students, beneficiary organisations and the local community. In more extreme cases, this diversity and longevity of volunteering may have led to a lack of resources in some areas, or worse still, complacency.

This section takes on some of the bigger issues faced by HEIs when undertaking the HEACF:

- what to do when no volunteering structure exists
- how to build and organise a volunteering department
- how to reorganise volunteering for the whole of the institution
- how to get students to take responsibility for running volunteering programmes
- how to introduce monitoring and quality assurance systems.

Case study IN1 (2003)
Volunteer Management
Imperial College London

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Context

HEACF funding has enabled universities to get more involved in various community initiatives. The increasing interest in volunteering amongst students means that volunteer co-ordinators within universities need to respond to the potential for expansion and streamline the activity.

The Imperial Volunteer Centre had its formal launch in February 2003. The centre aims to develop opportunities for both staff and students to interact with the wider community through volunteering. The fact that the centre is such a new initiative within the college has given it an excellent starting point to explore different ways in which to manage volunteers within the university context.

The centre's comprehensive volunteer management policy formulates the basic structure for all procedures. The policy document is used to create very practical, clear and simple guidelines so that everyone knows exactly what is expected of them before, during and after the volunteer placement. This policy document is used to set up the basis for the management structures, which is then followed by the day-to-day volunteer management procedures, which are made simple but effective.

Programme detail

Volunteers are recruited proactively by the centre, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement within the community. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in a specific opportunity, or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific project. The registration process follows simple step-by-step guidelines which are clearly explained when the volunteer contacts the centre for the first time (please see flowchart 1).
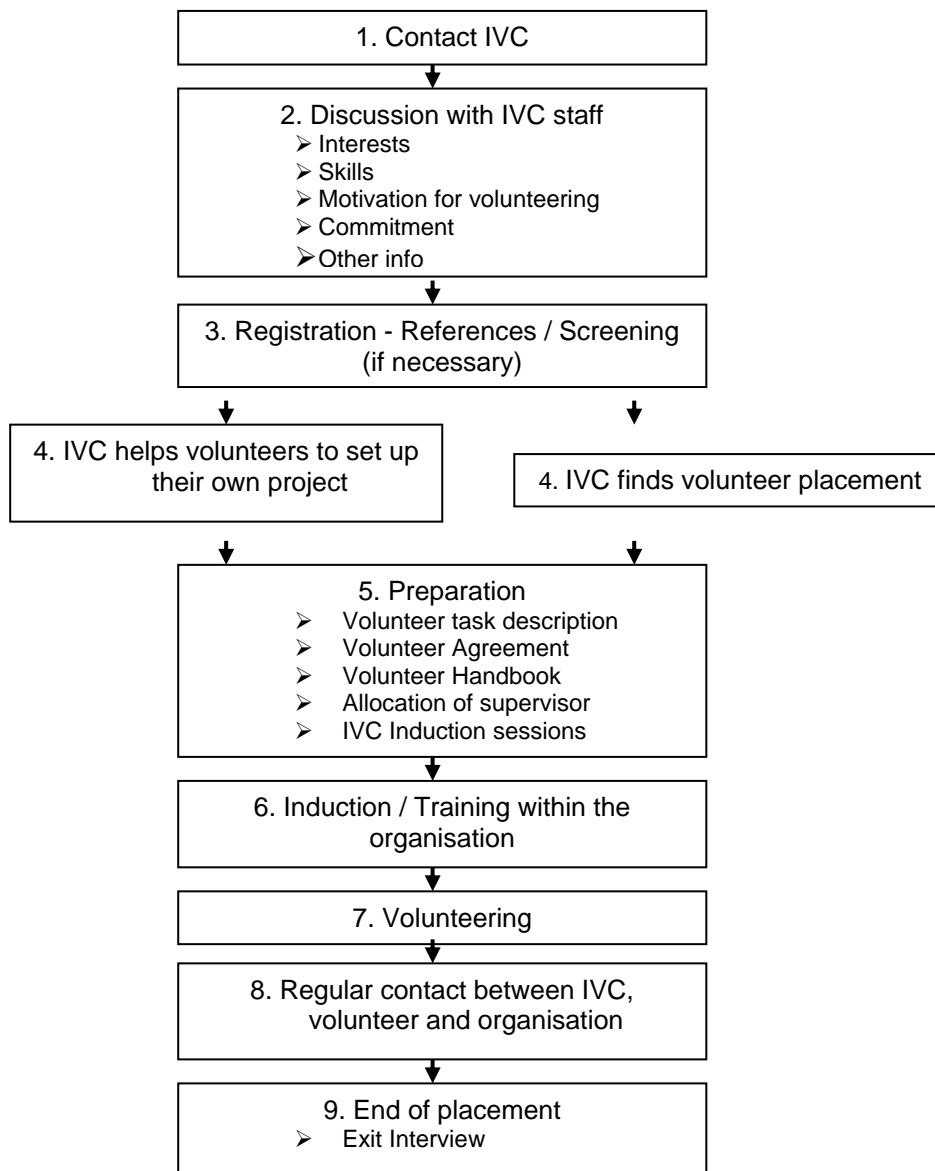
Flowchart 1 How to become an Imperial Volunteer – step by step guide

The volunteer projects that the Imperial Volunteer Centre (IVC) offers can be split into two categories:
1. Internal projects are mostly run by the clubs and societies. These are mainly student-led activities. Members of the society will act as project leaders and the group can make decisions about the activity and whether to continue it, expand it or discontinue it. The Imperial Volunteer Centre will support and advise the society in all matters regarding volunteering.
2. External opportunities within external organisations, where the IVC acts as an agent, matching volunteers with suitable opportunities.

In both cases the procedure to become an Imperial Volunteer is similar:

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                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │      1. Contact IVC         │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │  2. Discussion with IVC staff│
                    │   ➢ Interests               │
                    │   ➢ Skills                  │
                    │   ➢ Motivation for volunteering│
                    │   ➢ Commitment              │
                    │   ➢ Other info              │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 3. Registration - References / Screening│
                    │          (if necessary)     │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                      │                        │
                      ▼                        ▼
     ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
     │ 4. IVC helps volunteers to│   │ 4. IVC finds volunteer    │
     │   set up their own project│   │        placement          │
     └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                      │                        │
                      ▼                        ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │      5. Preparation         │
                    │   ➢ Volunteer task description│
                    │   ➢ Volunteer Agreement     │
                    │   ➢ Volunteer Handbook      │
                    │   ➢ Allocation of supervisor│
                    │   ➢ IVC Induction sessions  │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 6. Induction / Training within│
                    │      the organisation       │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │      7. Volunteering        │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │ 8. Regular contact between IVC,│
                    │   volunteer and organisation│
                    └────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────┐
                    │     9. End of placement     │
                    │   ➢ Exit Interview          │
                    └────────────────────────────┘
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As appropriate for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, volunteers in certain situations are asked to go through a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. In such cases the CRB check will be processed at the same time as the registration process. By making registration as user-friendly as possible the paperwork has been reduced to a minimum, both

for the volunteer and the centre staff. All volunteers are required to provide two references which will be followed up by the external organisation if necessary.

Volunteers are only required to fill in the registration form once they have expressed an interest in a particular opportunity. If someone doesn't have time, but is interested to hear more about volunteering, their contact details will be added to the database so that they will receive regular updates about volunteering through the centre. Once the volunteer has expressed an interest in a particular project, they need to register. Volunteers will be matched with the project within the next two days. Volunteers are provided with clear task descriptions of the position, and before the placement takes place, a signed volunteer agreement will confirm that the volunteer has read the volunteer handbook and the code of conduct. The centre aims to be as flexible as possible by providing most of this material by e-mail. All the information is also available on the website which is updated weekly.

Volunteer opportunities are advertised using all possible channels, such as staff and student magazines, student TV & radio, information stands, posters, leaflets, presentations, newsletters, articles etc. The centre therefore encourages staff members and students, who might not think about volunteering, to come and find out more about it. The centre has a comprehensive database of opportunities in the local area. Currently there are over 300 projects which have been divided between 38 categories, such as arts, animals, children, elderly, environment, etc. The database is used to match the opportunity with the volunteer and to store further information about the placement. The centre also has PCs which are available for anyone to find more about volunteering and to access the database of projects.

Volunteers are encouraged to attend a general induction by the IVC on the nature and purpose of volunteering. A more specific induction will be the responsibility of the external organisation. The centre's induction sessions take place every Thursday in term time and there are regular drop-in sessions every Tuesday and Friday. The centre also has late opening hours once a week so that those who are working or have a busy study schedule are able to come in person.

Experienced volunteers are actively encouraged to participate in the design and delivery of volunteer orientation and training. In most cases more specific training will be provided by the external organisation. However, the centre also aims to organise training which can be tailored to suit particular needs in, for example, transferable skills, first-aid and sports coaching. When no training is available on a particular subject or skill, the centre will help the volunteer to participate in training sessions provided by other groups or organisations. There is no charge for volunteers to participate in any training.

The IVC aims to support volunteers throughout their placement. Periodic evaluations are carried out either by the centre or by the external organisation, in which case the centre agrees on the content and structure beforehand. An evaluation is seen as essential to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in volunteering style, and to seek suggestions from the volunteer on ways to enhance the volunteer's relationship with the external organisation and the centre.

Another form of evaluation is also used to monitor the success of volunteer placement. Where possible exit interviews are conducted with volunteers who are leaving their volunteer placement for whatever reason. The interview ascertains why the volunteer is leaving, and explores how that particular position could be improved, and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity within the external organisation. Currently the centre and the external organisation jointly co-ordinate these interviews.

The IVC is still developing an annual evaluation of the value of volunteers. This will include information gathered from volunteers, centre staff, external organisations and internal

projects. It will assess how the local community, volunteers and Imperial College London have benefited from volunteering. Currently the centre has started to gather feedback from volunteers. Feedback is collected by e-mail and specific questions are used to find out how things are between the volunteer and the external organisation. Volunteers who return feedback will be entered into a weekly prize draw and this hopefully encourages them to communicate with the centre staff so that services can be improved.

Rewarding volunteers is an important part of any volunteer management programme. At Imperial there is an annual volunteer recognition event to highlight and reward their contribution. In May 2003 over 60 Imperial Volunteers were invited to an informal party at which reward certificates were given. During the academic year 2003-04 another party will be organised and in the future the centre hopes to develop a more formal volunteer accreditation programme.

Thanks to HEACF funding, the IVC has been able to release the hidden resources within the university which now can be used for everyone's benefit. This applies not only to staff and students, but also to the local community partners. Volunteering can benefit not only personal and professional development of students and staff members, but it gives them an opportunity to give something back to their local communities by using their skills and expertise through volunteering. In this way the interaction between the university and the local community will be enhanced and developed even further.

Hints and tips

- ***Establish a Volunteer Policy:*** This gives your volunteer co-ordination a structure which can be used as guidance for all aspects of volunteer management.
- ***Be flexible:*** Remember that the volunteer management policy will give the basic structure for your volunteer management procedures, and you need to find the balance between the need to provide an easy and flexible service to your volunteers whilst ensuring that important issues, such as CRB checks and health & safety, are taken into consideration.
- ***Provide a fast and efficient service:*** You will run successful volunteer programmes if you are able to provide a fast, clear and efficient service. In this way you will make volunteering as easy as possible for everyone. It is good to arrange one-off opportunities to keep your volunteers active and interested, especially if they need to wait for CRB checks or references before starting longer-term volunteering.
- ***Recruit proactively:*** Don't wait for to volunteers to find you, instead go out there and find them! Promote volunteering by using all possible channels, newsletters, websites, posters, information stands, etc. In this way you can make sure that everyone will know about your existence, especially those who have never even thought about volunteering as a way to improve their personal or professional development.
- ***Communicate:*** Keep your volunteers updated by using simple methods, such as e-mail and website updates. Remember to give volunteers the option to unsubscribe if they don't want to receive updates from you anymore. Also, encourage people to forward e-mails to their colleagues and friends – the best promotion tool is word of mouth.
- ***Provide rewards:*** Always make your volunteers feel special, organise social events, reward them, and try to create an accreditation system which can give volunteers a formal recognition which they can use for their own personal and professional development.

Case study IN2 (2003)
Framework to Manage Volunteer Projects
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Context

Lancaster University Volunteering Unit (LUVU) was established as a result of the HEACF; prior to this initiative the university had been unable to financially support volunteering activity.

There are a number of factors worth considering in light of this, not least the fact that trying to meet the targets and requirements outlined by HEFCE provided an immense challenge. There was no recent history of community volunteering within Lancaster University, therefore no pool of experience or skills within either the staff or student bodies that was easily identifiable. This meant that the logistics of running a volunteering unit and deciding how this might be effectively managed was a priority.

Experience gained from a very steep learning curve in the first six months of operation revealed that at Lancaster, student volunteers needed a great deal more support than time and human resources could allow. It was necessary to rethink how a sufficient number of projects could run at the same time to fulfil the HEACF criteria, whilst ensuring that they were sustainable and providing the development opportunities for the students[5]; and all this with no previous experience and no history or culture of community volunteering.

The framework was developed to provide a systematic approach to managing projects. It was designed by LUVU to take account of all aspects of the process: creating the project, recruiting the volunteers, providing support and training, delivering the project, undertaking timely evaluations and assessing the overall impact to enable further recommendations to be made. Its aim was to enable students to take ownership of projects whilst creating what was effectively a time management system so that everyone received the maximum benefits in the time that was available.

Programme detail

The project framework addresses fundamental areas of consideration for working in a systematic manner. It is designed to enable anyone to embark upon and manage a successful project. It was initially developed for full-time and part-time staff to follow, but can be as easily used by students. It is hoped that as LUVU develops this will indeed be the case.

The essence of the framework is that it has a project life-cycle of 13 weeks. In the context of the academic year that has to be a basic consideration, particularly at Lancaster where the academic life-cycle works to a term as opposed to a semester. This is deemed to be the most effective means of getting a project under way.

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[5] While not compulsory to the running of the HEACF, these were two fundamental quality issues that were considered to be important to LUVU and the university.

The framework does not include the ongoing nature of any project, but any tangential projects that are derived from the initial one may be developed within the framework. That said, all projects considered in the early stages will be expected to continue in some format, most likely as a placement opportunity.

Preliminary work

There are three main areas that are fundamental to any project. Strictly speaking these are not part of the framework, but clearly the framework cannot be implemented without the raw materials.

- ***The Eureka Moment:*** This is when an idea for a project is first suggested. This could be by a volunteer, a community partner or a LUVU staff member.

- ***Development of a project file:*** In order to kick-start projects, a number of project files are developed. These files will hold the necessary information for a group of volunteers to start a project.

  Viability of projects is critical. This will be decided as the project is researched. From experience, LUVU will identify barriers that will hinder the project's completion and look for ways to overcome these. The outcome of the initial research will be recorded in the project file that will eventually be given to the project group.

  The project file will include an outline of the project that can be seen by potential volunteers when they are deciding which project they want to be involved in.

- ***Recruitment and self-selection:*** At this stage the marketing and advertising takes place, particularly if the idea came from the community partner or a member of LUVU staff – or indeed if it came from a student but more volunteers are going to be required.

  For LUVU projects volunteers are project specific. They attend a preliminary session to register their interest but then need to commit to the project.

Once these three fundamentals have been achieved the framework becomes live and operational.

Operation of the framework

The framework operates within six main sessions over a ten-week period.

Session 1 covers the establishment of the group, the induction for the group in terms of LUVU and the initial key elements of the project itself; it is, effectively, a project-specific induction. The key to a successful outcome on any project is the team, so this first session is aimed at developing a team approach. The induction sessions cover the support networks and the expected levels of behaviour, and establish the ground rules for the team and their approach to the project. It is at this meeting that a communications officer is identified to be the link person between the project group and LUVU. A timetable of actions and activities is also set out here so that the project is given initial parameters.

Session 2 presupposes that an amount of activity has taken place to date and it is expected that some problems will have been encountered by this stage. Some of these problems may have been solved but where they have not there is the opportunity for the volunteers to discuss with a member of LUVU staff the possible solutions and next set of actions and direction for the project.

By this stage it should be possible to have a clearer view of the costs of the project. With all projects LUVU makes an initial assessment of the cost but builds in a margin for expansion or extension, particularly if it is decided that an extension is required to guarantee the project's long-term sustainability.

Session 3 establishes the clearest set of actions required to deliver the project. Thereafter the volunteers essentially adhere to their plan.

From there it is a case of getting the job done, and meetings are scheduled for evaluations, progress and closure of the project. Of course closure doesn't actually mean the end of the project; it serves as an indication that the project has been set up. It then turns into a sustainable set of placements, which can be accessed by any volunteer including those who have been involved in its establishment.

Measuring success

The aim of the framework is to give clear direction to the volunteers of how they should divide their time throughout the life-cycle of the project. This was based on a realistic understanding of the commitment and availability of volunteers. It also gave the staff in LUVU clear landmarks where they could be expected to give their guidance and support with no other distractions.

This aim was derived from early experience where ineffective time management resulted in little ownership being taken by the student volunteers, no clearly defined structure and a poor management of time for all concerned.

To date the implementation of the framework appears to be meeting its aims. It is still fairly intensive in terms of contact between the volunteers and LUVU staff – particularly the volunteer co-ordinator – but the time spent is constructive, which has given the volunteers greater confidence to take the projects forward by themselves.

Hints and tips

- Spending time at the start of any project making sure that volunteers are confident, supported and informed will save time in the long run.
- Have a few clear landmarks which have equally clear purposes and stick to them.
- Keep it simple: it is supposed to be understood and straightforward to implement by anyone.

Case study IN3 (2003)
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Context

Volunteering is part of the Student Development Service (SDS), based within the Career Development and Employment Service. Quality standards are taken from the Matrix standards.

Quality standards are essential to running any project. The Matrix standard has been used for the work of the volunteering unit and it is believed that it can be applied to any volunteering project.

Of the list below, all have been written or proposed since the HEACF project started, therefore volunteering is incorporated into the SDS statements, and voluntary organisations are often referred to as employers.

Programme detail

Statement of service

This is posted on the website and briefly outlines:
- the primary aim of the service
- objectives
- what students, staff and external organisations will have access to
- what is expected from them
- the principles that are abided by:
    - confidentiality
    - equal opportunity
    - accessibility
    - quality assurance
    - staff development
- any codes of practice that are adhered to.

Code of practice for volunteering

This is in the handbook and brief statement. It includes:
- student development service aims
- volunteer guidelines
- voluntary organisation aims
- data protection information.

Statements of entitlement

The aim is that statements of entitlement are produced for all SDS work; one will be written for students and one for non-voluntary sector employers. One currently exists for voluntary organisations, which includes:

- aim of work with the voluntary sector
- criteria for acceptance of organisations – e.g. equal opportunities policy
- screening, health and safety of volunteers
- policy on why the working relationship may be withdrawn
- complaints against the place of volunteering by a student
- complaints against students referred to a voluntary placement
- complaints against HEI staff
- principles that are abided by
- contact details.

Employer relations strategy

There is a danger with projects where the targets are numbers, such as HEACF, that a service will find it difficult to refuse assistance to the voluntary sector and overload itself. Therefore planning is essential. Current strategy includes all the employers that are currently involved with projects, voluntary and non-voluntary. It includes complaints procedures and principles but specific targets are based around:

- government, university, student services and quality drivers, which affect service provision
- current employer work
- what employers want from the service
- what is offered by the service
- what is expected from employers
- strategic goals which incorporate:
  - increasing the range of development opportunities through partnership working
  - improving communication with partners
  - effectively recording and distributing information about employer-related opportunities
  - effectively recording students' details onto a database for monitoring purposes – this will help identify who is using the service and those students who are not
  - effectively promoting opportunities to students
  - developing feedback, monitoring and evaluation methods to ensure SDS provision is effective
  - ensuring revenue streams are established to maintain and build upon the service whilst maintaining professional values
  - ensuring students are encouraged to participate in activities through recognition and accreditation
  - provide clear information on services to employers.

Projects/programmes in partnership

Many partnerships are currently active, such as mentoring schemes, which involve external organisations to varying degrees. Most partner organisations have procedures in place to

feed back on training, induction and evaluation. Where they do not, London Metropolitan's own procedures are used to do this.

Projects are monitored and evaluated in the same way as partner organisation projects. Feedback is sought from events from both students and the voluntary sector.

Other feedback

- An important aim is to be sure that the volunteering unit is offering services that students want. An indication is through sign-ups to programmes and attendance at drop-ins. To be sure of this, a questionnaire is being devised to ascertain student awareness of the SDS and its services, and to ask for suggestions for services.
- The service is incorporated into a feedback sheet used by Student Services, and is part of the annual university student satisfaction survey.
- Publicity is monitored on all application forms for programmes, events or drop-ins.
- Feedback is sought from the voluntary sector through mail-outs asking for suggestions for projects etc.

Vacancy handling for the voluntary sector

This has proved difficult as several hundred organisations are on the brokering database; if the number was smaller then they could be visited and personal contact maintained. Success has been gained through monitoring those volunteering by offering incentives such as a monthly prize draw, free places on the InsightPlus™ Programme[6] and an invitation to receive their StAN[7] certificate, at the annual StAN awards where there is a grand prize draw. Monitoring those who do not take up volunteering positions is much harder, and ways to improve this are being sought. Free lunches are offered to attend a half hour feedback session on why they are not volunteering. If this does not work students are offered a goody bag if they return an on-line form to the volunteering unit.

Hints and tips

- Ensure that your work is in response to the bigger picture; in this way you will get support from the university.
- Ensure that you are providing services that the students actually want; do not make assumptions.
- Ensure that you take account of university policies, codes of practice and legal requirements.
- Feedback, monitoring and evaluation are all essential and you must adjust your service provision in response.
- Remember that quality standards can assist you with future funding bids.

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[6] InsightPlus™ is a national accreditation scheme which seeks to increase student employability by aiding students' recognition of the skills they develop while undertaking part-time employment or voluntary work, and by accrediting them with the Management Skills Award from the Institute of Leadership and Management. It was developed and is managed by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre, and run locally by HEIs. www.insightplus.co.uk

[7] Please see Case Study C4.

Links with the community

Developing links with the community is at the heart of the HEACF purpose: '*Volunteering helps to promote a fairer, more cohesive society in which individuals feel they have a stake. It also helps to build bridges between communities and local organisations such as HEIs.*' [8]

For many universities, building bridges between local residents and the university in areas with large student populations was an obvious priority in the use of HEACF allocations. The case studies on this theme illustrate some of the more imaginative and enduring ways in which students and staff are working with local groups to improve the quality of life for all residents in the locality.

Other case studies look at how universities are supporting particular communities such as ethnic or faith communities. This can be to meet urgent needs which the university is well placed to address: for example, mentoring refugees with professional and advanced academic qualifications. In some cases, the initial driver can be the widening participation agenda.

Two case studies draw out some success factors in working with small community groups and local organisations.   Importantly, they include an emphasis on how the university's wealth of resources – from training course expertise to meeting space – can be used to benefit the local community.

All universities engage with the community in different ways, but it is the long-term strategic and sustainable commitment to the community that underpins an improving position. This section illustrates how universities are embedding this commitment in the university agenda, and that community projects are not short-term or remedial activities.

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[8] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reachout/heacf

Case study LC1 (2003)
Trash Splash
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Context

This case study highlights an example of partnership working between an HEI (University of Liverpool) and a local council (Liverpool City Council) to achieve a community benefit.

The Liverpool Youth Offending Team (YOT) was very keen to work with the university, as the difficult relationship between students and young people in the city means that students are often the targets and victims of youth crime. The university was also keen to work with the YOT for this reason, and because many psychology students had expressed an interest in volunteering with the YOT as relevant work experience.

As the YOT had already filled its voluntary places for the year it was decided to develop a tailor-made project, with the University of Liverpool HEACF project acting as the lead partner.

Programme detail
Trash Splash!

In the last two weeks of May 2003 11 students volunteered alongside 5 young offenders to paint wheelie bins and entry walls for local residents in two streets of a designated regeneration area, close to the university. This may seem a strange idea, but it had been identified by the community as desirable; cleaning up the local environment consistently appears in the top three priorities of local people in various surveys undertaken by local stakeholders and community groups. A similar bin-painting project in two nearby streets involving students from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) had been very well received; an overwhelming number of residents requested the project be extended to their streets. The Trash Splash team took on the challenge. The project complemented other local initiatives, happening around the same time, to clean up the environment such as Picton in Bloom and the Picton Clean-Up Day, so ensuring some sustainability for the work of the project.

The area chosen was very close to a significant student population, and also suffered a high percentage of youth crime and anti-social behaviour. This meant that both the students and young people had the chance to benefit a local area and hopefully to become more aware of their responsibilities towards the communities in which they live, breaking down the barriers between the two groups.

This is a good example of how HEIs and local authorities can develop projects that are specifically focused on the needs of individual communities. The Trash Splash project operates on a number of levels, achieving HEI objectives of widening participation and improved employability of students through volunteering, and hitting YOT targets of reducing youth crime by challenging misconceptions, raising aspirations and using the principles of restorative justice and reparation.

The project involved different parts of the council working together as well as with the university. The Risk and Insurance Unit was involved to ensure that the project would be fully covered under the council's liabilities arrangements. There was also close work with the Environmental Action Team to gain permission to paint the bins (which are council property) and to arrange the best days to run the project, in order to fit in with the street cleaning and bin collection.

This added another strand to the project as the Environmental Action Team had their own priorities. They asked for residents to sign an agreement stating that in return for painting the bin and/or wall they would keep the entries free and clear of rubbish and place their bins out for collection at the correct time and place. This worked well as it complemented the aim of improving the visual environment and helped with the sustainability of the project. The Trash Splash team also enlisted the help of the North Liverpool YOT (run by Barnardo's) to assist in the delivery of the project.

The letters to residents explaining the project contained information on local council and community initiatives that would help residents maintain a clean environment and involve them in local decision-making.

The team also worked closely with local groups and stakeholders; permission was granted from the Registered Social Landlords who owned properties in the streets for their tenants to take up the project.

Results

The project definitely had a positive impact on the young people involved and the only complaint from the local residents was that the team could not stay to do more. Many of the students involved have gone on to gain further experience in different parts of the YOT and some of the final year student volunteers have applied for jobs in the field.

In view of the above it has been decided to run the project again next year and the Trash Splash team are currently working with the North Liverpool YOT to develop further projects along the same lines in different areas of the city.

Hints and tips

- Choose your area well and then design the project around the needs of the area.
- Look at ways of maximising the impact of your project by working with community groups and other local stakeholders.
- Always consider quality and sustainability: it is important that there is some continued working either by you or another organisation. (The area in which the project ran had a very low percentage of residents attending or having any contact with the university so it was imperative that they had a positive experience.)
- When working in partnership with an outside organisation be very clear on work divisions - who will deliver what and who will pay for what.
- When working with local authorities:

  - be aware of differing political agendas
  - consider the timing of project costs - it can sometimes take a long time for payments to be processed

if your authority does not work well across its different agencies it may be better for you to approach the individual agencies as required (though this was not the case for this project).

Case study LC2 (2003)
Mentoring and Guidance Project
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Context

The Mentoring and Guidance project was set up as a partnership between London South Bank University's Community Ambassador Scheme and Faith in London. Faith in London is an innovative and wide-reaching multi-faith organisation, working alongside faith communities and other concerned organisations throughout London to regenerate deprived areas within Black minority ethnic and White communities.

This project came about as a result of shared objectives to raise awareness about higher education within faith groups, and has taken full advantage of both organisations' resources – Faith in London's contacts within the local faith communities and expert knowledge on cultural diversity, and London South Bank University's trained community ambassadors.

Objectives
- To help provide the missing link between progressing from school to FE/HE.
- To provide a resource of comprehensively trained community ambassadors for local faith groups.
- To empower target groups.
- To widen opportunities and access to FE/HE.

The main aim was to raise awareness among local faith groups about further and higher educational opportunities. This was done through a series of 10 visits to groups identified by Faith in London.

Participants in this project included 10 community ambassadors from London South Bank University, the project manager within Faith in London, and eight faith organisations (Southwark Muslim Women's Association, Chalk Farm Baptist Church, The Islamic Cultural Centre, Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre Trust, Universal Churches of the Kingdom of God, Westway Development Trust, Arachne Greek Cypriot Women's Group, Bengali Workers Association).

Programme detail

Ambassadors on all projects within the university's scheme benefit from extensive training and briefings, including:
- ambassador training – helping to build presentation skills and team work
- mentor training – helping to create an understanding of boundaries, identifying barriers to learning and ways these can be countered, and different techniques for communicating.

For the Mentoring and Guidance project it was decided that extra training was needed because of the sensitivity surrounding areas of cultural diversity. This led to research on sources of cultural diversity training, which would provide specific knowledge of different

cultures/religions, advice on acceptable behaviour when dealing with different cultural groups and sensitivity to cultural norms. Faith in London already possessed this knowledge and experience. They agreed to provide this additional training to the 10 ambassadors, plus additional students who had indicated an interest in dealing with faith groups.

Training aims

- To provide a working knowledge and awareness of the various minority ethnic cultures and religions.

- To understand the nature of culturally sensitive services, thus ensuring equal access and participation for all the communities.

The training was carried out in a group with a trainer, a representative from Faith in London and three members of staff from the university. Students worked in pairs to learn about one specific religion and then to report back to the wider group for discussion.

Training contents

- Understand and appreciate the multi-cultural reality of Britain:
  - migration into and out of Britain
  - migration of post-war period (discussion focus)
  - general perception of cultural diversity
  - 1991 Census figures
  - Black/White ratio
  - ethnic minorities
  - why and who.
- Economics, labour shortage, war and post-war development.
- Focus on specific cultural groups – migration e.g. Jews (early 20th century), West Indians and West Africans (1950s onwards), Asians (1960s onwards), Somalis (1980s-90s).
- Recognise the disadvantages faced by the people of ethnic minority cultures.
- Recognise cultural awareness as an important means to change.
- Acquire a general overview of the various minority cultures and faiths e.g. Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Rastafarianism, Chinese religions.
- Identify the religious and cultural needs of the clients and possible ways of meeting them.

The university has always been very conscious of diversity, situated as it is in a culturally diverse area of London from which it draws a high percentage of its students. This was the first time an outside agency was enlisted to bring its expertise to students and widen both staff and student awareness of how to deal with religious and cultural diversity.

It is a good example of partnership working, illustrating the value that partners can bring not only to a project but also to the wider needs of the university.

Hints and tips

- Identify the needs of the students.
- Discuss potential training with partners.
- Gather information from the students on their areas of interest and expertise.
- Use this feedback to structure the courses, e.g. utilise the current knowledge within the group to disseminate information.
- Make sure the information is relevant to the project(s) on which the students will be working.

- Build evaluation into the projects, so that the faith groups can give feedback on aspects which they thought went well, and others they thought could have been improved. This feedback is probably best done to the partner group – in this case Faith in London.
- Gather feedback from the students, not only on aspects which could be added to the training but how the training has impacted on their perceptions and ability to deal with cultural diversity issues.

Case study LC3 (2003)
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Context

The STAX (Students Taking Action for Community Change) project was launched to students at the start of the academic year in 2002. STAX has taken an 'agency' approach to the development of student volunteering activity, acting as a bridge between potential student volunteers and local community groups. STAX has registered contact with a total of 170 community groups offering 203 different types of volunteer opportunities to students.

The development of realistic and comprehensive policies was seen as a priority for this project. The agency model means that students will be volunteering in a variety of organisations and locations. As staff will not have day to day access to the student volunteers, the responsibility of addressing and introducing volunteering best practice is extremely important. Therefore alongside the initial mapping process was the development of policy documents. The importance of having clear policies was reinforced as contact with community groups grew. It became obvious that these groups are run and resourced in many different ways and do not always have the opportunity to cover policy development and implementation as comprehensively as they would wish.

STAX is keen to maintain a constructive and supportive relationship with the local community and groups the students are volunteering with. After some consultation with them it was decided to host and deliver a training event (free of charge) in an attempt to address some of the issues in feedback.

Programme detail

The training event was held on campus and advertised to a broad section of community groups. It offered a morning and afternoon workshop with informal networking at the end of the day. Twenty-four representatives from 20 local groups attended the event. The programme addressed two main areas in which community groups had expressed the need for most support:

- policy development
- recruitment and retention of volunteers.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator and Student Development Manager from the STAX team designed and delivered the policy session. The content was based on the team's own experiences of developing policies from scratch. It was intended to be a participatory exercise drawing on the expertise and experience of the community groups and identifying through that the relevance and importance of clear policy guidelines.

The recruitment and retention session was run by a colleague from Student Volunteering England and examined experiences of effective recruitment techniques. It also addressed the need for expectations, rights and responsibilities to be clearly established, and the importance of this in the retention of volunteers.

Both sessions were very lively and generated some interesting discussion and sharing of experiences.

Feedback from the community groups

The feedback from the training session was extremely positive. The community groups identified:

- feeling less overwhelmed about policy development and implementation
- recognising the need for clear policy guidelines in volunteering
- welcoming the rare opportunity to network with members of other local groups and share common experiences
- that they enjoyed the university's facilities and appreciated the gesture of the STAX project in offering the training.

Perceived benefits to the STAX volunteers

The STAX team felt the exercise was an important good will gesture but that other benefits were also generated:
- Ultimately the support and recognition of the need for best practice can only enhance the experience of volunteers.
- The STAX team also learned from the experiences and expertise of colleagues in the community groups.
- The university and STAX project has become increasingly recognised as a part of the local community.

Case study LC4 (2003)
Live Guides
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Context

'Live Guides' is an example of how the Kent Institute of Art & Design (KIAD) and the Turner Centre worked together to develop a comprehensive volunteering programme addressing the cultural conflict generated by the influx of arts activity into Thanet.

KIAD is a small, specialist art, design and architecture higher education institution. Droit House in Margate is a Visitor Interpretation Centre and exhibition venue run by the Turner Centre close to the proposed location of the new Turner Centre art gallery. The Turner Centre aims to develop audiences for contemporary art leading up to the opening of the new gallery in 2007. Crucial to this process is a healthy and positive dialogue with its visitors. Audience interest in contemporary art is not highly developed in Thanet, with some visitors unfamiliar with a gallery visit.

The background to the project centred on the regeneration of Thanet, focusing on the Turner Centre specifically. The proposed Turner Centre will help to bring prosperity to Thanet through enhancing tourism, attracting creative and cultural industries to the area and creating employment in an area of deprivation. Yet, at the launch of the first Thanet Contemporary Arts Festival in 2001 held in unoccupied buildings in Margate's Old Town, it was clear that there was hostility from local people. Some of this hostility arose from a misconception that Council Tax funds were being channelled into the Turner Centre, against the wishes of local people.

Following discussions between the Turner Centre's Education and Outreach Officer and the KIAD HEACF Project Co-ordinator, 'Live Guides', a volunteering project to engage with gallery visitors and enhance their experience and understanding of contemporary art exhibitions at Droit House, was planned and implemented.

Programme detail

From the outset, both KIAD and the Turner Centre aimed to promote excellence in volunteering.

The Live Guides were the first point of contact for gallery visitors, acting as intermediaries between the visiting public and the contemporary artists' work. They also faced the wider challenge of promoting the notion that the development of the arts in Thanet does not necessarily run counter to the long-standing perception of Margate as a traditional seaside town and that contemporary art can and should be inclusive. As such, the guides were addressing key issues currently under debate in the arts and society as a whole.

Promotional posters advertising for volunteers were placed on each of the three KIAD campuses. This was followed by informal visits from the HEACF Project Co-ordinator to promote the opportunity and answer questions from potential volunteers. Seven students applied and were accepted as volunteers.

The selection of Live Guides was a formal process, beginning with structured interviews. All were given a job description which clearly stated the skills and personal qualities needed and the intended outcomes for both the volunteer and the Turner Centre.

Volunteers took part in a comprehensive induction programme. They were provided with guidelines covering conduct, tasks, health and safety and security. Their hours of work, responsibilities and working procedures were clearly defined.

Induction included a session for the exhibiting artist to present and explain their work to the volunteers. This session was also attended by the Director of the Turner Centre, the Education and Outreach Officer, the Administrator of Droit House and the KIAD HEACF Project Co-ordinator. It provided a fascinating insight into the artists' work and an opportunity for stimulating dialogue. It also reinforced the sense of teamwork and the value that all participants placed upon both the project and the volunteers. It was remarkable that a large group with inevitably diverse approaches to contemporary art achieved a positive exchange of views and established strong relationships based on mutual respect in such a short time, a factor essential to the successful implementation of the project.

There was a high level of trust in the artists' willingness to hand over responsibility to the Live Guides to represent their art to the visiting public. This was appreciated by the volunteers and engendered the strong sense of responsibility which was evident in the volunteers' approach to the project.

Evaluation

The volunteers gained invaluable and transferable skills from their involvement in the project, and received positive feedback from gallery visitors about the role of the Live Guide.

Volunteers were invited to reflect upon their experience by attending a feedback session to enable them to share experiences and exchange ideas. They were also asked to fill in a questionnaire to help the Turner Centre and the HEACF Project Co-ordinator further develop the Live Guide concept. The questionnaire asked them to provide feedback on:

- how well prepared they were for the role of Live Guide
- which aspects of the training were useful and what else they would like to see included
- whether they felt they had made a difference to the visitor experience and if so how
- what they had found positive in the experience and what they had found difficult
- the timing and structure of the Live Guide induction sessions
- any ideas for further development.

Sustainability

The success of this project has led other community arts organisations and festival organisers in Kent and Medway to approach KIAD to use the model developed for Live Guides. The Turner Centre also plans to further develop the project by inviting KIAD and other HEIs to participate in additional Live Guide projects across East Kent.

The Turner Centre perspective

'The Turner Centre, an international centre for the visual arts, will open in Margate in 2007. The Live Guide project, which takes place in a small exhibition space in Droit House, the Turner Centre's Visitor Centre, started in April 2003. The project has provided students with the opportunity to talk to professional artists about their work and enabled us, as a

community-based arts centre, to strengthen links with KIAD. Most importantly, Live Guides have encouraged visitors to think and talk about contemporary art and this has had an important impact on the quality of visitors' experiences. The Live Guides, through their volunteering, have become important ambassadors for the Turner Centre.

'We hope to continue this collaboration with KIAD to ensure that Droit House, and ultimately the Turner Centre, are stimulating environments where audiences feel excited about looking, thinking and talking about art.'
Karen Eslea, Education and Outreach Officer, The Turner Centre

Hints and tips

- Taking a risk, providing it is managed well, can be very worthwhile.
- A formal structure to volunteering provides reassurance to both sides.
- Commitment and responsibility from all parties involved is required to ensure success.
- Build in a good support and feedback structure for volunteers.

Case study LC5 (2003)
Community Engagement

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Context

This case study aims to explain the strategic approach adopted by the University of Leeds to building links with the community. The university is at the forefront of community engagement, being one of the first to develop a community relations strategy, employ a full time community liaison officer and develop a community-sensitive housing strategy. This strategic approach has given focus and purpose to project development and enabled community engagement to become embedded in the core activities of the university.

Central to this success has been defining community engagement, its meaning, scope and purpose. The City, Regional and Widening Participation Office manages and co-ordinates 15 major projects involving over 300 student and staff volunteers annually. The diversity of these projects is testament to the processes that engage community organisations and help to delineate the spectrum of issues in which the university can offer support. The outcome of this approach is a consultative and engaging university which is both proactive and responsive to the needs identified within the local community.

Programme detail

The university believes that the appointment of a dedicated community liaison officer has been crucial in forging new relationships and partnerships with the local community. Increased awareness of this role through sustained and regular attendance of local group meetings presents the university as a listening and lasting presence. Previously, community relations principally involved reacting to issues, often as a result of conflict generated in areas of local residents and transient student populations. This remains a core function of the role, and dealing with issues and complaints is managed through a dedicated neighbourhood help line.

However, the role is also proactive, seeking to develop projects within the community to utilise the student resource as a benefit to local people and devise, in consultation with the community, new and innovative strategies to prevent recurring problems. Working in this way has enabled the community to feel a sense of ownership and to give a steer to projects, and has in all cases improved perceptions of the university. This is exemplified in the Leeds University Community Initiative, recently launched to provide small grants to staff, students and community groups which seek to develop projects that build new relationships between the university and the community.

The role has a strategic focus based around the academic year. The local community faces most disruption and inconvenience during student changeover. In consultation with local community groups a project has been devised to enable students to recycle books, tinned food and clothes. This reduced the visual impact of waste and allowed recycled goods to be donated to local charities. The high levels of waste produced at this time were also reduced

through discussion with the City Council to increase waste collection rounds in the weeks leading up to the changeover.

Community engagement has also been achieved through student volunteers being involved in the development and delivery of local events. The East Bank Community Festival was initiated by the university and involved over 50 volunteers. The event celebrates local history, culture and talent through performances and workshops. The university brings together local community groups and schools and is planning to run the festival annually.

In building links with the community, the university understands that it needs both a two-way dialogue to disseminate the positive involvement had through the 300 volunteers, and a point of contact in the community that can defuse and deal with potential disputes relating to the well-documented 'town and gown' conflicts. With a growing student population putting an increasing burden on the local property, the community liaison role has necessitated consultation on the first University Housing Strategy. This has informed the university about the concerns of the general public and enabled strategic planning for coping with increased student numbers. It is clear that building links with the community involves engagement in not only social events but also in consultation on policy matters that can affect the locality.

Whilst all universities engage the community in different ways, it is the long-term strategic and sustainable commitment to the community that underpins an improving position. The community deserves to know that this role is embedded in the university agenda, and that community projects and consultation are not short-term remedial activities.

The university is proud of the considerable improvements made in community relations, but understands that this is a continual and gradual process. As student numbers increase, the university believes that only through engaging the community in a partnership can it offer the community resources and support in the areas and ways that they themselves have defined.

The community liaison role was given a great deal of flexibility in its inception to allow the post holder to engage and listen to the community. In this way the strategic direction of the university's commitment is based on grass roots input relevant to the local community.

Hints and tips

- Be represented on local Community Involvement Teams.
- Provide clear signposting for the community for complaint procedures through a community help line.
- Ensure there is a rapid and personal response to issues raised within the community.
- Create a sense of community ownership in project development and implementation.
- Publicise the positive and popular community projects.
- Link activities with other HE providers to avoid duplication and maximise resources.
- Define community engagement within a strategic framework.

The Up Your Street Project
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Context

The Up Your Street Project is a joint initiative between the University of Leeds and Community Action at Leeds Metropolitan (CALM). The aim is to improve the environmental image of the areas of high student population, which is a cause of concern to some local long-term residents.

The need for the project has been established in consultation with local communities. The University of Leeds Community Liaison Officer regularly attends local meetings of residents groups and community involvement teams. The project is a joint response to addressing this need.

Programme detail

The project activities aim to address common concerns in all communities with large student populations, including:
- the cyclical nature of student occupancy and the inadequate refuse collection service at key points in the academic year (student changeover)
- concerns of long-term residents that the large number of properties let to students are not well maintained.
- high concentration of litter
- the commercial fly posting and leaflet dropping targeted at students
- graffiti and litter, creating an impression of the areas being run down and in decline.

The Up Your Street Project is the umbrella name for a year-long programme of diverse activity aimed at improving the aesthetic appearance of the local community. Environmental improvements make up the core activity, but the intention is also to improve the lines of communication and interaction between students and the local community.

Last year's programme included a number of projects including a Graffiti Jam, working with local children in decorating a legal graffiti wall. Other projects involved students removing illegal graffiti from key public spaces and buildings. Murals were also painted on shop fronts. A bargain hunt and community fun day at the start of the summer enabled students to host a table-top junk sale run in the local park. Other events included a Millennium Green arts festival and a winter festival for residents and volunteers.

The project has been expanded this year to create community notice boards, a glass and plastic bag recycling scheme, a web-site for the project and buying a milk float for recycling initiatives! This will also link into the national 'Don't be a Tosser' litter campaign to cut down on waste from flyers.

The project engaged over 40 volunteers last year, most of whom took part in several of the activities. The Up Your Street brand is now established and has resulted in an increase of volunteers this year to 60.

The project has achieved the following:
- strategies to reduce refuse left by students
- reduction in litter and refuse through community clean-up days
- improved community discourse and relations
- volunteering opportunities for students and local residents
- sustained and mutually beneficial relationships with the City Council, local residents groups, police and youth groups
- consultation with the community on strategies to address problems created by commercial advertising and graffiti in the area
- stronger working relationships between the two Leeds universities.

The creativity and diversity of the projects has enabled students to work in partnership with a broad range of community partners and with all age groups. This ensures that the community as a whole benefits from the programme rather than a targeted group. All the events are low cost and are based on volunteer hours, which means significant improvements are made in a cost-effective way.

Hints and tips

- Working in partnership is essential. Contact other education providers in the area to maximise interest.
- Involve the local community throughout to generate a sense of ownership in the projects.
- Keep a database of student volunteers and encourage them to participate throughout the year.
- Establish a brand and identity for the project so that it becomes a recognised university activity and one which local people associate with the institutions involved.

Case study LC7 (2004)
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Context

Mentoring Refugees into Employment was introduced into the programme of HEACF funded projects in the university in January 2004. It followed a decision to develop a strategic and sustainable theme in support of the refugee community in Leeds. Up to 5,000 refugees settle in the West Yorkshire region annually, many in the Leeds area. A recent regional skills audit showed that 33 per cent of refugees coming into the area had been educated to degree level, and more than half of the refugees interviewed were based in Leeds.

Local refugee community organisations were contacted to help identify ways in which HEACF funding of volunteering could benefit these refugees. Mentoring was identified as an effective means of supporting refugees to achieve their education, training and employment aspirations.

The rationale was to develop a long-term secure relationship with this community, while continuing to achieve the targets specified for the project.

Programme detail

The project aims to enhance the employability of Leeds-based refugees through individual mentoring provided on a voluntary basis by staff of the university. Vital to the operation of the project is the partnership with three agencies in the city:
- Refugee Council Leeds provides advice and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees
- Refugee Training Advisory Service (RETAS), is a charity offering advice and help in areas of education, training, employment and re-qualification to local refugees
- St George's Crypt is renowned in Leeds for work with the homeless and provides a drop-in and support centre for refugees and asylum seekers.

Terms of reference were developed with the project partners and a steering group formed.

The project was promoted via the university web-site and through a newsletter publicising HEACF voluntary activity in the university. Some of the volunteers were targeted and individually approached, as an important element of the project is to match mentors and mentees with a similar professional or academic background; although this is not compulsory.

Participating refugees were carefully briefed and referred to the project from St George's Crypt and, at a later date, from RETAS and from a local FE college. The criteria for participating refugees are that they must be:
- actively seeking or wanting employment
- vocationally/professionally qualified and/or experienced
- moderately competent in English.

The refugees are given guest membership of the university library and initial support in using this resource.

Mentoring partnerships are reviewed after a period of six months and the project is monitored and will be evaluated by the steering group, with participation from the main stakeholders.

Training and support

Training days were delivered to volunteer mentors in January and March 2004. Speakers from the Refugee Council and RETAS provided in-depth information and advice on working with refugee communities. An external trainer delivered a practical session on mentoring skills. Packs of supporting information have been compiled and distributed to the mentors.

At the same time, a Mentor Support Group was established to provide support, advice and encouragement to the mentors and to enable them to share and feed back their experiences. All mentors are encouraged to refer difficult queries which arise during mentoring sessions to the steering group to investigate, using their combined areas of expertise. A great deal has been learned from dealing with queries and sharing knowledge, and this will help to support future pairings.

Outcomes and sustainability of the project

Since the launch of the project, interest in it within the university and in the local community has rapidly grown. By August 2004 16 pairings had been formed and a growing list of volunteers.

Good working relationships and a network of contacts have been developed with refugee community organisations in the city. This has led to a successful bid for funding, with local partners, to investigate and audit the barriers that face refugees in accessing HE. This will build upon the university's widening participation strategy to target under-represented groups entering higher education. The project leader, representing the university, has been invited to contribute to the regional strategy for refugees and asylum seekers.

The practical outcomes up to now have centred on the mentees being given guidance and support in submitting job applications, course applications, attending interviews and in seeking relevant work shadowing and volunteering opportunities. Many of the refugees are keen to upgrade their qualifications on the path to returning to their former professions. The mentors have been well placed to assist them with this process.

One unquantifiable aspect of the project is the pleasure reported by mentees in being made welcome in a university environment, and feeling comfortable in using university services such as the library or even the coffee bar.

Awareness of refugee matters has been increased across the university and there is a growing interest in implementing other areas of support and research.

Students will shortly begin to participate in the project by volunteering to provide conversation sessions. Discussions are taking place with the newly formed Student Action for Refugees (STAR) group of the students' union.

This project is possibly unique in involving university staff in volunteering activities with this particular client group. Mentors have reported positively on their experiences and the insight and knowledge they have gained about refugees and asylum seekers. Mentoring skills are transferable to their working situations. In particular, the university has formed a working

partnership with the Refugee Council in Leeds, and is now discussing a model which can be rolled out to other universities.

Hints and tips

- Be clear about expectations and boundaries.
- Take advice from the experts about sensitivities.
- Provide support for the mentors.
- Build in monitoring and evaluation.
- Observe confidentiality.

Case study LC8 (2004)
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Context

A successful university-run volunteering scheme is reliant on strong community links. Developing these links requires time, enthusiasm and innovation. A number of marketing approaches have been developed by TVU Volunteers to make this service both accessible and responsive to community needs, thus creating a diverse range of volunteering options for staff and students.

Marketing and communication tools include: newsletter, Caffeine Network, web-site www.tvuvolunteers.co.uk , mobile (for direct communication with the Volunteers Manager), email-shot for new opportunities (sent out weekly to the volunteers distribution list) as well as posters and flyers using TVU Volunteers branding and the new Volunteers Handbook.

Programme detail

Volunteers' newsletter: The TVU Volunteers newsletter is a printed update on news, events, and profiles of different organisations and volunteers. This is distributed around campus sites and also sent out to organisations and new volunteers. It is printed quarterly in-house. Past copies are included in the organisation registration packs sent out to new and interested groups so they are able to gain an insight into what TVU Volunteers is all about, and ways in which they can involve volunteers.

Joint projects: Joint projects co-ordinated by TVU Volunteers have been a highly successful way for groups with similar goals to share event organisation, funding, and publicity. Groups that have worked with TVU Volunteers projects include Age Concern, Alzheimer's Concern Ealing, Neighbourly Care groups, Mencap and church groups.

Community groups often do not have the funding available to run large scale events by themselves. The university can join groups together, and involve them at a level to which they are most suited.

Participation only events: TVU Volunteers also runs events that groups can just turn up and participate in (either by having a display, a table and activities or sending clients). Examples of this are:
- *Encore*, a music/luncheon club where different community groups with elderly clients attended
- *Ealing Bookworm*, a free book-based event for children in the Town Hall. Children's charities and community groups had a table each to display information and run activities for the kids.

Utilising university resources:

- The Mary King Room (training restaurant) has been used for a number of TVU Volunteers projects. These have included fundraisers, events and community coffee mornings for Volunteer Co-ordinators (Caffeine Network). Vestry Hall, is the venue for free lunchtime music recitals co-ordinated by the Music and Media department at the university.
- University rooms have also been booked for volunteer training. Thus the community is exposed to some of the resources and courses on offer within the university and other community outreach projects.

Developing successful community links:

TVU Volunteers has strengthened links with community groups by providing opportunities for volunteers. An example of this is a local primary school where the following TVU Volunteers initiatives have taken place or are still running:

- translation service that provides either basic written or verbal translation for school notices, parent meetings etc
- pond development and garden project that featured on BBC2 in July
- fundraising initiatives (spring bulbs and Christmas catalogues)
- after-school clubs (cultural/gardening/dance)
- *Log-On* (an IT project for parents run by the ICT co-ordinators and TVU Volunteers)
- spring bulb planting with children (junior classes)
- mural painting project.

Hints and tips

- *Local community knowledge:* This is vital in your ability to provide a range of new opportunities for volunteers. Information includes accessibility of the organisation or event be it public transport links or parking; and who are the key personnel in an organisation who need to be aware of your project and how to contact you.

- *Take time to do your own research* into the local group and the national governing body (if appropriate) to gain further information into the type of volunteering that already exists and identify gaps.

- *Communication:* Respond efficiently and effectively to community organisations, through e-mails and phone calls. When running events for specific groups use distribution lists to make email updates simple yet effective.

- *A website* that is updated regularly provides information to both existing and potential volunteers as well as community groups. It needs to be simple to navigate, interesting and informative.

- *Sustainable volunteering:* Fewer groups on your files should enable you to develop more sustainable links with each one. As you find volunteers that need different opportunities, then make the time to develop new community links.

Partnerships

The HEACF intends to increase the amount of volunteering opportunities and projects in HEIs as well as to develop relationships between HEIs and their local communities. Many HEIs have identified that an excellent way to address both these objectives was to build upon volunteering work already established and to create partnership arrangements with local community stakeholders to deliver HEACF projects.

Student Community Action (SCA) was already present in the vast majority of HEIs in England, usually led by the students' union or guild of students. Its status varies, from a student-run society operating in the same way as any student society, to having support from dedicated student development staff, though still retaining its student-led ethos. SCA, while not a single, cohesive, national organisation, has a strong identity amongst students, volunteering/student development practitioners and volunteering organisations external to HEIs. Its success locally is varied, with some well-established SCAs attracting student volunteers by the hundreds and running a large portfolio of projects. Newer societies can have a far harder time attracting this volume of volunteers, perhaps due to the added pressure of having to create a culture of volunteering – or at the least to get students to make explicit their interest in volunteering, without the benefit of substantial peer word-of-mouth.

It seems natural, then, for HEIs to look in the first instance at developing a partnership with the institution's existing SCA group – given the fact that students' unions cannot apply directly for HEACF funding. A large number of HEIs have taken this approach, the outcome being a number of different, successful models for developing such a partnership.

External partnerships are also another clear route for HEIs to follow in delivering their HEACF objectives. This can take the form of partnership with one major local organisation, such as the local council, in order to identify together ways in which the HEACF could benefit the local community. Potentially, this method will involve the development of further partnerships later in the relationship, typically with agencies of the local council, or with entirely separate beneficiary organisations (such as schools and youth clubs).

Partnerships have also been developed with smaller beneficiary organisations, with very focused aims and objectives, in order to run specific projects directly. This could be with local hospitals, schools, prisons and centres for asylum.

Both internal and external types of partnership are explored in the case studies within this section.

Case study P1 (2003)
University of Liverpool HEACF Project Team
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Context

The Guild of Students and The University of Liverpool work together to deliver the HEACF. This case study explains how different opportunities are offered, how they operate and the benefits of working together.

From the outset the Guild of Students and the university recognised the joint aim: to ensure students and staff are encouraged and are able to volunteer, are properly and effectively supported and can make the best use of the skills they develop from volunteering.

Programme detail

Staff from the Centre for Lifelong Learning (based within the university) together with Student Community Action (based within the Guild of Students) focused on developing a cohesive infrastructure that would encourage and support all volunteers.

Liverpool Student Community Action (LSCA) was already involved in volunteering, running student-led projects in the local community and maintaining links with external organisations, such as Liverpool Citizens Advocacy and Barnardo's. Community Bridge, based in the Careers Service, was involved in identifying and developing work experience-related student volunteer placements with community organisations. The HEACF Volunteer Co-ordinator, responsible for running Community Bridge for students, also works with staff to expand their volunteering opportunities.

The project working group, made up of representatives from LSCA, the university's student welfare section and the HEACF staff, meets regularly to discuss strategy, focusing on joint publicity and recruitment methods to maximise resources and share best practice.

A quality framework has been established, along with publicity materials, registration documents, induction/training processes and an efficient referral system providing routes for curriculum and social volunteers to a diverse range of opportunities, both within LSCA and with local partnership organisations.

The partnership manages the sustainable development of volunteering by having a clear division of tasks, with staff and students emphasising the importance and value of volunteering to the individual and to society. They have been visible at presentations and staff development events. The advantages of this have been the opportunity to speak directly and passionately about volunteering to a target market and also to receive direct feedback. On more than one occasion additional volunteer placements have been fostered through speaking to staff regarding their existing activities.

Monitoring activities and building on existing links with the local community have become fundamental in development for the future. Telephone evaluations and personal interviews have been carried out with volunteers and staff. Organisation evaluations were carried out with partnership organisations. These aimed to discover the awareness and effectiveness of LSCA and Community Bridge within the local community. The feedback from all these evaluations has enabled the project group to address issues of volunteer satisfaction, i.e. personal development and support which volunteers received. This has been used as a baseline to continue to monitor improvements in volunteer satisfaction.

Recent developments have been the newly established support and accreditation sessions. These sessions provide a forum for volunteers both academic and social to discuss their placement with like-minded people. There will also be an opportunity to provide additional information regarding any certification or accreditation for volunteers, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the Higher Skills Development Award run by the University of Liverpool.

In conjunction with other HEIs from the region, there are plans to organise a North West volunteering conference aimed at building capacity and securing futures within society. As the profile of volunteering increases and as it is recognised as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and the local community, the Liverpool HEACF project team will continue to foster activities throughout the University of Liverpool and in the local community.

Hints and tips

- Map existing activity.
- Build on existing links.
- Organise partnership activities.
- Share best practice within organisations.

Case study P2 (2004)
Gateside Festival Mentoring Project

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Context

The Gateside Festival Mentoring project is run in partnership with New Cross Gate New Deal for Communities (NDC). The project sees GCSU recruiting and training students as mentors to work with groups of young people (aged 14-25) from the local area, in one of five creative groups: Music, Dance, Fashion, Drama and Design. Each group put together a production that was showcased at the 'Gateside Festival' in August 2004. For example the theatre group helped young people script and perform a series of short sketches; the fashion group made and modelled their own garments at a fashion show for the festival; and the design group learned how to use computer packages to produce publicity for the event. NDC recruited professionals (also from the local area), in each of the five areas, who were responsible for outreach work to get young people involved and for co-ordinating the -running of the groups. Each group held weekly workshops from March 2004 until the festival.

Programme detail

This project is innovative firstly because GCSU has had a positive impact in shaping a community project and has been instrumental in bringing together two usually disparate groups – young people from one of the poorest wards in the country, and students. Secondly, it is innovative in providing an opportunity for students to gain experience relevant to their degrees, and opportunities for local young people to express their creativity, gain skills and identify employment and educational routes.

Coping with the unexpected

The project has coped with various unexpected problems, ultimately being a success and forming a solid relationship from which the project can be developed further.   It is thus an example of how problems can be overcome if working in partnership develops successfully.

The first problem was at the initial meeting of young people and mentors hosted at GCSU. Far more young people turned up than expected, and there were several incidents of local youths being rude to student staff. The night ended with a fight in the nightclub among rival gangs. After that, it became apparent that it might not be possible for GCSU to host the festival safely, nor would it be of sufficient benefit to our members to do so. A dialogue was established with New Cross Gate NDC.As a result, rather than withdraw from the project, it was decided that we could still offer the mentoring framework and facilities for the group to meet, but NDC would outsource the overall running of the festival.

The second unforeseen problem was that it took much longer than NDC had originally proposed to get the groups up and running. They started in March not in January. This caused problems in terms of retaining volunteers. Coupled with the date of the festival being

put back to August, this meant that students who had initially trained for the project were unable to commit time during their exams and the summer holiday. This was overcome by holding an additional session of mentor training, and establishing further volunteering opportunities for students from other universities to participate in the project. Students who were still interested in the project but felt unable to commit time over the exam period were offered the opportunity to volunteer as a steward on the day of the festival.

A sixth group was initially planned, Visual Arts, but this struggled to get off the ground. Again, students who had wanted to get involved in this group were offered alternative ways of volunteering with the project as a whole, either through other groups or as a steward on the day.

In summary, the project had to cope with several unexpected circumstances and did so by forging good communication channels and strong links with our partner organisation, New Cross Gate NDC, and by remaining flexible and open to new ways of keeping volunteers involved.

Hints and tips

- Communicate openly and honestly, discussing problems immediately as they arise with your partner organisation.
- Be flexible and imaginative about ways of getting and keeping volunteers involved.
- Provide alternative volunteering opportunities and different ways for people to get involved if possible.
- Always consult volunteers when planning the future of the project.
- Undertake thorough risk assessments when dealing with vulnerable groups.

Case study P3 (2003)
University and Students' Union Partnership
University of Plymouth

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Context

The HEACF at the University of Plymouth is managed through the Active in Communities Project (AiC), co-ordinated by university employed staff, in close co-operation with the students' union. The relationship between the university and the students' union has been one of the project's greatest strengths and provides the focus for this case study, along with the project's experience of developing the wider infrastructure to support its work.

The university is spread across a number of sites in the region and the AiC has aimed to extend existing Student Community Action activity to other sites and to introduce new activities. The second year of the project sees this activity extended to partner colleges.

Working towards delivering 420 new volunteer opportunities during its lifetime, the project has sought to work with the voluntary sector and to align itself with other university development priorities. There is a full-time AiC co-ordinator and 2 development workers, one engaged through the students' union.

Programme detail

Working in partnership, why is it significant? A number of HEIs have chosen to manage their HEACF project directly through their institution, with some reference to the students' union; others have taken the opposite approach, with the students' union managing the project directly. The University of Plymouth has sought a slightly different route, with the university and students' union working in close partnership. This appears to be unusual, and it is also the first such arrangement at the university.

The university's original project submission was developed with a cross-university team, including a strong input from students. It was felt that existing students' union volunteering, particularly through Student Community Action, provided a solid basis from which to extend volunteering and one that should be nurtured on the smaller and less well served sites. The submission therefore not only proposed students' union representation on the project committees (as well as that of community groups), it also envisaged the students' union holding direct responsibility for delivering over a quarter of the project's target volunteer numbers. To support this commitment a similar proportion of the budget was devolved to the students' union.

In delivering the project a Statement of Arrangements has been developed between the university and the students' union, to ensure that all parties are clear about expectations. This identifies activities, milestones and financial arrangements and has provided a valuable framework for reviewing progress.

In practice, as the project progresses, it has become clear that the students' union can contribute beyond what was initially envisaged. This has allowed the project team to play to its strengths. The students' union acts as the main interface with students, including recruitment activities, the Volunteer Fair and the organisation of the Awards Ceremony. The other AiC staff have been able to consider the broader university picture, such as aligning volunteering with the university's widening participation priorities, managing the accreditation framework and overall project management.

In the interim evaluation of AiC, undertaken by the Evaluation Trust, and presented to the steering group in May 2003, the external evaluator commented:

> 'The management of the project has achieved a difficult balance. It has aligned itself with the university sited alongside projects and departments with similar aims. It has also collaborated positively with the students' union and yet is visibly separate and exists for the benefit of the students and the wider communities. It is an example of successful partnership working, which depends on the parties remaining clear about their separate agendas as well as the areas of overlap.'

Developing the infrastructure, why is it significant? Prior to April 2002, AiC management systems did not exist. There was pressure to establish systems quickly, but ones that were also effective and to do so before most of the project staff were in post. What proved very helpful was the ability to draw on the experience of another development project.

By involving a member of a previous HEFCE Innovations project it was possible to draw on proven systems. The committee framework and terms of reference were developed on this basis, as was the project's dissemination strategy and evaluation strategy.

What did not exist, however, and had to be created, was a project plan and detailed project budget, transforming the original submission for a 3-year period into a practical programme over a period of 30 months. Initially time consuming, this process has proved invaluable to the project team, providing a framework for delivering the project and for monitoring and evaluation.

In developing the infrastructure to support volunteering, as opposed to the project itself, sustainability has been the key from the outset. This included, for instance, seeking university validation for a Volunteer Certificate, to be delivered through the Careers Service; sponsoring the development of volunteering provision on an existing web-based service for students, 'gradsouthwest' ([www.gradsouthwest.com/)](www.gradsouthwest.com/) and working on a joint initiative with Business in the Community, all of which can be continued beyond the life of the project.

Hints and tips

- The university and students' union should work closely together, playing to their respective strengths.
- Partnership arrangements should be made explicit, such as through a formal Statement of Arrangements, and should be systematically and honestly reviewed.
- Working in partnership requires sensitivity and takes more time in the short term, but delivers over the long term.
- People and systems from previous successful development projects can prove valuable resources, especially when starting up.
- Develop a clear project plan, based on project objectives, with milestones and targets which can be used to monitor progress, including by the project management steering group.
- Develop a clear budget plan profiling expenditure across the life of the project.
- Establish the evaluation and dissemination strategy early on in the project.

- Seek sustainability from the beginning. Look for synergy and opportunities to devolve provision and resources as a way of embedding volunteering.

Case study P4 (2003)
Sports Volunteer Scheme
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Context

The Sports Volunteer Scheme (SVS) at the University of Manchester is one of the many projects that resulted from the university's HEACF allocation. The SVS was allocated £70,000 for a period of 3 x 10 months.

The project appointed a manager who began work on 1 August 2002. The SVS now works with many differing organisations across the Greater Manchester area. The work that the volunteers are involved in varies from coaching to events organisation to administration.

In the first academic year (September 2002 to August 2003) the SVS created close to 100 volunteering opportunities; nearly three-quarters of these were filled by a total of 29 volunteers. In the following year the number of volunteers doubled and the scheme hopes to do the same with the number of opportunities that are fulfilled.

A particularly successful area for the SVS has been partnership building. This case study looks at ways to set up partnerships with local organisations and agencies, and how to keep them sustainable and successful.

Programme detail

When the SVS was first set up it was important that the project had a high profile within the local community, so that there would be plenty of opportunities available for the volunteers who had signed up to the scheme. Initially, the best way to do this seemed to be to attend as many sports networking meetings, meet as many potential partners as possible and advertise the scheme in the community through leaflet distribution and a website.

These approaches worked well. The scheme became so well known that more organisations were requesting volunteers than could be catered for. A decision had to be made about which partners the SVS should be working with. This was not an easy task after meeting with all of the organisations.

It was concluded that the SVS should work with umbrella organisations, which would enable volunteers to be channelled into smaller organisations through volunteering programmes run by these umbrella organisations. For example, instead of trying to create opportunities for volunteers in football through contacting local schools or football clubs, it was simpler to place these volunteers through Manchester County Football Association. This meant the volunteers were immediately integrated into an established volunteering programme, which had the by-product of the assurance that volunteers were being placed in organised and safe environments. It also reassured the beneficiary organisations that their volunteers were reliable and correctly trained because they were placed by the sport's national governing body.

Another example of this is the partnership with the RFU (Rugby Football Union). In Manchester, a Rugby Union Student Liaison Officer (RUSLO) is employed by the RFU in order to discover students who are interested in rugby, but are not playing within the university system. The officer finds local clubs for these students to continue their interest, and also to recruit them to complete community work. Through this volunteers are placed within local schools and clubs while actually working for a larger organisation (the RFU).

Benefits

Partnership building allows the SVS to pursue its targets of working with members of the local community, through existing developed pathways, and gives assurance to all parties that these volunteers are reliable, trained and working within safe environments.

An additional benefit of this method of working is that the scheme's manager has time to concentrate on other areas of their work, such as volunteer support, certification and accreditation. The long term development of the volunteers becomes a priority when the short term future is secured within these larger organisations. This provides the volunteers with goals and rewards on a continual basis and not as finality.

Hints and tips

- Establish the needs and hopes of the volunteer.
- Discover the requirements of the beneficiary organisation.
- Initially, build partnerships with umbrella organisations, such as the FA and RFU.
- Use existing volunteer pathways: this will help provide assurance about and for the volunteers for all interested partners.
- Build the connection between the volunteer and the beneficiary organisation. These are the two parties that will have the closest relationship, so effort must going into this to help it become successful.

Recognition of volunteering

Acknowledging the contribution made by student and staff volunteers can take a number of different forms. Some universities have gone down the formal recognition route, exploring various types of accreditation (see section on Accreditation and volunteering in the curriculum).

Accreditation is not, however, appropriate for all. The option to work towards an award is unappealing for large numbers of student volunteers, because the commitment required in terms of attendance, training, providing evidence of learning and other assessment is too great.

One means of rewarding and valuing student commitment to volunteering is to organise award schemes and celebratory events. These have the added attraction of being an excellent vehicle for communicating the university's HEACF achievements internally and in the local community.

Increasingly, universities are using multiple ways of recognising volunteering and awards, and celebratory events form part of broader strategies. In this section, however, we concentrate on sharing some of the detail of successful initiatives with similar aims but different forms.

Case study RV1 (2003)
A Celebration of Volunteering
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Context

The University of Salford has used the funding received from the HEACF to create Volunteering @ Salford. Based within the Education Development Unit at the university, two development officers (Rory Daly and Helen Rees) and one clerical assistant (Marion Porter) oversee the day-to-day running of the office, under the management of Iain Jones, co-ordinator of the HEACF at the University of Salford.

After a very successful first year, the volunteering team thought it fitting to promote their activities to the wider university and local communities by celebrating the work done by student and staff volunteers.

Programme detail

The celebratory event took the form of a conference, which was held at the university on 15 October 2003. A selection of speakers was invited, including academics, local politicians, local voluntary organisations and volunteers.

Professor James Powell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise and Regional Affairs, spoke of the importance of the university working together with the local communities and how this benefits all parties. Jane Hanstock, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, spoke of the importance of the skills and experience that students gain from working as volunteers. Councillor Stanley Witkowski, the Deputy Mayor of Salford, spoke about the importance of the voluntary sector to the City of Salford, and presented certificates of achievement to the volunteers. Dr Elaine Baldwin, Chair of the Volunteering @ Salford Steering Group gave an overview of the work of the Steering Group and reflected on the all-round benefits of volunteering.

Most important, however, were the contributions of the volunteers and voluntary sector partners. On the day, four volunteers (Nasima Hasan, Shahedul Alam, Katie McKenna and Nicola Devereux) spoke about the impact volunteering had had on their lives. All of them spoke about the improvements in their personal and academic skills. They noted the advantages of being able to use the knowledge they had acquired at university to the benefit of their local community, and how volunteering had helped in their academic work. Many of the academics attending the conference said that the talks given by the volunteers made them think of volunteering in a completely different light. They could now fully understand the positive impact volunteering could have on their students.

Speakers from the voluntary partners spoke highly of the contribution of volunteers. Sara Hadfield, Volunteer Co-ordinator from the Royal Schools for the Deaf Manchester, said that the volunteers have contributed 'their own specific skills and experience, commitment, reliability and support for our staff and students, and bring the "added bonus" to the work we do.'

Outcomes: There have been many conferences in the last year, which have been aimed towards HE employees involved in the HEACF. However, there is a feeling that none of these has really reflected on the contributions of the volunteers and the importance of the voluntary sector in today's society. Celebrations allow:

- the opportunity to acclaim student volunteers and applaud the work of the local voluntary sector
- local community groups the opportunity to encourage academics to volunteer with their projects and to be aware of the possibilities available to students through volunteering
- the opportunity to thank volunteers, voluntary sector partners and members of the university community for helping to make it a successful year
- the opportunity to publicise the HEACF through features in local media
- promotion of activities to staff and students through articles about the event in the university newspaper
- networking between volunteers in the local communities.

Following her presentation, one volunteer has had a promise of funding for the after-school science club that she founded so that her children would have something to do while she was at university!

The work of Volunteering @ Salford in the local community puts them at the forefront of the university's widening participation strategy, which is managed by Mike Doyle, the head of their section. Local college principals attended the event, which enabled us to promote the benefits of links with the university to these influential people, and to create more volunteering opportunities for the volunteers. Although the benefits of the work (in terms of widening participation) may not be immediately evident, closer links between universities and local communities can only be to the advantage of both.

The event permitted the dissemination of the results of the monitoring and evaluation that was carried out over the last year. Through the use of focus groups, questionnaires, one-to-one interviews and evaluation sheets, it is believed that a sustainable base has been created from which the University of Salford's HEACF might continue to prosper. The Celebration of Volunteering event was integral to this goal.

Case study RV2 (2004)
Annual Celebration of Volunteering
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Context

Exeter Community Action was well established, with a 36-year history. A high number of students were already volunteering. In light of this, emphasis was placed not only on achieving the target volunteer numbers, but also on making volunteering an easy, valuable and rewarding experience. The course of action followed was to review the processes volunteers go through, the training and support offered to them, and the rewards and accreditation provided to enhance their experience. The need for an awards ceremony was identified at the outset of HEACF Round 1, to recognise the achievement of volunteers and to publicise their commitment to the wider community through the press. The Annual Celebration of Volunteering was established.

Programme detail

The first Annual Celebration of Volunteering took place in June 2003 with over 300 student volunteers attending a black tie champagne reception, three course dinner and Oscars style awards ceremony followed by a disco. The event was provided free, to ensure every volunteer received something in return for their efforts. The standard VIP bar was abolished and the volunteers became the VIPs for the evening, in the presence of guests such as the vice-chancellor, City Mayor, trustees of partner community organisations and the press. Workers and clients from community organisations had the opportunity to thank volunteers personally. The evening was profiled in the student press and local media. The local paper used the concept of student volunteers to combat the 'town and gown' stereotype and to challenge negative attitudes to students in general. The high profile of the evening has created excellent relationships with BBC Radio Devon and the local media, which are used for publicity and for assistance in fundraising and charitable events such as our community Christmas parties.

Volunteering at the University of Exeter encompasses the efforts of all those who engage in extra curricular activities for the benefit of others. Not only is it appropriate to reward the volunteers who engage with the local community, but also those who benefit the student community such as the Campus Media, Telephone Helpline and Listening Service and the efforts of the RAG volunteers raising money for local charities. The Annual Celebration assisted in building relations across the students' union activities and recognises the efforts of all volunteers, including some who had been overlooked in the past.

Eight areas of the Guild of Students were asked to submit one volunteer for an award, in the category of `outstanding volunteer achievement'. This was done by asking the elected student representatives to call a working party with their respective organisations and look for volunteers who had committed over and above what was expected of them in their role.

From this, the elected chairs chose two nominees in year one and one in year two. It was difficult to impose criteria due to the different forms of volunteering being rewarded. The number of nominations per area was reduced after feedback from staff and students suggested the ceremony would have more impact if one person won rather than teams of people. Feedback from 2004 has suggested that different categories could be created to allow, for example, `most successful project', `most innovative approach' or `greatest achievement in the face of adversity.' This would help group the students together as volunteers and reduce rivalry between activity areas.

Each area was asked to generate an invite list and a reserve list. Each student was sent an invitation with a personal congratulation from the Guild President for their efforts throughout the year. Each was asked to reply to their invite and leave a deposit for their place which was returned to them on the evening. The event was opened up to all student volunteers free of charge after the awards presentation, for the disco and celebrations.

None of the volunteers receiving awards have any knowledge of their nomination prior to their name being read out. Each winning volunteer was presented with a £20 voucher, a crystal champagne glass with the University crest and a certificate. It is important that the rewards are worth receiving, as word of mouth from the event will ensure that more students volunteer and more students attend the awards celebration.

The VC gave an inspiring speech to the Annual Celebration in 2004 and received a standing ovation. The guest speaker at the event must be someone held in high regard by the students as their words of praise are an important part of the reward. The VC referred to the event in his graduation speech. As a result, we have increased the number of postgraduate volunteers thanks to his endorsement.

The décor of the venue transformed the graduation hall into a glamorous ballroom. Other institutions offer similar events but not on this scale in terms of attendance or expense per volunteer. Sponsorship is obtained to ensure every volunteer has the opportunity to attend. Numbers are expected to be higher in 2005 due to increased volunteer numbers and the positive response to the event.

Feedback from each area suggested in year one that community volunteering dominated the event awards. This was fed back to the student activities group, which has developed opportunities for each area to work in partnership. It has also allowed a working party to assist in setting up the event to ensure equal representation.

The Annual Celebration of Volunteering is a valuable opportunity to promote the efforts of the student volunteers and, more importantly, to thank them in a way that is wholly about fun and not about work or learning. As it occurs at the end of the year, coupled with the summer ball and the graduation ceremonies, volunteering is tied in with the most prestigious annual events and receives the coverage it deserves.

Hints and tips

- Arrange your special guests at least 9 months to one year in advance. If you cannot confirm dates with them, at least make them aware of the event so the thought is in their mind.
- Ensure that all volunteers are rewarded in some way. Free tickets to the evening, complementary drinks or free event photos after the evening are good methods of keeping everyone happy.
- Invite the press. Professional photography and local coverage helps community organisations to access volunteers and improves city/university relations.
- Offer the opportunity for feedback to all represented areas.

Recruitment

The HEACF has as one of its central aims the development of new volunteering opportunities. HEIs have used various methods to create these opportunities such as increasing volunteering activity centrally or devolving responsibility or funding to smaller independent groups. However, recruitment of students and staff to fill these new volunteering roles is of course, key to the success of the HEACF in each HEI.

Given that approximately 30 per cent of the student membership of HEIs changes annually, it is difficult to establish a loyal cache of volunteers for any time – two years is perhaps the best one can expect from a loyal volunteer. This means that retention campaigns focus very closely on the relationship already formed between the HEACF staff or leadership team, the beneficiary organisation(s) and the individual volunteer. The individual's decision to withdraw from volunteering may also be affected by external pressures (such as academic work, part-time paid work, internal voluntary work). Similarly, it is increasingly the case that students are very aware of all of these pressures before engaging in any voluntary work, thus they are looking for more short-term opportunities – ranging from one or two months all the way down to a single day or afternoon. Therefore recruitment is an ongoing activity at the very core of making the HEACF work on a local level.

Diversity of volunteers is another key issue when recruiting for programmes. Promotional campaigns tend to target as broad a cross-section as possible in order to garner the maximum interest, which may not always take into account minority groups of students, such as international students, mature students, postgraduates and students from ethnic minorities.

The following case studies explore both the promotional side to recruitment and the practical side; key information on screening, volunteer registration and assessment of opportunities sits alongside promotional and targeted campaign planning and execution.

Case study R1 (2003)
Manchester Student Volunteers Taster Sessions
University of Manchester and UMIST

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Context

Manchester Student Volunteers (MSV) is a significant part of the response to HEACF by the University of Manchester and UMIST. Managed and administered from within the joint Careers Service, MSV offers support and guidance to students, and consultancy to local non-profit organisations on volunteering and related issues.

The Careers Service has a long-established relationship with graduate recruiters and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), yet traditionally its links with the non-profit sector were based around ad-hoc enquiries. In funding terms, much of the responsibility is to increase the number of volunteering opportunities and students undertaking them. However, it is the Careers Service's view that there is also a duty of care to increase core awareness of volunteering/the voluntary sector in terms of lifestyle and/or career choices. To meet this longer term need, a number of activities were identified, one of which is outlined below.

Programme detail

The concept of organising taster sessions derived from discussion with local organisations, careers advisers and potential student volunteers. When MSV was instigated, colleagues at the Careers Service identified a selection of common queries from students related to the voluntary sector – whether from students wanting to know how to go about gaining voluntary work in a specific field, or how to get their first experience of a particular organisation or career. Upon speaking with a selection of local organisations, it became clear that representatives would be keen not only to promote their own organisation but, more importantly, to become involved in interactive sessions allowing open discussion around their 'field'. To make it even more worthwhile for speakers, 2-3 sessions were arranged to run concurrently (allowing greater capacity for networking).

The following local organisations have been involved in taster sessions:

Age Concern
CAFOD
Childline
Children's Society
Counselling Service
Gaddum Centre
Groundwork, Oldham and Rochdale
Groundwork Tameside
Human Relief Foundation
Institute of Fundraising
Friends of the Earth
Lifeline
Manchester Housing

Mental Health Awareness and
Development
NACRO

focusing on:
Children and young people
Conservation and the environment
Counselling skills
Drugs and alcohol
Fundraising
Housing and homelessness
International development
Mental health
Older people
Young offenders

Over 95 students have attended the sessions to date.

Results

- *Sustainability*: The most resource-intensive part of running sessions like this is in the initial planning stage – sourcing suitable speakers, and in identifying promotional avenues. However, once you've got it right, you can use the formula to run the sessions on a regular basis.
- *Target-effective*: Although you're not placing students directly in projects, the feedback gained at sessions indicates that attendees are more motivated to get involved in voluntary work. This can be enforced by producing factsheets or contact lists for attendees to take away.
- *Interaction*: Possibly the only time potential volunteers will get the chance to talk openly and candidly about what their expectations are, and to hear an unbiased view from practitioners.
- *Variety*: Although not infinite, there's potential for a large number of sessions which could be themed around other activities and campaigns (whether on a national scale or a local one; for example, One World Week, Disability Awareness).
- *Responsive*: Depending on student and/or voluntary organisation interest.
- *Networking opportunities*: A comfortable forum for swapping ideas, contacts and experiences (amongst potential volunteers, the speakers and project workers/session organisers themselves).

Attendees' feedback indicates the individual benefits of the sessions:

'A realistic approach to volunteering in the field. It was objective in how and why you should consider working there.'
'Refreshing - provided a new way of thinking.'
'The speaker was fantastic.'
'I found it beneficial to find out how to get involved and which skills were considered important.'
'Made me think about the lobbying/awareness aspects more.'
'Everyone was very approachable.'
'Very informative.'
'Very good to hear honest and straightforward advice.'
'Examples of real (career) development.'
'Great information about how to get into volunteering (with children/young people).'

'Enjoyed one-to-one question and answers with the speakers. It had the right balance - keep to the same pattern, it was great!'
'Good to talk to representatives about their experiences.'

Hints and tips

Do:
- Research your market – is there a demand amongst potential volunteers, do such sessions exist already?
- Enlist help – from colleagues who may have personal leads or specific requests for sessions.
- Collaborate – with other units within your University (Careers Service, Students Union, relevant departments etc). Perhaps you could integrate the sessions with formalised training.
- Inform – be honest with speakers about your aims and ask what they want to gain from the session.
- Encourage – speakers to highlight their career path (this will inevitably focus on the importance of voluntary work).
- Evaluate – one of the best ways of generating ideas for new sessions! By monitoring feedback, you can gauge whether sessions (and speakers) are tackling the issues and matching your brief.

Don't:
- Become disheartened – some sessions will attract fewer attendees simply by nature of the subject material. But if five potential volunteers get more enthused about volunteering with the elderly that's five more than before!
- Make assumptions – just because you're clear about your objectives doesn't mean your speaker is. Confirm some guidelines in writing and double-check all is well in advance.
- Raise expectations – you can't guarantee that attendees will want to volunteer for the speaker's organisation but most will accept this.
- Expect the sessions to be stand-alone – you must be able to support the sessions by providing access to suitable voluntary work.

Following evaluation and monitoring of attendance, the sessions are now incorporated into an annual programme of events. There have been benefits from improved promotion and also attract a wider variety of attendees. This has also brought both volunteering and careers in the voluntary sector into a wider domain.

Case study R2 (2004)
Kaleidoscope Fair
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Context

Kaleidoscope is a one-day event organised by the manager of the HEACF-funded Manchester Student Volunteers (MSV) project at The University of Manchester. It offers students and graduates the chance to meet with people and organisations from the voluntary, community and public sectors and find out first-hand about volunteering and career opportunities in these sectors. This fair presents volunteering and career opportunities under one roof and is open to students across the region. Exhibitors attend from a wide variety of organisations and have volunteering, unpaid work experience or paid work to promote, as well as offering advice and experience, and giving visitors the chance to network and gather information about the voluntary, community and public sectors.

Programme detail

Kaleidoscope is a non-profit event. It costs nothing for exhibitors to attend, although larger organisations are asked to make a small donation to administrative costs if they are in a position to do so. All exhibitors are supplied with an exhibition stand, table and chairs, parking and refreshments free of charge.

The event is open to students and graduates from all higher education institutions, and is publicised widely on the three Greater Manchester campuses. More than 1,600 students and graduates attended the 2004 fair from a variety of institutions both in Manchester and elsewhere in the North West. Kaleidoscope even attracted visitors from outside of the region, primarily from the University of Newcastle. The fair appeals to students and graduates from all disciplines and years of study.

A total of 85 organisations attended Kaleidoscope in 2004, including national charities, local voluntary projects and work/travel schemes. Exhibitors spoke to an average of 80 visitors each, and all exhibitors stated they would consider attending Kaleidoscope in 2005.

Comments from exhibitors included:
'As per last year's event, this was again well attended with good quality students. Impressed!'
'It was brilliant, can't think of any way to improve it.'
'I thought it was a great event and that the staff were very helpful.'
'Well organised, well done to everyone involved on a very professional event.'

'I think the event works well as it stands.'
'The layout was good and the stands were well-equipped.'
'Overall, it was a very good event.'

Kaleidoscope enables the University of Manchester to engage with both large and small organisations and provide them with a useful networking opportunity. It helps us to promote volunteering and the sectors represented as potential career choices to the student population. It also helps in creating an interest in volunteering – not just through the university but directly between organisations and individual students.

Hints and tips

- Invite exhibitors early and aim to have booking forms out at least four months before the event.
- Think creatively about targeting publicity – use appropriate advertising channels, e.g. student and local newspapers, the Big Issue.
- Shape the range of exhibitors: aim for a balance of paid and voluntary opportunities; 50/50 public and voluntary sectors. Our exhibitor categories last year were – Healthcare, Environment, Community, Public services, Education, Overseas Opportunities, Arts and Culture.
- Administration and organisation should be perfect – this inspires confidence and ensures exhibitors will want to come back.
- Create student publicity that helps to ensure accurate expectations of the event.
- Always have an evaluation form for both students and exhibitors.
- Having the Independent as a media sponsor really helped the prestige of the event and provided free advertising.

Case study R3 (2003)
University of Warwick Volunteering Fair
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Context

Warwick Volunteers is the HEACF programme at the University of Warwick. Warwick Volunteers held a Volunteering Fair on 9 October 2003 as its main recruitment event for new volunteers onto its projects. The event was organised in partnership with the South Warwickshire Volunteer Forum, a network of local community groups co-ordinated by Warwick District Council for Voluntary Service. This arrangement helped with the management of the event, and ensured a good representation of local organisations.

Over 40 projects and organisations had stands, and nearly 400 students registered their interest with different projects. The event achieved a very high profile across the university, and was a visible demonstration of the range of projects and activities now available through Warwick Volunteers.

Warwick Volunteers held its first Volunteering Fair in January 2003. This marked its formal launch having been renamed from Community Action following the establishment of the HEACF programme at Warwick. This first fair was essentially a showcase of existing projects, and gave the team good experience of how to organise such an event and what the problems might be if something on a larger scale was to be attempted. The event was successful enough to see the potential of running another fair at the start of the new academic year in October, as the main focus of a recruitment and publicity drive.

Over the year 2002-03, close links were developed with Warwick District Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) as part of a strategy for building relations with local community groups and developing new projects. Chris Lancaster, CVS Volunteer Development Officer, was invited to be involved in the fair in October. She was very enthusiastic, and agreed to promote it as an event for the South Warwickshire Volunteer Forum (SWVF) which she co-ordinates.

Programme detail

Warwick Volunteers staff met with Chris Lancaster and representatives of the SWVF on three occasions to plan the event, so it could be agreed what information participants would need, and so they could see the venue and give advice to SWVF members on what materials to bring. Chris sent information and booking forms on Warwick Volunteers' behalf to SWVF members. Warwick Volunteers also wrote to their other link organisations who were not members of SWVF.

Publicity

The Volunteering Fair became the main focus of publicity for new and returning students at the start of the year. Methods used to promote it to students included:

- A flyer in mailings sent out by the students' union to all new and returning students before the start of term.
- An article in the first issue of the students' union magazine 'The Word'.
- A feature on the home page of 'Insite', the university's internal website.
- Members of the Warwick Volunteers Executive Committee gave talks at the orientation event for new international students.
- Members of the executive did tours of the campus residences, giving out information and promotional goodies (pens, key-rings, etc).
- Information about the event was broadcast on 'RaW', the student radio station.
- A large banner was displayed outside the students' union on the day of the event.

The event

At the event there were over 40 stands for different projects and link organisations. About half of these were organisations coming under the umbrella of the SWVF. The remainder were Warwick Volunteers projects, partner projects with other community organisations, and associated university activities such as the Warwick Skills Programme (which runs some modules specifically aimed at volunteers). There was also a central stand for Warwick Volunteers, providing general information and details about membership and criminal records checks.

There was a great variety of displays. In particular, several organisations brought video displays or other demonstrations.

Nearly 400 students registered their interest with different projects during the day. Warwick Volunteers collected all these details and will continue working with all the projects and organisations involved to convert this interest into active volunteering opportunities. Feedback was requested from the participants regarding the organisation of the day.

Long-term results

Volunteering Fairs are not innovative on their own; many HEIs run such events using various different models, but Warwick Volunteers' was believed to be innovative because of the partnership with a local agency. This not only helped with the management of the event, but also increased their profile with local community groups. It also met the objective of developing a more co-ordinated approach to building relations with the local community by working with those agencies responsible for developing volunteering activity at a strategic level.

Also, the scale of the event and its attendant publicity has helped to raise the profile of volunteering within the university significantly, and created the step change in volunteering activity which is the objective of Warwick's HEACF programme.

Hints and tips

- Work with a partner organisation.

- Provide information to stall-holders on where to park, what to do when they arrive, who to go to for help, and where to get food and drinks (e.g. take round sandwiches at lunch-time).
- Have a team of volunteers, with identifiable T-shirts, to help with organisation on the day and provide information.
- Provide each stall with a standard sign-up sheet with the information you need to collect – and take copies before they leave, so you know who has signed up to each project.
- In future, Warwick Volunteers would like to have more participatory activities running through the fair (demonstrations of projects, etc) to keep people in the venue longer, increase the visual element, and make it even livelier!

Case study R4 (2003)
'Just Do It' Recruitment Event
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Context

Recruiting students into volunteering is an ongoing effort that requires projects to be creative, entertaining, supportive and accessible. Inspired by a visit to the 2003 COOL Conference in the US, it was decided to hold an event which would aim to draw in a wide range of students to complete a specific, useful piece of voluntary work in the local community.

Programme detail

The event or programme consisted of taking two groups of volunteers to projects in the local area where defined tasks had been planned for them to complete within the afternoon. Neither of the projects involved had been in contact with Voluntary Action before.

One group was taken to paint the inside of the Benwell Play Centre, while the second group performed a 'Ground Force' style make-over of the front garden of the Pendower Good Neighbour project.

At the end of the event all volunteers were taken to a local Indian restaurant for a thank you meal.

This event was run for the first time at Northumbria on the last Saturday of Freshers' Week. However, it was promoted widely and attracted students from across subjects and years.

Recruiting volunteers can often be difficult and providing an easy first step can be very important. The Just Do It event allowed students to sign up to a single event with no further commitment, yet they would still be able to meet new people and do something worthwhile. In the planning of the event, all the 'leg work' was taken out of the volunteering for them, and transport, food and drink were laid on.

As a result the event achieved its main aims of making the volunteering experience accessible, fun, rewarding and above all else, of practical value to the community. 18 volunteers took part in the day, with only a few having volunteered at any time in the past and only 3 had previous contact with the Voluntary Action project.

Pressure on students' time is a significant factor in many of them not volunteering. Running the event over single afternoon on a Saturday was noted by many as a reason for them getting involved.

The total cost for the event was £520, broken down as follows:

- equipment = £312 (some of which is reusable)
- transport = £104
- refreshments and meal = £104

This works out to be £28.90 per volunteer which is very good value for the work completed and number of new volunteers involved. A quote for the painting work alone from a contractor was over £750!

Since the event, many of the volunteers have been in touch to find out about other opportunities and all of them indicated their desire to take part in another similar activity. Both community projects have also asked for the recruitment of volunteers into more detailed volunteering within their organisations.

Due to its success, Voluntary Action has decided to make the Just Do It event a monthly occurrence and has already received offers to host the event with various community organisations.

Hints and tips

- Be clear with host organisations that the work should be practical and achievable within the time frame permitted.
- Identify tasks that can involve a flexible number of volunteers, although setting a limit is necessary.
- Establish a list of resources for the day and purchase these items well in advance.
- If you are to involve more than one project on the day try to keep them close to each other unless transport allows you to spread people out.
- Reward the volunteers with a social event at the end of the day to reinforce the bond and sense of community between them.

Case study R5 (2003)
Quality Checks on Volunteers and Volunteering Opportunities
Manchester Metropolitan University

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Context

MMU decided to focus the core of its HEACF activity upon one central project entitled 'coMMUni'. coMMUni has co-ordinated a programme of targeted training alongside appropriate checks and assessments of volunteering needs and skills, for both the individuals involved and the organisations.

Programme detail

Focusing on the quality of the volunteering experience, the coMMUni project has developed two core procedures to assess the quality of a volunteering experience:

Assessment of the volunteers' needs and skills
Every staff member and student requesting volunteering information is invited for a face-to-face meeting. At this point staff use a registration form (which is constantly updated, amended and revised in the light of feedback) to ascertain why, how, when and with whom they wish to volunteer. The form also covers in detail practical questions individuals need to answer to improve their search for volunteering work, e.g. What skills do they have to offer? What knowledge do they want to gain by volunteering? Are they prepared to undergo a police check if necessary?

Any individual not wishing to meet staff, for whatever reason, can access the website and register their interest in volunteering online. This process mirrors the face-to-face meeting and allows the provision of services to individuals who might be based in one of seven faculties on seven sites over two counties at MMU.

This information is then used to match the volunteer's needs with a database of volunteering opportunities. The volunteer is then referred to the appropriate group or organisation in the way that best suits their needs. For example, some students are nervous and wish coMMUni staff to attend their first visit, others take up the offer of using the office phone to call the organisation in question, whilst many wish to independently make contact with the opportunity of their choice. Often staff try to offer several options to an individual depending upon their circumstances.

Once referred, there is a system of contacting the individual after several weeks to find out what they did and if the opportunity is appropriate to them. They are also asked at their registration if they would partake in a volunteer evaluation survey several months after they start volunteering. Those who agree contribute to the academic researcher's evaluation of the coMMUni project.

As a final aid to the volunteering experience, every volunteer is issued with a coMMUni guide to volunteering handbook. This has been designed by coMMUni staff and re-covers questions asked but also importantly directs them to online training resources and provides an induction checklist of questions the volunteer should ask when starting with a volunteer organisation.

Assessment of organisations' volunteer needs
coMMUni endeavours to visit as many organisations offering volunteering opportunities locally as possible. Currently over half the 250 registered opportunities have been visited. By going to see the group or organisation face-to-face, one is able to better understand how they operate and work out who potential volunteers will meet. Simple, but crucial to the 'first impression' process, are directions to a project. Many students are young, new and nervous of such a big city as Manchester, so offering public transport directions to a project helps them take that initial first step.

Every opportunity coMMUni promotes must be registered before being entered onto the database. An organisation fills in a general 'organisation registration' form and then a shorter, more specific opportunity form for each volunteering need they have. Questions range from practical ones such as where is the project, to important duty of care issues such as insurance and supervision of volunteers.

Organisations are kept in contact with how their opportunities are promoted by a referral checking system that ensures they are contacted every time a volunteer is referred to their agency. This allows tracking of volunteers. Also provided is a statement of service explaining what coMMUni does, what is expected of the organisation requiring volunteers, and the responsibilities of the volunteer.

The academic researcher attached to the project is also piloting a specialist-training course for community organisations in participatory research. This course is funded by coMMUni and is in partnership with Groundwork Tameside. Six representatives from small local agencies and groups are undertaking an accredited course in research techniques. They will assist the researcher in analysing the volunteering needs of local groups and how coMMUni meets such needs (e.g. they have evaluated registration systems and procedures). Currently there is an ongoing project that will provide results in the 2005.

Hints and tips

- In developing registration systems, coMMUni began from the viewpoint that the needs of the volunteer and the needs of volunteering organisations were paramount.
- All registration systems are refined and adapted as staff, volunteer and organisational feedback is encouraged (e.g. after only 10 months of operation coMMUni is using version seven of some forms).
- All registration forms, referral procedures and evaluation methods are available to be shared with other HEACF projects.
- Any system must be versatile. Registrations can happen by meeting coMMUni staff, utilising the Internet, through the post or by referrals from other agencies.

Case study R6 (2003)
Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme: It matters to you, it matters to them

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Context

The Sponte Community Volunteer Scheme was launched in September 2002 – a joint initiative between Staffordshire University and its students' union. (Sponte is Latin for 'of one's own accord'.)

Sponte operates as a mini 'volunteer bureau' within the university structures – recruiting, selecting, training and then 'matching' volunteers with local voluntary and community organisations. It has also launched one-off community projects in autumn 2003 with the aim of engaging those who cannot commit to long-term, on-going volunteering.

Prior to the introduction of Sponte, the university had had no formal volunteering scheme and so faced the challenge of establishing a 'volunteer culture' amongst students and staff alike.

It was clear that a hard-hitting, far-reaching marketing campaign would be critical to the recruitment of the first volunteers – incorporating as many different mediums as possible – so the team really went for it.

Programme detail

Posters, postcards and leaflets: With the assistance of the university's Design and Print Unit and the students' union Communications Department, a series of A4 and A3 posters with matching A5 postcards were designed, using striking images of people who could be either volunteers or recipients of volunteering. It was felt that the initial launch campaign could not afford to be too abstract, given that the concept of volunteering would still be very new to many. The aim of the posters and postcards was simply to raise interest in the scheme and encourage people to seek further information. (This year over 9,000 postcards were distributed to students before arriving at the university.)

The posters and postcard campaigns are changed each term to keep the appearance fresh, and identical images are also used as screensaver adverts across campus throughout the year – via the university IT Services.

A more informative general leaflet (A5 size) was also developed which is used to advise both volunteers and organisations about the scheme and how to get involved.

Promotional merchandise: Branded promotional pens are used to increase the awareness of Sponte and are available for free across several university and union outlets and distributed at volunteer induction sessions. Student staff and volunteers also wear branded T-shirts and sweatshirts when they promote the scheme on campus – they have been trained to distribute information and answer general enquiries.

www.staffs.ac.uk/sponte: An extremely comprehensive website was developed with the help of the Design and Print Unit including information about the benefits of volunteering, opportunities available, community project details, case studies, frequently asked questions, and a 'Skills Base' link to other internal developmental websites at which students can identify and record their personal development and experiences.

Results

The scheme was officially launched in September 2002 at the annual Welcome Week with large-scale poster, postcard and leaflet distribution, information stalls at clubs and societies and commercial fairs, and e-mail bulletins to students and staff. Articles were also placed in the annual Student Guide and wall planner. Introductory e-mails were circulated to students and staff. Targeted introductory letters were distributed to all clubs and societies, Welcome Week representatives, all staff members, departmental secretaries, residence representatives and school (faculty) representatives.

Never missing an opportunity to promote the scheme, the team have approached departments/areas within the university to offer to deliver presentations about volunteering and Sponte. There have also been invitations to deliver presentations to other audiences. Areas include sport, health and exercise students, nursing science students, social work students (all areas in which the academic staff want to encourage volunteering to complement students' academic studies), careers module students, geography students, staff members attending career development courses, and during a students' union and staff day. Sponte has also featured several times in the internal staff newsletter, which is read by both staff (who then pass on information to their students) and students alike.

Sustainability

Strong links have been created with several university and union departments in order to maintain Sponte's image throughout each term.

Sponte submits an update on volunteering opportunities to the monthly Careers department's e-zine as well as piggybacking e-mails direct into student in-boxes. Mini 'opportunity guides' are also circulated across campus, detailing all the volunteering opportunities available. Sponte has also played a key role in the establishment of a formal volunteering module at Staffordshire University – being piloted this term.

The volunteer 'drop-in' areas at both the Stoke and Stafford campuses also give potential volunteers the opportunity to come in to browse through information leaflets, chat to the Community Volunteer Co-ordinator or support staff, and review

the latest window adverts. The drop-in locations are advertised via an external 'A-Board' and signs at both sites.

Volunteer Fairs 2003: The first Volunteer Fairs were held in February 2003 to re-launch Sponte in the spring term and maintain marketing momentum. Over 30 local voluntary organisations attended the events held at the Stafford and Stoke campuses with the aims of marketing their work and recruiting volunteers direct from the student and staff populations.

The Volunteer Fairs were repeated in October 2003 with over 50 organisations in attendance.

Hints and tips

- Network with as many different departments and areas as possible to see how you can work together. If you don't ask you don't get.
- Cover as many different marketing media as possible. For example, not all potential volunteers read e-mail regularly – or have time to go onto the all-student chat rooms. Never underestimate a basic poster and postcard – Sponte's greatest recruitment medium to date.
- The personal touch never fails. Try to deliver presentations about your scheme or project where possible – even if only for five minutes – and always make time to chat to people and answer questions.

Case study R7 (2003)
TVU Volunteers: Volunteering Awareness
Thames Valley University

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Context

The key to a successful volunteering venture is an effective and continued volunteering awareness campaign through a variety of methods. In essence, a positive and proactive working relationship with your Communications department will be reflected in the success of the service that you provide.

Volunteer Managers within the university have a multi-functional role in service promotion and provision to both students and staff. It is therefore necessary to have those with the experience available to organise posters, flyers, broadcast e-mails and support the different events and promotions that you run across the university and into the wider community.

TVU Volunteers has been fortunate to have the full support and creative ability of the Communications and Design Departments.

Programme detail

Promotional tools are widely used in most organisations and TVU Volunteers is no exception. The colours blue, yellow and red are being incorporated into all promotional material. This ensures that TVU Volunteers is instantly recognisable to both staff and students.

Business cards: Make them recognisable, jazzy and fun. They communicate your contact details to a wide range of people including community groups, potential sponsors for events and of course your volunteers. A large print run of business cards is affordable and can be used in a number of ways. Remember to use both sides for information.

Postcards: Easy to use for a wide range of promotions. There are a number of printing options. These include using postcards so interested people can return to get specific information, or just as a source of general volunteering opportunities and information. Once again remember to use both sides. Distribute these at Freshers Fairs, Student Volunteering Week or use them as a promotional tool with appeal by taping on a chocolate bar to encourage more people to pick one up. This was used as part of a wider promotion to thank those who already volunteer and encourage more people to do so. If the postcards are bright and colourful then people are less likely to dispose of them so quickly.

Posters: Have some fun with these, they are viewed by thousands of students and staff. Try and keep to a theme that will be instantly recognisable as volunteering. TVU Volunteers has utilised the skill within the Communications Office to produce

bright funky posters that provide a straightforward message and have a similar design layout. Be sure to display these where people pass by, are waiting, stop for food or drink or go on a regular basis.

Newsletter: To volunteers, other students, staff and community group. This is an easy means of communicating your successes, highlighting different students and what they are doing within different community organisations. It also provides community groups with a means to promote their volunteering opportunities. Photographs and logos add to the interest and might encourage people to pick it up and have a read.

Broadcast e-mails: These could make or break you. (First check that you are abiding by the Data Protection Act.) Many staff and students press delete as soon as these come through, so what is the secret of getting them opened? The first few e-mails are the most important if they are catchy and informative then people will continue to give you a moment of their time. Get to the point, and try and get some response from people. Once you have an ounce of interest put these people on a separate e-mail list for further information you want to get across rather than bombard them with a general release.

Local newspapers and in-house publications: Use these methods to highlight your successes and the different opportunities students are engaged in. Get their insight into how they felt, what they achieved and why they volunteered. These tools convey your information to the wider community and to more people within the university.

Text: Should be kept short and snappy, allowing the reader to get maximum information in as few words as possible. Keep the message clear and simple, and if possible use tag or strap lines throughout your publicity. Be sure to include contact details for further information, and double check dates and venues. 'You' is the most important word in the English language when you are trying to involve people in a project or volunteering opportunity.

Promotions: Think about what information you want get across and who is your target group for the different promotions you run. 'Snacks – volunteering to go' is a promotion aimed at all those too busy to volunteer and offers opportunities of two hours or less. TVU Volunteers gave interested people a 'Snack pack' with information and ideas about what they could do, contact details, and a snack to eat while they digested the information. Another promotion was a sports volunteering event run in the students' union bar. No paper information was distributed, but a month-long daily prize draw of sporting goodies was used to increase the volunteering database of sports-interested students and staff.

Both kinds of promotion (raising awareness of TVU Volunteers and distributing written information) used most of the promotional tools that have been previously mentioned, and had a detailed plan that allowed for smooth execution of each one. But don't stop at these ideas, there are many interesting and innovative ways to get your message and information across. Have fun, be creative and utilise the knowledge and experience that already exists within the university.

Hints and tips
- Keep to a limited colour range to gain recognition.

- Try not to use set dates as this then limits the use of different materials.
- Use gimmicks that appeal to the masses, and can be used across the spectrum of students.
- Tap into the creativity within the Communications Office, after all this is where their talent lies.
- Try to provide publicity campaign guidelines so those helping you have an idea of what you are doing in the next 5-8 months.
- Allow time for both in-house and offsite printing.
- Make sure you get the words right. This can make or break your campaign.
- Keep it simple and have fun, after all that's what volunteering is all about.

Case study R8 (2003)
Interviewing Volunteers
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Context

@ctive Student is the University of Brighton Volunteering Project that matches students to volunteering opportunities in the local community. Each student is taken through the interview process in order to be able to match them to a volunteering opportunity.

The student is invited to meet with the worker who will support them throughout their volunteering. This meeting is face to face and lasts for about 45 minutes. The worker conducts the interview and completes the relevant forms on behalf of the student. Firstly, the interview form is completed. The student and worker will talk about what areas the student is interested in with regards to volunteering and what the student wishes to learn from their volunteering. The process collects details of their past experiences and qualifications, as well as giving them the chance to talk about any support needs they may have.

A volunteer agreement is signed by the student and the project worker. This outlines the guidelines of the project and what the student can expect from @ctive Student, and what @ctive Student expects from the student.

A personal details form is completed with emergency and medical details. This information is then sent to the volunteering placement once a start date for the student has been agreed.

The interview process also includes a monitoring form that reflects commitment to equal opportunities and accessibility of the project.

Programme detail

The interview process is conducted face to face on a one-to-one basis, with the student and the @ctive Student worker. In this process the student is made aware that they are in control of their volunteering experience and that the @ctive Student worker is there to support them personally throughout this time.

The focus is on what the student wants to do, incorporating their interests and skills into this. The experience aims to empower students through emphasising what skills they already have. This can be through reflecting on past experiences and talking about how transferable skills from these experiences have been gained. It is also important to determine what the student wishes to gain from their volunteering and this is discussed in terms of both practical and transferable skills.

Another special aspect of this process is the open discussion that takes place regarding any support needs the student may have, and how these can be best met whilst they are in their volunteering opportunity.

Each student is offered a selection of opportunities depending on the type of volunteering they wish to pursue, the skills they have and what they wish to gain from their volunteering. This is very student led.

Hints and tips

- Keep the whole process informal. The style of the interview must be relaxed, and the student should be encouraged to ask any questions as you go through the process.
- Fill in all the necessary paperwork. A number of students have dyslexia and would not access the service if they thought they would have to complete several forms.
- Focus on the student, listening to them and picking up on what they want to do and where they want to go.
- Offer options to the student. Don't tell a student what they should do. Where possible try to provide a choice of placements: if the student has truly decided their own placement, they are more likely to stick with it.
- Provide an 'exit point' for the student during the interview process. Make sure before you fill in any paperwork that they have understood what the scheme is and whether they still want to be part of it. Let students know that nothing is set in stone, and they can change their mind or say they don't like something.
- Ask about any criminal convictions or prosecutions pending and explain why you are asking this question. Some volunteering opportunities must carry out CRB checks before a student can volunteer. If a student knows why they are being asked this question, they are more likely to give full information. If a student has disclosed a conviction to you, then seek their permission to ask the placement whether they can consider an individual with a criminal conviction. If the placement says no, move on, but if they say yes then negotiate with them whether it would be worth putting your student forward. Only once you have an assurance that the student will be considered alongside any one else, should you disclose the student's name.
- Ask about any special requirements the student may have. You can then establish an appropriate support package tailored to the individual.
- Tell the student that the project operates with an equal opportunities framework, and explain what this means. Enquire whether the student is happy to work alongside different groups of people. If the student says they have a problem with a particular group, enquire about this further and challenge where appropriate. If an individual cannot sign up to equal opportunities, they would not be able to volunteer via @ctive Student.
- Explain why confidentiality is important within a volunteering opportunity. Stress that if a student is unsure whether something is confidential, or they are being asked to keep something confidential which they do not feel comfortable about, then they can either speak to their supervisor at the placement, or they can contact the project worker for guidance and support.
- Mention the Data Protection Act. Explain that the information will be stored on a computer and is kept confidential, and is only used for monitoring and compiling statistics. Get the student to sign to say they understand this.

- Emphasise the importance of regular and honest feedback, through regular updates on how the volunteering is going.
- Make sure the monitoring process is anonymous. Explain the monitoring form to the student, and that it is used to assess accessibility to the project. Let the student know that the form is anonymous, and they don't have to fill it in if they don't want to. Then leave the room and ask the student to put the form, completed or not anywhere they like within a pile of completed monitoring forms.
- Ask about the student's health and agree what is to be written down before doing so. You can then provide an appropriate support package, and also match the student to an appropriate placement.

Case study R9 (2003)
Recruitment of Volunteers at a Freshers' Fair
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Context

Every year the University of Lincoln takes in thousands of new students, all of whom are encouraged to attend the Freshers' Fair. This appeared to be a perfect opportunity to recruit volunteers, publicise the work done and the connections with voluntary organisations in the local area. Co-ordinating a strategy for the Freshers' Fair resulted in recruiting more students in one day than in the entire previous year.

When recruiting students, it is important to look at the situation from their perspective. Volunteering is often the last thing on a new student's mind; getting used to a new area, new people, an increased study workload and perhaps a part-time job are the more likely subjects. But if the incentives and advantages of volunteering are presented to them effectively, then the project can become highly popular, and be seen as a positive new way to meet new people and gain valuable experience.

On the first few days after enrolment students can feel overwhelmed by the volume of different clubs and societies they could join. A volunteering programme should be able to offer all of the advantages of these other clubs and more. Teaming up with the students' union and other established clubs can also make volunteering a more popular and attractive option to new students. Working in collaboration with these clubs, for example members of the football team offering volunteering opportunities as coaches for disadvantaged children or after school clubs, will spread the popularity of volunteering activities and promote the diversity of voluntary opportunities available.

Volunteering of a specific nature can be tailored to target the different courses offered by the university, and subsequently represent areas of student interest. For example, health studies students may enjoy working within a hospice or day-care centre and media students may enjoy helping to create a school newspaper. Presenting specific opportunities will minimise confusion and help to prevent students becoming overwhelmed by the volume of information on offer. Projects such as these provide not only a great service to the community but also contribute to the learning and ultimately employability of students. Using these points as a method of 'selling' volunteering to students has proved very effective in terms of creating awareness and interest in the project at the fair. The university offers its students a variety of different incentives to become involved in volunteering and this recognition is emphasised at the Freshers' Fair to create interest in the stall and reduce common fears about volunteering.

Programme detail

At a freshers' fair, entertainment or other traditional 'leisure' activities tend to attract the most attention, so the location of the stall is vital and will determine how much interest is gained. Ask the organisers if your volunteering stand can be positioned in the same area as the 'popular' stalls. These stalls also give students a reason to stop and look at them – usually an incentive, or a well-known name that students will actively look out for.

Once a student's attention has been caught it is much easier to get them to listen to what you have to say; this is usually done by getting students to register interest in a project or activity in return for a freebie or gift of some kind. Students want to be involved in popular and effective projects, so using peers to promote the project, such as other volunteers from the second year has proved to be very effective.

The Community Volunteers stand was made as eye catching as possible with bright colours, direct information and freebies to encourage students to stop. On the stand itself the HEACF Community Volunteers Logo was used alongside other signs that the students know, trust and recognise, such as the University of Lincoln corporate logo.

Giving out freebies could be very costly if they were given out in a random promotional manner, as by done by large companies. So goody-bags were only given to students that actually registered to find out more about community volunteers projects. The type of promotional item also affects the response: students will bin or create litter with leaflets and carrier bags. Pens and sticky notepads are usually the most cost-effective tools. These items will be used and seen by many students throughout the university and show a free phone number, and a website address. When designing the pens and notepads try to make them as different and attractive as possible; the pens distributed by University of Lincoln Community Volunteers contain a rotating centre panel that displays an eight line message about the benefits of volunteering to both the local community and the individual.

Giving away an item of food, such as a can of beans, with a label on the top giving the details of how to contact the project co-ordinators is a cheap and eye- catching tool - these were well received by most students. Make sure that the label you apply does not cover any of the important information about the contents, such as the best before date. You could even apply for sponsorship from the local supermarket chain to provide the beans.

Hints and tips

- Speak to the students' union well before the Freshers' Fair to make sure that your stall can be positioned well.
- Invite the local volunteer bureau and other groups that might be able to help you with publicity.
- Give your freebies and promotional items a bit of thought. Consider getting second or third year Graphics or PR students (if you have them) to help you create the initial designs – then get them made up professionally if you can. Quality makes a lot of difference to the amount of attention each item is given.
- Give away something a little bit different, to create a talking point amongst students.

- Host a follow-up session about a week after the Freshers' Fair giving out more details, more advice and even refreshments!

Case study R10 (2003)
Mentoring Project: promotional approach to enhance volunteer recruitment
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Context

York St John College is a higher education college in York. There has been no real tradition of student volunteering within the college, and in the 2001-02 academic year only 14 student community volunteers were recorded.

The purpose of the Mentoring Project is to place student volunteers with various schools in the local community providing one-to-one support. There are currently two strands to the project: Secondary Mentoring involves volunteers raising aspirations and achievements of a secondary school pupil through fortnightly meetings; Literacy Mentoring involves weekly volunteer visits to primary schools to read with pupils one-to-one.

The project was taken on by the students' union in September 2002; in this first year, volunteer interest was limited. Both strands of the project were successfully piloted, but only eight volunteers were involved in total. It was evident that a significant rethink of the publicity strategy was required to ensure the success of the project in the second year.

Programme detail

The following negative perceptions of 'volunteering' had been identified within the college:

- volunteering is not for young/sociable people
- volunteering is not a big part of student life
- volunteering is not professional.

What is perhaps special about the approach taken is that a publicity strategy was put together specifically aimed at breaking down these perceptions of volunteering in general – and the Mentoring Project specifically.

Volunteering is not for young/sociable people: This belief was challenged by reworking design briefs to get design concepts similar to those used for social events. The information leaflet was given a deliberate 'entertainment' feel while remaining strong on the information on the opportunities available. Bottle-opener key rings were produced in a contemporary style in chrome, and these were distributed through the social centres of the college – notably in the students' union bar and the coffee bar. It was hoped that these would also raise awareness in the informal social scene by being used in student houses.

Volunteering is not a big part of student life: It was recognised that some institutions have a 'culture of volunteering' that ensures that a much higher proportion of students volunteer than at York St John. To an extent this relies on a visibly large number of volunteers spreading information about volunteering by word of mouth.

However, other elements can change in order to raise the profile of volunteering:

- **students' union officers** formally and informally talk to students about student life and extra-curricular involvement. If they give volunteering a high profile this makes a big difference to students' perceptions
- **academic tutors** discuss personal development with students. Support for student volunteering from all major academic committees was sought and received. Academic tutors were then contacted to ensure that they had accurate information about the projects
- **libraries** are core to academic life in higher education, and by distributing bookmarks promoting Literacy Mentoring through the library issue desk and induction sessions credibility is added to the volunteering experience
- **bars, catering outlets and shops** are often-frequented services within institutions, and can be the social core of a college/university community. Publicity for the Secondary Mentoring programme was distributed through these services
- **proud student volunteers** displaying their involvement can be the best advertisement for getting involved. All mentors are supplied with characteristic polo shirts enabling them to be seen as being proud to be part of the scheme. This impact is particularly valuable in institutions with strong sports clubs that do the same
- **activities fair:** another change in the general strategy was the combination of what had previously been a very subdued 'Volunteering Fair' in the third week of term with the well established 'Activities Fair' in the first week. By combining volunteering opportunities with clubs and societies, both footfall and enquiries at the volunteering stalls increased. It was also made clear that volunteering was not a minority interest, but as important as the clubs or societies collectively
- **promotional mailings** are sent to students by many students' unions to encourage involvement in activities. Space in these mailings is precious, but getting some publicity into the mailing raises awareness of projects and also makes a statement about how important volunteering is.

Volunteering is not professional: Volunteering has a tradition of cutting every cost possible. In publicity this can prove to be a false economy, as it can portray volunteering as 'cheap' or 'low quality'. A professional standard has been attained, with the publicity produced to make it clear that volunteering is professionally run and offers a high quality experience.

Concerted efforts have been made to make volunteering and publicity materials 'desirable'. One example of this is the distribution of the key rings for promotion of Secondary Mentoring: the key rings were not simply given out, as this may have created the impression that students had to be bribed to get involved. By distributing the key rings through promotions in commercial services they became both desirable and achievable.

Through using professional design and printing, the image that the project was professionally run was reinforced. The knock-on benefit of this is that volunteers are more likely to approach their volunteering professionally.

Hints and tips

- **Think and act bigger than you are**: If you seem like a big thing you will become one. If you promote volunteering in isolation you will limit your recruitment to those students who see themselves as 'the volunteering type'.
- **Encourage staff to encourage volunteering**: Front line institution staff often discuss personal development and employability with students. If they are aware of the development opportunities offered by student volunteering they will encourage students to get involved.
- **Workers need to listen to feedback from elected student representatives**: Whether you work for an institution or students' union the feedback from these students is vital to inform you how to get your message across.
- **Consider going for quality rather than quantity** with publicity if you want to come across as something worth getting involved in.
- **Be wary of alienating your core volunteers** if you try to reach out to people who don't traditionally get involved: are you balancing your 'party-goer' publicity with publicity for different types of students?

Case study R11 (2003)
Using HEI and HEACF resources to overcome a barrier to volunteering
University of Liverpool

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Context

Many students expressed an interest in becoming volunteer telephone counsellors for ChildLine. The nearest counselling base to the University of Liverpool was in Manchester (Childline NW), which meant that only the most determined of students would be prepared to pursue this interest. Before the partnership was developed, ChildLine NW had only conducted information meetings and interviews for volunteer telephone counsellors in its Manchester base.

The university was keen to work with ChildLine, as the training and support it offers to volunteers is superb. The experience gained through working on the ChildLine help line as a volunteer telephone counsellor is transferable, as well as directly relating to the course and career choice of many students registered as HEACF volunteers. It therefore represented a high quality volunteering experience that the volunteering team was keen to capture.

The university's partnership with ChildLine is significant as it allows students and staff to volunteer, and it resulted in the development of ChildLine's recruitment procedures.

Programme detail

Two counselling supervisors from ChildLine came to the university to conduct an information meeting, as most potential volunteers would be reluctant to travel a long distance before even knowing whether they would want to volunteer. This made the recruitment process efficient for staff and students as the meeting was arranged in a convenient place, at a convenient time, enabling many to attend.

By publicising the information meeting widely across campus, using the university-wide computer poster system, the room was filled to capacity with over 60 people attending. This meant the trip was more than worthwhile for ChildLine, as 12-25 people normally attend information meetings in their base. This publicity also raised the profile of ChildLine on campus, which should help with future fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

The HEACF Volunteer Co-ordinator passed on the information to all those who had not been able to attend, to allow them to apply as well.

Over 30 people requested information packs and at least 15 staff and students applied. The process had to be made as painless as possible for those applying, so ChildLine was offered the opportunity to hold the interviews in the University of Liverpool Careers Service. (ChildLine interviews all applicants to the role of telephone counsellor.) This offer was gratefully received and the facilities provided enabled ChildLine to develop a new interview process. Again, this was a more efficient use of time and a worthwhile experience for the applicants.

ChildLine's usual interview procedure is a 45 minute individual interview at its Manchester base. For the interview day this was changed to a group interview, comprising small and large group work followed by short individual interviews of a maximum 15 minutes each. The group was also debriefed as the process had considered many difficult issues.

All eleven applicants who were able to attend the interviews were accepted, subject to satisfactory references and Criminal Records Bureau clearance. They were offered places on the next suitable training courses.

The university has continued to work with ChildLine, promoting more recent opportunities and arranging for training space to be made available at the university if required (to allow student/staff volunteers to access training more easily).

Hints and tips

- If the students can't get to the organisation, it may be possible to bring the organisation to the students.
- Make it worthwhile for the organisation to be involved.
- Continue this way of working and attempt to develop further, similar partnerships if it has been successful.
- Ensure that the beneficiary organisation does not lose out; look for ways to compensate them if necessary.

Case study R12 (2003)
The University of Leeds Refugee Support Network:
Encouraging non-participating students to volunteer
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Context

During the academic year 2002-03 the university became involved in the Refugee
Support Network (RSN), a self-help group set up by primary and secondary school
teachers working with pupils whose first language is not English. The pupils come
from different backgrounds, most being children of asylum seekers and refugees,
others moving to the UK because of their parents' work, but all have immediate
need of language support. The university is well placed to support such a demand
due to the large numbers of international and language students.

Programme detail

The RSN has been extremely successful in recruiting previously low participating or
non-participating volunteers. It has attracted a much higher percentage of
international students (over 50 per cent) and postgraduates (25 per cent) than any
of the university's other 15 volunteering programmes (5 and 3 per cent respectively).
The reasons for this are multifarious.

International students clearly see an opportunity to offer support using their first
language. They often cite a lack of confidence in their own English as a barrier to
volunteering on other projects. There is also an affinity and a desire to assist people
that speak their own first language who have faced and continue to face deprivation
and disadvantage.

Postgraduate students represent relatively low participation rates due to greater
work commitments, and lack of integration with the undergraduate student bodies
and societies, as well as personal commitments, such as having a family. This
programme has engaged the postgraduates as they were specifically targeted. One
reason for this is that they include a higher percentage of international students than
undergraduate courses.

The project is now embedded in the volunteering prospectus and has become one
of the university's most popular volunteering opportunities.

The RSN is delivered in a uniquely flexible and responsive way to take account of
the changing situations and circumstances of the refugee and asylum seeker
population. Typically, refugee and asylum seeker families are transient, often having
to move to different homes and schools. They are also mainly housed in low
demand social housing predominantly in areas of significant deprivation in the inner
city. This situation is detrimental to planning; indeed, schools are not able to predict
or plan when new pupils will arrive. Volunteers are therefore informed of these

circumstances and are made aware that completing a placement may involve changing schools with the children or ending the support if the child is relocated out of the city.

All Campus Connect volunteers undergo compulsory training and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks at the beginning of the academic year, prior to placement in school. However, as requests for languages are unpredictable and spontaneous, the RSN is reactive in finding the volunteers, and (unlike the other volunteer programmes) training and checking for this cohort of volunteers is an ongoing process.

Volunteers assist young people assimilate in the classroom, improve their English and raise their confidence. They have also on occasions helped schools with translation and interpretation between the teachers and the parents. Children in some circumstances have better English language skills than their parents and as such parents have used the support to ask questions about many other aspects of their lives.

The university has introduced a more flexible and reactive approach to accommodate the unique aspects of this project. Requests for languages continue to grow exponentially and each request is logged on a database. Equally volunteers may come forward with a particular first language that has not been requested; this is also inputted to ensure they can be matched if there is a request. The simplicity and flexibility of the RSN is its greatest asset, and fluency in a foreign language is the only pre-requisite. In seeking to meet the demands for the many languages, volunteers have been recruited through personal contacts, student societies and even contacts from other universities and organisations. The diversity of participants is perhaps exemplified by Ana Canhao, a Portuguese social worker in Bradford who heard about the scheme through the Brazilian Society, and has been volunteering at Bentley Primary School with two Angolan children. Transport costs are also covered, enabling volunteers to travel safely and quickly to local schools, which has helped to overcome the concerns about travel time and safety.

To date the RSN has placed 35 volunteers in local schools. Requests for languages include Portuguese, Arabic, French, Swahili, Afrikaans, Cantonese, Mandarin, Kurdish, Russian and Czech. Registered volunteers include those from the Philippines, Slovakia, Persia, Brazil and Russia. Student societies are naturally an excellent source of potential volunteers, with many groups formed on the basis of nationality. The university's Brazilian society, for example, has increasingly become a source of volunteers for Portuguese which (because of recent difficulties in Angola) is currently the language most requested by schools.

The university has used the RSN as a launch pad for further refugee and asylum seeker involvement. Close links have been forged with the regional refugee and asylum seeker support agencies across the public and voluntary sector. Whilst the university offers basic training and CRB checks for all volunteers, partnership with Leeds Asylum Seeker Support Network (LASSN) has enabled volunteers to be trained specifically to support the target group.

This is an exciting and unique project that has caught the hearts and minds of many new volunteers who would not otherwise have been registered with us. It has attracted national press coverage and can truly be said to be a project that utilises

one of the university's greatest resources – its large numbers of diverse students and languages.

Hints and tips

- Engage the student societies.
- Forge links with other refugee and asylum seeker support organisations.
- Work with other HE and FE providers.
- Publicise the project in postgraduate centres and staff common rooms.
- Build a database of volunteer enquiries and schools language requests.
- Link up with overseas students through the relevant focal point within the institution.
- Attend as many functions as possible at the beginning of the academic year, e.g. postgraduate receptions, international student receptions.
- Request 5 minute slots at the start or end of lectures to talk to students directly about the project.
- Get publicity through campus publications, e.g. staff reviews, student newspapers.
- Make volunteers aware of the circumstances of the refugee and asylum seeker children.
- Provide where possible assistance with travel costs.
- Provide ongoing CRB checking and training for volunteers.
- Provide a volunteer manual of tips and resources.
- Provide supervision of volunteers.

Safety and security

Ensuring the safety and security of HEACF volunteers and beneficiaries is clearly of prime importance. While universities are already experienced in some policies and procedures, there is still scope for learning from the approaches developed for HEACF in other institutions.

It is essential to follow correct procedures in both volunteer recruitment and continual assessment, in order to safeguard the welfare of both the participants and the volunteers.
All HEIs involved in volunteer programmes have the responsibility to prevent unsuitable individuals working with the vulnerable. Equally, it is crucial that the process of checking placements meets minimum standards (in terms of health and safety, supervision and student support) and is conducted effectively.

The case studies in this section enable universities to compare their own processes for safeguarding volunteers and vulnerable participants with those illustrated.

Case study SS1 (2003)
Safe and Sound Recruitment for Sport Volunteers
University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University

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Context

The Combined Universities of Oxford Sports Outreach Scheme (CommUniSports) is a project that was designed with three aims in mind:

- to break down the barriers between the 'town' and 'gown' in Oxford
- to add to and improve existing sports provision in Oxford
- to aid in the social and financial development of university sports clubs.

The scheme is run, primarily, from the Oxford University Sports Federation in conjunction with the sports department at Oxford Brookes. Volunteers from sports clubs at both universities work together to fulfil the project aims. These volunteers run projects such as after-school clubs, tournaments and taster sessions in different sports, primarily for children and young people.

All sport carries some element of risk, and cases of negligence and abuse in sport are well documented in the national press. It is essential to follow correct procedures in both volunteer recruitment and continual assessment, in order to safeguard the welfare of both the participants and volunteers. All HEIs involved in volunteer programmes have both the responsibility and the right to prevent unsuitable individuals working with the vulnerable. The policies that have been implemented by the sports outreach scheme have been an integral part of the success of the scheme, with the volunteers recruited exceeding expectations. This good practice case study highlights the most important and successful recruitment procedures adopted by the scheme. Available on request are copies of the volunteer policy, code of conduct and child protection policy. Our website at www.sport.ox.ac.uk/outreach also forms an integral part of the successful recruitment strategy.

This case study is also relevant to all those projects where volunteers are working with children or vulnerable people.

Programme detail

Safe recruitment: Having a transparent and equitable recruitment policy in place gives the programme simple guidelines that can be easily adhered to. The recruitment of volunteers should be as strict as is required for the type of scheme the volunteer will be participating in. A less stringent recruitment procedure could in theory be used for a volunteer working on a conservation project compared to one working for a children's charity. However, good recruitment will often mean good

volunteers and the better the application process, the better protection for your volunteers and your institution in the case of an incident.

Internal procedures: An internal application procedure can help you recruit reliable and enthusiastic volunteers. It is also important to have records of your volunteers for contact and monitoring purposes. These records can also be essential for insurance purposes. Internal applications should gauge information such as contact details, any medical information or information that may affect a person's ability to volunteer, and the names and contact details of two referees who can comment on a person's suitability for the position. Under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) all volunteers must declare all convictions, including spent convictions.

External procedures: The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) have improved access to criminal records and provide a service to employers, who can access the service to help establish whether a volunteer has a background that might make him or her unsuitable for a particular post. An enhanced disclosure is required when working with vulnerable people. A disclosure is a document that contains information on convictions, cautions and warnings kept on police computers, plus information from the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills. Obtaining a disclosure has become much easier over the past year with a turnaround of around 2 to 3 weeks.

The forms, although still time consuming, have been made shorter. It is very important that the forms are filled in correctly and particularly that student volunteers do not fall into the trap of using their home address as opposed to university address on the application. It is also very important that the correct documentation is provided and seen by an appropriate person. This documentation includes recent proof of current address, proof of national insurance number and passport or driving licence. The form when completed has to be checked by a counter-signatory who works for the 'registered body' before it can be sent to the CRB.

It is possible for the department under which your scheme operates to become a registered body to check completed forms. This, however, is costly and time consuming and relies on a permanent member of staff accepting responsibility. At HEIs many personnel or security services will be able to offer a counter-signatory service (particularly those with medical or teacher training departments). These departments are very likely to offer to check volunteers because, firstly, it is free of charge and, secondly, it reflects well on the institution. Most will also let the volunteer co-ordinator check the original documentation and then send photocopies to the counter-signatory.

A word of caution when working this way: as volunteer co-ordinator you will only receive a 'yes' or 'no' as to whether the volunteer is considered suitable. You will not receive information about specific convictions or cautions, and therefore cannot make a judgement on whether the individual may still make a suitable volunteer despite what is presented on the disclosure.

Hints and tips

- Have a published, readily available recruitment policy and code of conduct. Volunteers can then have no quibbles as to what is expected of them.

- Ensure the policy covers equal opportunities.
- Have a good practice and child protection policy that is always considered when recruiting.
- Always check CRB forms are filled in correctly. Incorrect forms cause huge delays.
- Remember that volunteers have the right to refuse a CRB check. However, you have the right to refuse a volunteer.
- Always remember to abide by the Data Protection Act.
- If you have foreign students a disclosure can only inform you of criminal acts committed in this country. Certificates of good behaviour can be obtained for European students from embassies, and if a student has been awarded a visa this would imply they have no convictions.
- Remember the disclosure is only valid for the day you obtain it. Decide on a timescale over which you will recheck volunteers.
- Have a concise and well maintained website which guides volunteers through the application process and gives access to essential paperwork.
- ALWAYS use your judgement when recruiting.

Case study SS2 (2004)
@ctive Student and Project V: the Placement Visit Process
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www.sussex.ac.uk/projectv

Context

@ctive Student and Project V are the volunteering schemes at the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex respectively. The schemes operate a 'volunteer bureau' style placement service involving local voluntary, charity and not-for-profit organisations. They have a joint approach to the community and voluntary sector.

The university schemes aim to provide safe and supported volunteering opportunities to students, and do this by way of the placement visit process (PVP). Once a student has chosen a placement, a volunteer worker from @ctive Student or Project V will make a placement visit to the beneficiary organisation to ensure appropriate mechanisms for students are in place prior to a student starting.

The PVP centres on a simple but effective paper system with a one to one meeting. It has been designed to ensure a set standard of safety and support for students at the placement, but also to reduce the burden already placed on the voluntary sector by only carrying out this process once a student has identified an interest in volunteering.

Programme detail

The system
The PVP checks standards of safety and support offered by beneficiary organisations before students start their volunteering placement. The process has been streamlined for ease of use, so on the placement visit only two pieces of paperwork (the placement checklist and service level agreement) need to be completed.

The process forms a joint agreement between @ctive Student, Project V and the beneficiary organisation. It process can be used regardless of the size or scope of the beneficiary organisation, and could be easily implemented by any volunteer placement scheme.

The focused face-to-face meetings provide a useful forum for discussion, giving beneficiary organisations the chance to ask questions about receiving student volunteers. The contact and perceived professionalism of the system meant that much closer working relationships were created than would have arisen through an e-mail or letter system.

Placement checklist
The placement checklist is used to establish whether the beneficiary organisation reaches the minimum standard required by @ctive Student and Project V to place volunteers with them. The checklist (reproduced below) covers the organisation's health and safety policies, equal opportunities / race equality policies, insurance provision, screening processes (to gain a better idea of the length of the recruitment process), and support available (in terms of training and supervision).

Service level agreement
The service level agreement (SLA) represents a commitment to ensuring good practice when working with student volunteers. It outlines who does what regarding the safety and support of volunteers, for the beneficiary organisation and the universities.

The SLA states that @ctive Student and Project V will provide a matching service for volunteers, with each student signing a volunteering agreement. @ctive Student and Project V agree to make students aware that some placements require different screening policies, and reiterate the level of support available from the universities' volunteering projects.

At the same time the SLA commits the beneficiary organisation to providing an acceptable level of safety to all students, providing reasonable adjustments wherever possible for disabled participants, and providing induction, training and ongoing supervision for the volunteer. The organisation is reminded of its obligation to provide details of its health and safety, insurance and equal opportunities policies.

Benefits
The PVP is an innovative system, created by experienced practitioners to provide a professional approach to volunteer safety and support. It has identifiable benefits to students, beneficiary organisations and volunteering schemes alike. Students are assured a certain level of safety and support. The beneficiary organisation's time commitment to this process is reduced as the paperwork is straightforward; it is completed with direct assistance from a volunteering worker; and is only required once a student has identified a definite interest in volunteering. The volunteering schemes are able to collect relevant information in a clear and focused manner, and are able to form closer working relationships with beneficiary organisations, thus increasing the sustainability of links between the university and the wider community.

Hints and tips

- Explain the process to students so they understand why there may be a short delay before they can begin a placement.
- Send the placement visit paperwork to the organisation prior to the visit so they can be prepared, and can contact you with any questions.
- During the meeting:
  - Be patient when asking for information, explain why you are there and why you need the paperwork.
  - Be clear regarding your screening policy to make sure that it is understood what each party will / will not do in terms of screening.
  - Identify the relevant supervisor for your volunteer so a named person is responsible for supporting them.
  - Collect all the necessary paperwork *during* the placement visit where possible. It's much harder to get information sent on afterwards.
- If an organisation does not have particular policies in place, signpost them to sources of support in the community and voluntary sector so they can develop them. Stay in touch with organisations while they are developing policies to reassure them of the benefits.
- Have a risk assessment template available to organisations that do not have their own. This is to be completed for all relevant activities that the student will be involved in.
- Be aware of the reduced legal requirements for beneficiary organisations with five or fewer employees with regards to holding explicit health and safety policies.
- Thank organisations for their time and commitment to the process.
- Work closely with your university health and safety department so they are aware of what you ask for, and to advise and guide where necessary.

ProjectV

PLACEMENT CHECKLIST

The University of Brighton and the University of Sussex Volunteering Schemes have co-ordinated their procedures for recruiting Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations, and doing the placement visit and relevant checks to comply with Health & Safety and other good practice. Therefore the information you put on this form will automatically be shared between the University Volunteering Schemes.

Name of Organisation / Project	
Contact name and job title	
Address: Telephone: Postcode: Fax:	
Email: Website:	

Please tick the following boxes to indicate which policies your organisation/project currently holds, and use the details box if there is anything you want to add. Where your organisation does not hold some of the policies / practices below, or where it is not relevant to do so, please use the details box to explain why.

Insurance

Do you have insurance which covers the activities a volunteer will be involved in:				
Public liability	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**	**Policy Number:**
Does this cover volunteers?	YES	NO	N/A	**Expiry Date:**
Employers Indemnity	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**	**Policy Number:**
Does this cover volunteers?	YES	NO	N/A	**Expiry Date:**
Professional Indemnity	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**	**Policy Number:**
Does this cover volunteers?	YES	NO	N/A	**Expiry Date:**

Health and Safety

Do you have:			DETAILS
A Health and Safety Policy?	YES	NO	
Does this cover Accident and Emergency procedures and safety management and responsibility?	YES	NO	
Do you have emergency procedures for disabled persons?	YES	NO	
Risk Assessments, covering volunteer activities	YES	NO	
Have you ever received an Improvement or Prohibition Notice under the H&S at Work Act?	YES	NO	

Screening

The University Volunteering Schemes do not routinely seek references or police check volunteers. If it is a requirement of the volunteering that a volunteer from the university will be taking part in, it is expected that your project / organisation will fulfil this duty. If your project / organisation is not able to do this, please inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator

Do you:			DETAILS
Carry out Criminal Record Checks?	YES	NO	
Seek References?	YES	NO	

Equal Opportunities

Do you have:	DETAILS

An Equal Opportunities Policy?	YES	NO	
A Race Equality Policy (where appropriate – only required of public sector orgs)	YES	NO	

Induction

Please provide info on:	DETAILS
The Induction Plan / Induction Pack for new volunteers	

Training

Do you provide:			DETAILS
Training?	YES	NO	
Is the training optional?	YES	NO	

Supervision

Who is the specified supervisor responsible for volunteers?	
What format does the supervision take?	
How regular is it?	

Expenses

Please detail below any benefits volunteers can access e.g. food, childcare, travel etc

Documents

Please provide a copy of the following documentation	Received?
Health and Safety Policy, including an active Risk Assessment covering the activities a volunteer will be involved in	
Equal Opportunities Policy	

I confirm that the details I have given are accurate at this time, and that I shall inform the University Volunteer Scheme immediately if there are any changes:

Placement   **University Volunteer Scheme**

Print Name			Print Name	
Sign Name			Sign Name	
Date			Date	

Office Use Only

Placement Visited by:	Added to database:	Shared:

Staff volunteering

HEACF is as much about increasing HE staff involvement in voluntary and community activity as it is about recruiting more student volunteers. When university staff take part in projects with and for local people, their involvement exemplifies the university's commitment to reaching out to all sections of the community.

Staff volunteers are thus important ambassadors for university outreach programmes.

Staff have a vast wealth of experience and expertise to offer. Many offer the skills and knowledge they use in their work to benefit others. Others draw upon life experiences more generally. Some staff are proactive in developing and leading projects with student teams (often, but not always, subject-related). Others volunteer as individuals. The diversity of contributions made by staff through HEACF is illustrated by the case studies shown under `Staff volunteering' in the Cross -reference guide (pp9-12).

Universities also ask for academic staff support in promoting volunteering to students.
If the member of staff is also a volunteer, this enhances their ability to encourage others to do likewise.

Universities identify a range of potential benefits to encourage staff to volunteer. Some of these mirror the benefits to students: developing and sharing skills; building confidence; facing new challenges; CV enhancement; meeting new people and having fun; experiencing new career possibilities; as well as the satisfaction of giving something back to the community.

Some benefits are more staff-specific, e.g: developing contacts outside work-related networks; raising the profile of the department/boosting kudos through faculty-based programmes; building links with organisations that may help build the university as a business; helping the transition from work to retirement.

Many staff volunteer already, outside of HEACF. Universities are therefore working hard to encourage staff to volunteer within HEACF programmes, in order to take forward projects that build stronger links with local communities. As incentives, they emphasise the value of joining an organised programme of volunteering, with a point of contact throughout, and the information, training and contacts needed for the chosen activity.

There is rarely a shortage of opportunities for staff to volunteer. Local organisations frequently request staff expertise to fill roles such as: school governors, trustees, mentors and tutors. But frequently there is a mismatch between the commitment requested and the time that potential volunteers feel they can offer. Often, the type of project favoured by the donor is the short, one-off project, that can be undertaken by a team of staff and students to achieve transformational results (for example projects that improve a community environment).

Lack of time is frequently cited by staff as a limiting factor. In response, some institutions have instituted an element of paid leave for volunteering. In others, line

managers are authorised to grant a set amount of time off for volunteering within local HEACF projects, in order to facilitate, or make possible, employee involvement.

The case study below illustrates how one organisation has committed to turning staff volunteering policy into effective practice.

Case study SV1 (2004)
Best Practice in Staff Volunteering
Kent Union, University of Kent
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Context

HEACF funding has led to a focus on volunteering not just among students but by the staff of Kent Union too. Through a number of initiatives, staff at Kent Union are encouraged to participate in volunteering activities. This has led to community project work by Kent Union staff and an ambitious project to complete the Three Peaks Challenge in 2004.

Programme detail

Volunteering is now a central part of staff culture at Kent Union. Volunteering has been encouraged and supported through a number of initiatives:

Flexible working policy. Written in 2002, the policy includes a section on staff volunteering (reproduced below). Staff are encouraged to take up to half a day each month for volunteering. In agreeing the policy it was recognised that volunteering adds to work/life balance and is an activity that the organisation values; recognising the personal and community benefits.

17.0   Time off for volunteering
A key principle of Kent Union is a **commitment to helping others** who have a need. Via Kent Union, hundreds of students volunteer their time each year to help others. Kent Union wishes to widen this opportunity to its staff, recognising the mutual benefits this offers to the staff themselves, the Union and the community.

17.1 Therefore, Kent Union will allow employees to take up to **25 hours per annum** of normal work time to volunteer.

17.2 **Examples** of different volunteering opportunities are working with people with disabilities, assisting in local schools, conservation work, helping refugees, working in a local charity shop.

17.3 Volunteering must be in **blocks** of at least 2 hours and no more than 3.5 hours.   Staff may only volunteer **once per week**.

17.4 Volunteering times must be **agreed in advance** with the employee's line manager.

17.5 Volunteering should normally be **through the Union's existing volunteering programmes.**

Talk to the **Volunteering Co-ordinator** for further information.

- **Kent Union vision and values:** Volunteering has a place within the values of the organisation, which state that it 'recognises volunteering and promotion of community participation as core functions'.

- **Staff development events:** Volunteering has been included as an option in staff development days, encouraging staff to see value in volunteering their time and expertise. These events have raised awareness of the range of volunteering opportunities available and helped staff to identify how much time and expertise they have to give. This has led to staff volunteering who had previously not considered doing so.

- **Partnership with Canterbury Open Centre:** Kent Union has a long-standing relationship with the Canterbury Open Centre (homeless shelter). In July 2003 the centre opened a resettlement project and half-way house in Canterbury, creating new opportunities for volunteers to work with residents and renovate the property and grounds. These new opportunities have been filled by Kent Union staff.

  Staff have raised funds to equip the new property, used their own networks to get goods for free (such as a skip to remove old garden rubbish), and in August they spent a day working on an old shed to create a workshop for residents.

  Specialist knowledge within the Union is being used to develop the Open Centre as a whole. Senior managers are sharing best practice in strategic planning, and the marketing and fundraising manager is helping centre staff to prepare a marketing and fundraising plan.

More ambitious plans

The desire to work on bigger, more ambitious projects has led to a team of 15 staff taking on the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of the Meningitis Research Trust in July 2004. Volunteers work in all areas and levels of the organisation, including part-time student staff. Those not involved in the actual event are supporting through fundraising and publicity.

Benefits

Volunteering by staff at Kent Union has developed stronger communication networks and created a culture of teamwork and co-operation within the organisation.

Individuals have found the opportunity to apply their skills out of work motivational. Many were moved by the life experiences of the Open Centre residents and gained a sense of satisfaction from completing a project for the benefit of others. Projects have given a shared goal to staff who would not normally work together.

Volunteering is now firmly established as something to be part of at Kent Union - a sense that can only go from strength to strength.

Hints and tips

- Embed volunteering in employment policy.
- Utilise skills and resources already within the workforce.
- Find a cause that people can relate to.
- Create projects with flexible time commitment.
- Celebrate projects and success within the organisation.

Training

Varied support mechanisms have been put into place by HEIs to provide volunteers – staff and students alike – with the knowledge, skills and, importantly, confidence needed for them to work with beneficiary organisations. Given the diversity of volunteering opportunities created by the HEACF locally, it is crucial for volunteers to have access to robust and transferable training and resources.

The development of training programmes and resources comes in different forms:
- working in partnership with external organisations to give specific, task-related training
- recruiting a qualified trainer to develop and deliver generic and specific courses for volunteers
- creating detailed, accessible resources for volunteers' reference.

Within this section is also information on training for staff in running volunteering programmes. HEACF practitioners have a need for detailed and specific support in order to complete their tasks effectively – CRB checking, recruiting diverse volunteers, registering and placing volunteers are all tasks that are quite specific to the role of a staff member operating within the volunteering field.

Case study T1 (2003)
Involve
University of Birmingham
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Research and Enterprise Services
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Tel 0121 414 8037

Context

Rather than simply setting up new staff and student volunteering projects, the approach at Birmingham was strategic - building on the long history of volunteering through the Student Guild and the range of volunteering undertaken by staff.

The project is managed through a steering group known as the ACF Task Force; it meets quarterly and is chaired by Michael Clarke (Vice-Principal). The project was developed through a strong partnership between the Birmingham Guild of Students (through its Involve volunteering team) and the university. It started with a working definition of volunteering as:

'Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.'
National Centre for Volunteering/Institute for Volunteering Research

The project has as its central focus the belief, strengthened by the experience gained through developing volunteering placements by the Student Guild, that volunteering offers a valuable and constructive opportunity for individuals, community groups and agencies to develop their skills and learn new ones. This capacity building context is designed to offer skill development opportunities for the voluntary agencies and community groups that volunteers work with, while offering volunteers the opportunity to develop existing skills and form new ones.

Central to this is a new collaborative approach to training which involves both the Birmingham University Guild of Students (through the Involve volunteering team) and the Universities Staff Development Unit. Together they have developed a range of new opportunities to build volunteering into the existing staff development training programme, to expand the student volunteering training programme, and to create new bespoke courses.

Programme detail

The Student Guild has recruited a full-time trainer to develop and deliver courses to support student volunteers (with HEACF funding) and this has proved very successful in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. In the last academic year, 379 students attended a volunteering induction and at least 115 people completed over 200 hours of voluntary work (based on figures from the Millennium Volunteers project). This year, due to the value placed upon the induction programme by volunteers and by the beneficiary organisations, the programme has been made compulsory for all student volunteers. Its success is measured in the number of students who have taken part, with 279 already by October 2003, and a projected

figure of around 600 for the academic year.

The induction covers all the basic information to enable the volunteers to make a smooth transition into a volunteering placement. This includes basic health and safety, insurance cover and an overview of child protection requirements. Once volunteers have decided where they would like to volunteer, they can take part in training specifically designed to support the volunteering opportunity. For example, sport in the community training is available for those wanting to undertake football coaching in schools and communities, or refugee awareness training for the Student Action for Refugees (STAR) group.

These training sessions are also run by the Student Guild's full-time Involve trainer. Each course takes account of feedback from students who have been on placements and have direct experience of what will help fellow students to make the most of their placement. Any student who undertakes a volunteering activity with children is required to attend a child protection course in the first term of the academic year. This deals in detail with child protection issues, and includes the issuing of a Criminal Records Bureau check certificate. Until students have attended this course, to ensure that they can get involved in volunteering as quickly as possible, they 'buddy up' with another student volunteer who has been trained, and this offers an additional opportunity for volunteers to exchange skills and experience.

The whole emphasis of the training is to offer student volunteers the support to enable them to meet their own expectations of volunteering. This often includes setting up completely new volunteering activities, and training in project management, communication and other key skills that are tailored to support volunteers. This fits with the Involve philosophy that volunteering and skill development go hand in hand.

Building on the experiences gained in supporting volunteering through training and skills development, the Involve trainer has been associated with a similar support programme for members of staff of the university who wish to become volunteers. This project, in collaboration with the Staff Development Unit, has been extended to develop volunteering activities for staff members that focus on identifying the skill development needs of individuals (through the university's emerging Investors In People programme).

For example, a course is being piloted that takes participants who have attended an existing personal development course (Springboard) and, through a series of training and coaching sessions, finds participants appropriate volunteering opportunities where they are able to apply and build upon skills learnt on the course. Once again the emphasis is upon sharing skills and experience to facilitate capacity building for all those who take part, so the staff member will also use their new-found skills, (e.g. using presentation software or developing a database) in the voluntary group or agencies they are placed with. This placement will have been arranged with a focus on meeting the development requirements of the both the volunteer and the beneficiary organisation.

This collaboration extends to the university's membership of Birmingham Cares (part of the Business in the Community initiative), where a joint team from the university's Staff Development Unit and Involve will be building Volunteer Challenges into the university's Investors In People (IIP) programme. The

university's membership of Birmingham Cares gives the opportunity for eight volunteer community-based challenges, for example, decorating or gardening for a community group. The first challenge was undertaken by the ACF Task Force, who had a successful day working with volunteers from the Guild (students and staff) to renovate the gardens at Prospect House – a centre for agencies who work with people with disabilities. Each subsequent challenge will be used to develop team leader skills, including a day's training for all those who lead a challenge, and will include central administration teams that are going through the process of achieving IIP, and members of the Hospitality and Catering Division, as they have successfully completed the IIP process.

Hints and tips

The project believes that volunteering is a capacity building activity for all those who take part, including the volunteer, the volunteer agency, the Involve team, and university representatives. Central to this is identifying the lessons learnt from developing activities to put this belief into practice. These include:

- Harnessing and supporting the enthusiasm of the volunteer – if there is not an existing placement that meets their needs, then one is created using the flexible training packages that have been developed to support the new activity. It is this combination of responsiveness and support that encourages volunteers to involve their friends – an activity called 'spreading the secret', as this comment from a volunteer suggests:

    'Most people start volunteering because their friends tell them about it, and it's all about word of mouth, that's why it's getting bigger and bigger all the time. There are so many reasons to volunteer, and so few excuses not to!'

- Having an 'in-house' trainer who knows first hand the volunteering opportunities available and works closely with existing student volunteers. This results in the iterative development of the training delivery as students provide feedback to the trainer who can then build this into his delivery.
- The collaboration between those delivering student volunteering training and the university's Staff Development Unit has been developed through a series of meetings. These started by understanding the approaches each take to training and using this to build a programme which is complementary and draws on each parties' expertise and experience. Again this has a capacity building element. For example the Involve trainer summed up this approach by saying:

    'The foundation has been laid for future collaborations that will enable us to provide more volunteering opportunities for a greater number of people. Our involvement with the university's Staff Development Unit was an important milestone in furthering our ability to recruit and retain volunteers with real world experience and a broader outlook on the social issues affecting communities in Birmingham.'

- Build on what you know – all of these activities have been developed using lessons learnt from previous activities and time has been spent identifying what should be changed and enhanced.

Case study T2 (2003)
Specialist Volunteer Training for HEI Staff
Manchester Metropolitan University
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Context

Beyond a core volunteering service managed through coMMUni within Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), there are 20 satellite projects within MMU co-ordinating specialist volunteering and community partnerships.

Staff in MMU, or any higher education institution, do not necessarily possess the range of skills and experience needed to successfully manage volunteering projects. The central HEACF project (coMMUni) has budgeted to provide free training in all aspects of managing and recruiting volunteers to all staff co-ordinating satellite projects.

Programme detail

When tendering for interest to run specialist satellite volunteering projects at MMU, the project steering group stated that a selection criterion should be included regarding the training of volunteers, i.e. skills gained, accreditation recognised. This focused upon enhancing the value of volunteering to a student or staff member and rightly promotes a quality volunteering experience.

However, this only addresses part of the volunteer's experience. How they are managed and who manages them also matters. Managing a volunteering project is very different from the normal activity of staff in an HEI. They may have interests or knowledge of volunteering but they do not always possess the up to date volunteer management skills needed to run a successful project, with targets, and limited time and resources.

coMMUni staff used their local knowledge of support for volunteering in the voluntary and community sectors, such as from the National Centre for Volunteering, to access information on local relevant courses. All staff were then contacted (and their line managers) with details of courses available and a budget that they could use. This budget was in addition to each satellite project's own budget, so partaking did not limit or reduce the resources for their planned volunteering.

Beyond the individual staff members' skills an HEI does not posses the infrastructure to offer personnel support in the management of volunteers. Departments at MMU, such as Development and Training, are rightly focused on the core business and functions of the institution. Attending community-based courses not only improves the skills of volunteer co-ordinators, enhancing the long-term experience of volunteering for students and staff, it facilitates informal networking by

staff in the local voluntary and community sector. Thus establishing contact and support structures for advice, guidance and sharing of good practice.

To date the training offered has included:
- What every first time manager should know
- Recruiting and supervising volunteers
- Volunteering and the internet
- Health and safety for volunteers
- Mental health issues and volunteering
- Facilitating groups

Staff attending courses have been requested to provide feedback on the relevance and quality of the experience.

Hints and tips

- Seek out the range and variety of volunteering related courses available in your community, e.g. contacting volunteering bureaux or community volunteering services. This will ensure local contacts are made through attending, and local organisations receive financial support.
- Encouraging attendance at such events will expand the horizons and skills of HEI staff and generate confidence in understanding the voluntary and community sector network.
- Identify a budget for training and development and ensure the relevant line managers of staff understand what you are offering and why.
- Allocate an identified number of places/funding to relevant staff and offer a choice of courses they could attend.
- Request written feedback on the training and act on recommendations.

Case study T3 (2003)
Lancaster University Volunteering Unit: Volunteer's Handbook
Lancaster University
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Context

The Volunteer's Handbook was developed to support the volunteer by providing information, advice and guidance in a way that reflects not only the mission and vision of Lancaster University Volunteering Unit (LUVU) but also establishes a legal and philosophical context within which volunteers are expected to operate.

The intention of the handbook was that it should be used. Experience in other areas of student-based and student-led activities has shown that very often this is not the case where such documents have been produced and issued. A number of factors contribute to this, the main ones being user friendliness, size, context and appropriateness. When developing this handbook LUVU sought to ensure that these factors were taken account of.

LUVU developed this handbook to be used in conjunction with a comprehensive induction process and its own project framework, so that its content is constantly woven into the work of the volunteers, thus ensuring its regular use.

Programme detail

Many of the good practice guides LUVU investigated prior to the development of the handbook were large and bulky. Whilst they were often clear and well laid out, they contained too much information and sometimes pre-supposed that volunteers were already familiar with some of the nuances of process and procedure that were intended to be applied in a volunteering context. It was also not uncommon for much of the good practice to exist in a varied selection of documents, which had to be reconstructed to apply in the context of volunteering.

For LUVU there were fundamentals that needed immediate inclusion and attention both in terms of induction and further project training and development. These were:

- health and safety
- equal opportunities
- confidentiality
- vulnerable groups.

These four main areas are always considerations in the context of developing projects, from forming an idea to delivery.

As a result of this assessment, LUVU decided that its own handbook:

- should contain only the information that volunteers would need on a regular basis
- would be presented so that it served mainly to introduce volunteers to the key areas of policy and procedure that they would regularly encounter
- should be attractive and relatively compact
- should be written in straightforward terms avoiding as much jargon as possible
- could be used in conjunction with the induction process and the project framework
- should be produced in such a way that revision and development would not be expensive.

For LUVU it has been important to establish a 'LUVU' way of doing things. Before the HEACF there was nothing like it at Lancaster University. The handbook is a further extension of LUVU's brand image and the opportunity to reinforce this could not be lost.

The innovation perhaps lies in the continual use of and reference to the handbook throughout the process of the volunteering experience for the Lancaster University student volunteers. This has influenced its construction. It is a purpose-built document.

LUVU consulted with the National Centre for Volunteering to ensure that information contained was correct and that relevant issues were included. Since its publication, staff at the centre have commended the handbook as an example of good practice.

Hints and tips

- ***Decide what the handbook is supposed to do***: Will it fit into and support a larger process or is it a stand-alone document? If it is a stand-alone document then it may run the risk of hardly ever being referred to. Develop the handbook to link in with the induction process and subsequent training sessions and project development sessions.
- If it is to be used regularly, how ***user friendly*** is it? A huge folder might be practical in the sense that it can be added to, but it may be impractical. It can also start to look like a reference manual for the main office rather than the individual. A booklet format can make it more readable and accessible.
- ***Visual appeal.*** This can make all the difference. Ploughing through page after page of words is dull. Presentation should be colourful and readable so apply short bursts of information, interspersed with colour photos. Of course there are budgetary implications here but again the consideration must be how important is it for people to actually 'read' as opposed to 'have a copy of'.
- ***Who owns it?*** Many good practice guides are often not as readable and as usable as they might be because they are perceived as being set in stone and are constructed by people who aren't using them. The handbook should be a live document that is contributed to, updated, reviewed and reconstructed if necessary, by the volunteers themselves. This ensures that good practice awareness and understanding is at the forefront of the mind of the volunteer. It is essential that consultation takes place with professional organisations such as the National Centre for Volunteering to ensure validity and accuracy of information.

Case study T4 (2003)
MMU Volunteers' Handbook
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Context

Staff working on the coMMUni project identified at the outset that the handbook guide to volunteering would be an important tool in supporting staff and students interested in volunteering.

As a team, coMMUni designed the content of a handbook and commissioned a local design company to produce an attractive style. Two students also sketched cartoon images of volunteering that have now become the focal point of the handbook's illustrations and the project's promotion.

Programme detail

The project team designed and produced their own guide to volunteering to assist MMU staff and student volunteers registered with coMMUni. The guide replaced a variety of A4 sheet handouts given to potential volunteers. This was because staff felt that while the handout information was important and useful, it was not attractive or attention grabbing. The new handbook offers an easy to read and accessible format that can be kept by the volunteer and referred to when required.

The guide is comprehensive covering a variety of topics, which include:

- the service offered by coMMUni
- the benefits of volunteering
- how to make the most of volunteering through planning
- explaining volunteers' rights and responsibilities
- a suggested induction checklist for volunteers
- coMMUni's policies and procedures.

Staff and students of MMU can obtain a free copy of the handbook by contacting coMMUni staff direct or they can download a PDF copy from the website: www.communi.mmu.ac.uk/vhandbook.htm

The most crucial piece of information in the handbook is the suggested induction checklist. This provides sensible, practical guidance to any volunteer on the type of information they should ask for before they start volunteering with any organisation or group (e.g. Who is my supervisor? Do you have a first aid box? Am I covered by your insurance?). They can then decide whether the answers are satisfactory or not.

The handbook is currently being produced in other accessible formats, such as an audio CD produced by a local charity, using students attending an NVQ training centre with a sound recording studio run by Crewe YMCA.

Hints and tips

- Take time in identifying what information you wish to provide and the format in which it is best produced – such as a handbook, a CD-ROM or an audio CD.
- Seek out other local groups who have produced similar guides to ensure that there is no other more suitable and existing alternative.
- Commission a design company that understands your work and from which you can obtain a variety of style and choice. The visual impression the handbook makes often dictates how much (or how little) it is used, now matter how comprehensive or informative the content may be.
- Produce drafts and pass to a variety of staff and students for their comment and feedback.

The coMMUni handbook is available to be used as a template for other HEACF projects, and as indicated above can be downloaded from the coMMUni website.

Case study T5 (2003)
Student Mentoring - Training
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Context

In 2002, a new mentoring scheme was set up within the students' union at the University of Bath. This scheme aims to match up students with boys from Culverhay School, a local secondary school. The pupils identified as subjects for mentoring are normally falling behind with their schoolwork and in need of some guidance. Bath students act as mentors to assist with homework and aim to raise the aspirations of the pupils, thereby increasing their self-confidence. Most of the boys are unlikely to have a family history of attending higher education, and it is hoped that the students will therefore act as positive role models.

All students were interviewed to assess their suitability as mentors and have to attend two extensive training sessions before being allowed to volunteer. Thirty students took part in the scheme.

The mentoring scheme was a great success, with feedback from the headteacher of the school stating that the boys' attitude towards school and work had improved as a result of taking part in the scheme. The boys themselves reported an improvement in their motivation and homework. The students who took part also gained a great deal and learnt many key skills, ranging from time management to interpersonal communication.

Programme detail

The training is a key aspect in preparing the students for their role as a mentor.

Due to the diverse time commitments of students, the training scheme was developed to be both concise and comprehensive. The first training session lasted for 2 hours and covered the skills and attitudes required of a mentor and addressed any hopes and fears the students might have had. Sessions on good communication, ethics and boundaries, health and safety and child protection were also included.

The second training session also lasted for 2 hours and included a talk by the teacher co-ordinating the mentees in Culverhay School. The mentor and mentee application form, which aims to match up the student with the pupil, was discussed, and a role-play was conducted based on the first meeting. Other topics considered were the importance of confidentiality, volunteer policies and procedures, dealing with difficult situations and the nature and type of activities mentors could undertake with their mentees.

These training sessions have been developed for the specific purpose from general volunteer procedures and practices that have been fine-tuned over many years at Bath. Indeed, a variety of university departments have subsequently requested that elements of the training be delivered to other groups of students. For example, those staff responsible for organising the university's widening access initiative have often used the training for their own student mentors, tutors and ambassadors.

Hints and tips

- The students and pupils may end up wondering what to do during the mentoring sessions. It is useful to give students a folder of possible activities that they may like to adapt or use to give them some ideas. Where students go into a school over many weeks it is sometimes difficult for them to come up with new ideas, so encourage them to feedback what they have been doing each session in order that you can write up their ideas and add to a guide for future students.
- Communication is always key in any project. However in mentoring it is vital, so that both mentees and mentors do not get disheartened when one or other cannot turn up. It is a good idea to have a signing-in system in the reception of the school and e-mail access for both mentees and mentors.
- It is helpful to get the mentees and mentors to sign a contract so that they are clear about the boundaries of the relationship.
- Space for meetings in the school is often a problem. Make sure this is arranged before agreeing how many mentors and mentee matches you will have so you are sure you have space to house them all.

Vulnerable and non-participating groups

The diversity of volunteering projects initiated by the HEACF has been vast, perhaps due in part to the emphasis placed on 'new' volunteering opportunities. This has led local practitioners of the HEACF to seek out partnerships and community projects with which the HEI had previously no contact, or to assess local political situations and work to provide a solution or support method through which the HEI could engage with the local community. The latter could take the form of something as innocuous as garden maintenance for the elderly, or could tackle more complex issues such as social exclusion of at-risk groups.

Current political, economic and social conditions have led to major areas of development in volunteering, focusing on asylum seekers and refugees, offenders and other at-risk groups.

Asylum seekers and refugees
The increased attention being paid to the UK's policy on asylum (both by the media and by political groups) has led to greater public scrutiny concerning its impact on local communities. The subject causes extreme responses in local communities, and it is to be commended that some HEIs have chosen to use the HEACF allocation to bring greater awareness and understanding of asylum to their communities by getting directly involved with asylum-seekers.

School students
While relationships between HEIs and schools have existed for some time for a number of different reasons (widening participation, development of 'feeder' schools), volunteering schemes are now tackling the issue of school students at risk of exclusion. This in turn serves to support school objectives to increase pass and retention rates at various key stages. Alongside this, developments in security for school students have made this volunteering route more onerous on volunteer co-ordinators.

Prisoners
The number of prisoners currently serving sentences in the UK is at an all-time high. Prisons themselves, particularly in London and the South-East, form part of the local community due to central locations. Prison visiting schemes, whereby trained volunteers provide support to serving prisoners, are being developed to help tackle instances of re-offending. This serves the local community in two major ways –the prisons themselves are part of the community, and reducing the possibility or risk of re-offending makes the community safer for all members.

Related case studies within this section look variously at: supporting women who have become involved with prostitution; and at recruiting volunteers to work with support organisations for disenfranchised groups. This has been included as a stand-alone section due to the very particular needs of projects dealing with such vulnerable groups.

Case study VN1 (2003)
Inmates: Prison Visiting Volunteers
Goldsmiths College Students' Union (GCSU) and Goldsmiths College

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Context

Inmates is a scheme devised to recruit, train and develop students to become Official Prison Visitors. The project, run in partnership with the Home Office, NAPV (National Association of Prison Visitors) and UNLOCK (The National Association of Ex-Offenders), is the first of its kind in the country. Inmates is the next stage in a brief, but fruitful, history of volunteering at Goldsmiths College Students' Union, where all the volunteering projects link to the college's widening participation strategy.

With the prison population growing at an alarming rate (currently 73,500 serving prisoners), the need for prison visitors who have a direct association with the prisoner they are visiting has never been stronger. It is believed there is a link between regular visits to a prisoner and a reduction in offending behaviour on release. The Prison Service recognises the need to attract a younger, more ethnically diverse range of visitors – a need that the Inmates project and Goldsmiths students have met.

The scheme's success lies in its effective use of partnerships, rigorous planning and administration and the way it has been promoted to the students and staff at Goldsmiths. This has been particularly visible in the partnership forged with UNLOCK who delivered most of the training for the project – a project which, given its nature, clearly came with risks that needed to be mitigated or eliminated.

Programme detail

Bobby Cummines, Chief Executive of UNLOCK, in conjunction with the management team at GCSU, developed and delivered an intensive four-stage training programme that presented students with 'worst case scenarios', preparing potential visitors for the challenging surroundings that their volunteering work would involve. The choice of Bobby Cummines, himself an ex-offender who served 20 years in Britain's maximum security prisons, represents a huge leap of faith and true innovation. The training allowed a real glimpse of what incarceration feels like and how to avoid the inevitable pitfalls that prisoners may attempt to put in their way. The UNLOCK training was then supplemented by training and feedback from chaplains and prison officers from each of the prisons, who provided training relevant for their particular prison (as regimes vary significantly from prison to prison).

The four-stage process, devised to fully inform and train students to be safe and effective in their role as prison visitors, is as follows.

Introduction: This stage introduces the students to the world of crime and the culture of offending, including talks from other ex-offenders as well as the use of props, such as replica weapons. These props and guest speakers are used to capture the imagination of the students and present them with real life success stories of prisoners 'going straight'.

Profiling: This stage of the process is necessary to assess the intentions and motivations of the volunteer in working on the scheme. If, for instance, a student has a background in offending or has a relative who is a serving prisoner this could stall the security clearance process or prevent the volunteer from visiting a prisoner. These students, and others who are interested in the 'glamorisation' of crime, are encouraged to participate in other GCSU volunteering schemes, and are prohibited from taking part in the Inmates scheme.

Prison visit: A group introductory visit at the third stage is invaluable, enabling the visitors to see a prison environment at first hand. The visits are conducted, where possible, at the eventual destination prison of the visitor. It gives students the opportunity to experience the 'slamming door' effect and to take their concerns and questions back to UNLOCK for the fourth and final stage of the process. It is at this stage that students meet the wardens and the prison chaplain, who field questions, speak about their specific prison regime and subsequently provide counselling support after visits if required. (The college counselling service and a peer support group was also set up for visitors to share and discuss their experiences in a confidential setting.)

Workshop and role plays: This final stage was devised to put the student as far as possible in a real visiting scenario whereby one of the trainers (all ex-offenders) carried out 'worst case scenario' role plays, such as a prisoner trying to pass drugs to the visitor or attempting to gain the visitor's personal details.

This stage is particularly useful, as it ties together the previous three sessions into a tangible scenario and further highlights the pitfalls and the dangers; moreover, it trains the students how best to deal with the situations as they arise and enables them to pre-empt such dangers. One student described her experience as:

> 'Invaluable - even if I never visit a prison, I feel that I am better prepared for life.'

Audio-visual material is used throughout the training programme, including documentary footage about ex-offenders who have used education to 'go straight'. Although this scheme does not have the promotion of education in its remit, it is recognised that the prisoner and the volunteer may at some point discuss the positive effects of education, particularly in relation to offending behaviour.

The training is also filmed for students to refer back to and so that the footage can be used on a CD ROM for the future national roll-out of the scheme.

Hints and tips

- Forge strong partnerships with 'experts' in the field, acting on their advice.
- Remain flexible to meet students' needs (e.g. refresher sessions, as well as sessions at the weekend and during the week).

- Ensure extensive risk-assessments are carried out to inform the content and quality of the training material delivered.
- Use different media, props and speakers to stimulate the interest of participants.
- Be flexible to meet the needs of the beneficiaries (the training was tailored for each prison), but be firm when you may identify dangers (students on the scheme cannot visit category A prisoners or carry keys).

Case study VN2 (2003)
Mentoring at Campion Catholic High School for Boys

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Context

The aim of the project was to provide mentor support within the school in order to increase the number of students gaining GCSEs at Grades A-C and to raise aspirations and self-esteem for each pupil mentored.

Objectives:
- Specific: to match 20 mentors to 40 pupils in order to raise attainment and encourage achievement at school and beyond
- Measurable: by eventual GCSE results
- Achievable: through careful matching of mentor to pupil, support from HEACF Co-ordinator and the Deputy Head of the school
- Resourced: the expenditure covered student travel and lunch expenses (£15.00 per mentor per week); refreshments for an induction for the parents of pupils on this scheme, and a photocopying allowance
- Timed: the project was planned to end one month prior to the pupils' GCSE exams for impact to be most effective.

Programme detail

Twenty mentors were invited to Campion in December 2002 to meet potential mentees and to view the school's facilities. For most undergraduates, it was their first time in a staff room and in school as a non-pupil. Evaluations of the day outlined how important this was for those students who were considering teaching as a profession. The mentors were given academic profiles of the mentees so that they would have an understanding of the requirements of each pupil.

Pupils and parents were invited to the university in December and Professor Bill Chambers (the Dean of Liverpool Hope for Community and Widening Participation) gave a talk to the parents about university and the typical student. The pupils and mentors worked in teams in a business/marketing game. From January, the mentors met with each mentee for one hour on a weekly basis. The sessions were about finding ways of improving academic achievement, motivation, looking at routes into further and higher education, and employment opportunities. Student mentors were consulted before and after every session, updating and debriefing where necessary. This ensured that the scheme ran very smoothly and that staff and students were always informed of meeting rooms and pupil attendance in advance.

The school has been in challenging circumstances, with low GCSE achievement compared to the national average. The pupils had very little history of further or higher education in their families and the unemployment rate of the area is far above the national average.

Campion GCSE results:
1997: 3% at A-C
1998: 3% at A-C
1999: 11% at A-C
2000: 8% at A-C
2001: 12% at A-C
2002: 15.2% at A-C
2003: 23.9% at A-C

The school pupils visited the university in February to shadow their mentor, visiting the library, the gymnasium, the Career Development Centre, the Students' Union, accommodation and the finance team.

The uniqueness of the project:
- It allowed undergraduates an applied mentoring experience within a secondary school.
- It gave undergraduates access to school staff and experience of the staff room.
- It gave pupils access to undergraduates to gain real insight into higher education and the opportunity to ask questions not tackled in the classroom.
- The training given was written and delivered by the HEACF co-ordinator and unique to Liverpool Hope.
- Mentors were given the opportunity to provide peer training sessions on related skills and knowledge.
- The scheme was delivered across the school and the university.
- The mentors offered their own study skills tips in a dedicated session prior to the GCSE examinations.
- The parents of the pupils involved were invited to:
  – induction: Professor Bill Chambers gave an inspirational talk that broke down barriers to HE. Parents had the opportunity to see their children interact in a business game with the undergraduates
  – meet with the mentors who were able to offer advice and provide mentoring tips for them to employ at home
  – the shadow day, giving them an opportunity to visit the university, talk to careers, accommodation and finance staff about real issues and costs.

Results

- The target GCSE result was 20% for 2003. The actual result was 23.9%.
- The commitment of the mentors and the pupils.
- The strong partnership developed between the school and the university as a result of this project.
- The recognition of the HEACF as a source of community support, both from the community and within the university.
- Student teaching experience.
- CV enhancement.
- Improved communication.
- Time management.
- People management skills.

Mentor training

The students undertake mentor and child protection training. This includes a range of activities that challenge them in areas of prejudice, empathy and issues of mentoring. The students work through the 'Mentor's Toolkit' consisting of building relationships, listening and questioning skills, setting targets and giving feedback. Supporting knowledge includes discussions around why people are mentored, developing empathy, understanding prejudice and exploring barriers to learning. The mentors look at case studies and role play scenarios. This training equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful mentoring relationships with pupils.

Hints and tips

- For a mentoring scheme: the more you know about the school, the more effectively you can match mentors to pupils.
- Campion is an all boys' school, but it is important to have a balance of male and female mentors.
- Involve the parents/guardians of the pupils: it offers a different insight into the potential of their child.
- Introduce as much fun as possible into the scheme. The introductory session involved a marketing game whereby each team had to design a new product. For each mentoring session, the school treated the mentors and pupils to a range of refreshments.
- Offer essential and innovative training: something that the mentors can easily transfer into other roles, and that gives them a sense of fulfilment.

Case study VN3 (2003)
The Befriending Project
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Context

The Befriending Project was established to meet local community needs. Approximately 80 unaccompanied asylum seeking minors (UASM) are housed in Hull; most are supported, at arm's reach, by Kent local authority. These young people are at serious risk of social isolation, particularly those supported by Kent. The project also aims to reach young families – for example single mothers who are finding it difficult to raise children and cope in another culture.

Trained volunteers are matched one to one with an asylum seeker and meet with that person as often as they both feel necessary. The meetings may be used for the volunteer to help the participant complete forms in English, find local places, get in contact with local services or, alternatively, as a purely social meeting. The integration of asylum seekers into the local communities of Hull has been extremely problematic, which can be accredited to the high levels of local need and the low numbers of ethnic minority groups in the area.

Programme detail

Asylum seekers as a group are arguably one of the most deprived and isolated groups in society today. There is a severe reluctance within Hull to encourage these individuals into the community. The project has therefore been established in a difficult working environment. The majority of the volunteers on this project are from overseas or other areas of the UK. Students local to the Hull area are particularly difficult to recruit, although their participation is actively encouraged in an attempt to help reduce stereotyping.

Support, safety procedures and training for volunteers
At the outset, the befriending project was the only project set up in HUSSO[9] with compulsory training. This training covered basic asylum law and processes, health and safety, befriending, emergency procedures, child protection, confidentiality and mental health. The support included a 24 hour contact number and regular support meetings.

Working in partnership
There were initial teething problems with the referral of asylum seekers to the project. These were ironed out after a few meetings and also after the first volunteer had been matched. Once Social Services became aware of what the project was

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[9] Hull University Student Service Organisation Community Action

and saw it working they felt more able to refer people. There were two exclusion criteria which were agreed upon by all parties involved:

- no severe mental health issues
- no-one who was or had been a danger or threat to others.

Sustainability

As a part of this project and the effective partnership working, a steering group has been set up within the city comprising voluntary and statutory bodies to develop a city-wide befriending project for asylum seekers. The current University of Hull project is seen as a pilot for a scheme ('The Welcome Project'), for which the steering group is currently seeking external funding. As a result of this project there will hopefully be a well established befriending service to which university volunteer students and staff will be referred in future years. It also means that volunteers will be well supported in the longer term, as the project support currently relies heavily on one person with knowledge of asylum processes.

Hints and tips

- Training needs thorough planning to include anti-discriminatory practice, asylum issues, and mental health difficulties alongside mentoring/befriending issues.
- Ensure suitable volunteer support is in place – preferably someone with knowledge of asylum processes.
- Bear in mind the transient nature of the asylum seeker population as well as the additional health needs of the individuals – mental and physical. The transient nature also means support systems need to be in place for volunteers in the event that the person they are befriending is deported, detained or dispersed. Deportation can occur with little or no notice, and may be during the early hours of the morning. Communication with a volunteer befriender will be instantly cut if the person goes underground or into a detention centre and this lack of 'ending' needs to be extremely well managed.
- Produce wallet sized cards with emergency contact numbers that might be useful in relation to the asylum seeker but also to the volunteer (e.g. NASS[10] and the university counselling service).
- Make sure you have clarified, preferably in writing with the referring organisation, what information will and will not be passed back. For befriending to work there needs to be a strong element of trust. Asylum-seeking communities are often close knit within their nationality groups; one situation where the asylum seeker feels the trust is broken will make the project immensely difficult – if not impossible – to continue running with that community. It was agreed that the only information that would be passed on was in relation to the protection of children or if volunteers felt someone was in or potentially in severe danger.
- Plan the project alongside the voluntary and statutory groups working in the area, which will aid the sustainability of the project.
- Consider what will happen during long summer months to those being befriended by non-local students.
- Be aware that people from the same country may come from different sides of a war – don't assume an international student from the same country would be a suitable befriender, solely based on nationality.

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[10] The National Asylum Support Service

- This is a very vulnerable client group and therefore the checks on students should be rigorous, with interviews, enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and references taken at the minimum.

Case study VN4 (2004)
Volunteer Recruitment Fair
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Context

Volunteering is one of many ways the university connects with its local community. Through voluntary efforts, students and staff contribute to the social economy of the city and these efforts help to strengthen local organisations, enhance communities and promote the well-being of individuals. However, many voluntary and non-government organisations, particularly groups addressing barriers and issues faced by disenfranchised and marginalised groups, have been under-represented in the links developed. Partly to improve this situation, a Volunteer Recruitment Fair was held in March 2004.

A smaller event for university staff only was held in March 2003. Following monitoring and evaluation of feedback, it was decided to open this event to the public in 2004. This event was designed not only to help promote and strengthen links between the university and the local community but also to inspire people to get involved with community groups and organisations. Run in partnership with the local volunteering bureau, 55 groups set up stalls in the Great Hall, providing information about their work and services. Stalls selected for the event were weighted towards those from under-represented, marginalised groups and geographical areas.

Programme detail

Increasingly, resources are scarce and public sector institutions are encouraged to work in collaboration, to share resources and improve management of resources. The Volunteer Recruitment Fair is an excellent example of doing this through collaboration and partnership.

Students and staff were encouraged to attend, and opening the event to members of the public provided a greater pool of potential volunteers from which groups could recruit.

Comments on the event include:

'I felt the event was very successful and shows there is a need for people to come together to be able to offer their services as volunteers.'
'100% for effort, please repeat as soon as possible.'
'Was interesting and informative.'
'The quality of volunteers recruited was excellent.'

The number of people attending the day-long event reached 600. In August 2004 an evaluation mailing took place, and to date 32 organisations have responded. Of these, 18 organisations recruited a total of 36 new volunteers. Volunteers were a mixture of students, staff and members of the public. Many stallholders commented on the excellent quality of skills from volunteers recruited through the event; stallholders estimated that the volunteering hours arising from the event exceed 1,000. Based on HEACF's £2,000 figure per volunteering opportunity created, this project was highly cost effective.

Hints and tips

- To use resources effectively, work in partnership with external agencies. Often they have a greater understanding of local needs and can assist in identifying and reaching target groups and services largely absent from mainstream work.
- Consult widely with external partners to ensure that all aspects of best practice are covered as much as resources will allow.
- Form an advisory group of internal and external stakeholders.
- Use the advisory group to explore opportunities for further collaboration.
- Ensure there is the budget and time for an evaluation and monitoring mailing six months after the event.

Case study VN5 (2004)
KAIROS: Working with Disenfranchised Groups
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Context

KAIROS is a project within the community, set up to support vulnerable women who have become involved in prostitution and help them to recognise and develop their own potential. It is a project about women empowering and supporting other women.

HORIZON Volunteering, based at Coventry University, developed a partnership with KAIROS and was able to support it in several ways, including using HEACF funds to buy three laptop computers and providing volunteers with key skills to support the group.

Programme detail

KAIROS is a relatively new and under-resourced project, which sits in one of the most deprived areas of the city – Hillfields. It is also the area where the university campus is growing – through both its buildings and student accommodation – and so has a major impact.

HORIZON Volunteering and KAIROS identified several project ideas:
- engaging the women in educational activity to reduce their social marginalisation
- arranging drop-ins and other activities to help the women develop confidence and raise their self esteem
- providing financial resource to support KAIROS
- targeting university staff and students who have the necessary skills and expertise to support KAIROS – and encouraging them to volunteer
- promoting the project across the campus to encourage more people to volunteer with KAIROS.

Recruiting university staff to volunteer with KAIROS has been very beneficial because they have so much to offer. They are utilising the skills they already have, such as counselling, advice work, and managing committees. HORIZON Volunteering could not offer the required level of training to develop these skills and KAIROS requires all volunteers to take part in its own specific training programmes before they are allowed to volunteer.

When embarking on a project with a specialised or sensitive group of beneficiaries, it is important to make sure that the partner organisation can offer its own training, as university volunteer training is unlikely to be enough. It is vital not to put any volunteer in an activity where they are out of their depth.

The staff volunteers at KAIROS have encountered a number of challenges. The experiences of the street workers can be a world away from those of the volunteers and the people that they are used to working with in the university.

The service users often have drug and alcohol problems, do not have relationships with family and friends, and are constantly placing themselves in vulnerable if not downright dangerous situations. Many of the street workers are mothers. The majority do not have their children living with them. Some children have been taken into local authority care or have been adopted; others live with extended family members.

The agencies that the volunteers are used to turning to for support and help for their clients – for example the police, social services and housing and benefits agencies – often have a very negative attitude towards engaging with this particular client group. As a volunteer this gives an insight into the experiences of street workers and other disenfranchised groups.

Initially it is difficult to see what a volunteer can do that will help to make a difference to these women's lives.
The support of HORIZON has meant that volunteers, both staff and students, can go into the project confident that if they have any worries or doubts there is someone to discuss them with; or they can get advice and support from the HORIZON team. There is also the confidence that as this project has been promoted by HORIZON, it is safe, recognised as a professional group and well supported.

Being able to apply for funding for the project through HORIZON has meant volunteers feel they are really contributing something material. The HEACF award meant a lot to both the volunteers and the women they work with. It was seen as a vindication of what is happening at KAIROS: recognition of its value and therefore the importance of everyone involved.

This is important when working with disenfranchised groups, as it is easy for the volunteers to feel marginalised as well.

Working with KAIROS isn't like that! Within weeks of buying the laptops the women were engaging in poetry and writing their life stories. They have now composed a newsletter, and some are registering on courses. This is an amazing development and shows that with the support and encouragement of the volunteers, the self-esteem and expectations of the women have grown enormously and very quickly.

HORIZON Volunteering also produced a DVD, which showcases several projects including KAIROS. Although the women felt unable to be filmed, one read out a poem, and the DVD, which is now being used for promotional purposes, has had a profound effect on the people who watch it.

This project is significant for a number of reasons:
- a small amount of funding has made a major impact on these women and their self-esteem
- students and staff have volunteered, utilising their existing skills to support others and developing new ones

- the university, which impacts heavily on the area that KAIROS sits in, has given so much back to it with just a few people and a little money, and created a positive image of the institution
- the women have felt able to let their situations be part of a DVD – which is available for anyone to watch
- the laptops will continue to support the development of the women, and indirectly their families
- the project supports a disenfranchised group
- everyone benefits.

Hints and tips

- Do not be afraid to work with an area that is sensitive and unexplored.
- Tap into people's strengths – volunteers get so much more out of it if they are able to use their existing skills to help others. Their own skills develop and their confidence grows.
- Make sure you have all the necessary health, safety and training issues covered.
- Develop partnerships with the community and work with them continuously. It is usually through meeting and bouncing ideas off each other that ideas come up – ideas which seem impossible and yet through careful planning and organisation do work.

Case study VN6 (2004)
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Context

One of the Government's major policy objectives is to widen participation in higher education. A key part of achieving the target is to raise the aspirations, attainment, motivation and progression of those who are currently under-represented in HE.

Often these pupils will have had no previous experience of higher education in their family. The emphasis of the HEACF three-day Easter and summer schools was to change pupils' perceptions of HE.

In recent years the Institute has provided a number of activities targeted at under-represented pupils within the local area. The HEACF allowed the Institute to extend the range of projects, and to support schools that did not qualify for other sources of funding.

Programme detail

The Easter and summer schools set out to enrich the current Year 10 curriculum and covered various aspects of art and design, including film and video, design skills, and technology. Pupils worked in teams, supported by student volunteers, to give them a positive experience of the higher education environment.

Each school had a tutor who was supported by HEACF, and seven to ten student volunteers who assisted the tutor and provided guidance to the pupils. In all, about 30 student volunteers have taken part.

In addition a course workbook was written to give structure to the school. It describes the course and how it is organised. There is a timetable of events and projects so pupils can see exactly what they are doing on each day.

At the end of the schools the pupils were given feedback questionnaires. The pupils, their parents, and the teachers of the schools who took part, all commented on how useful the experience had been.

Student volunteers went through a selection process and were trained prior to the school. In certain cases the students had to be recruited from selected undergraduate programmes to meet the skills needed.

In addition, volunteers were trained in child protection, conflict resolution and tutor skills. The student volunteers also attended a session on how the students' disclosures might affect them.

Staff and students also gave feedback that the experience was extremely beneficial for all involved:

'A very creative programme, which is very good experience for both the pupils and student volunteers. Many exciting activities for children to engage in and experience some part of university life.'

'I am so glad I took this opportunity, as it has taught me things about myself, as well as teaching young people about art. It's good experience for all involved. Jolly good fun!' (Student volunteers, Year 10 HEACF Summer School.)

Hints and tips

Planning
- Good planning and good communication with all parts of the institution and schools are vital.
- All sessions should have clear aims for the pupils, using language that the pupils, and in some cases, their parents, can relate to.
- It is important to set an academic environment, which the pupils will find conducive to learning, while still challenging them over the period of study.
- Pupils can become easily bored if they are not kept on short, manageable, but challenging timed tasks. (In one case, the film school pupils were split into small groups who were competing against each other. This motivated students to stay on task.)
- Allocate student volunteers small groups to work with, so that they can give them the necessary attention, encouragement and praise to pupils.
- Run the tasks and aims past the year group tutor before the event to check the work is pitched at the correct level.

Student volunteers
- Have question and answer sessions with the student volunteers. These sessions highlight unusual questions and answers, which you may not have thought of.
- Make sure student volunteer training covers how they may be affected by possible disclosures by pupils. In some cases the host institution may need to have counselling available.
- When arguments arise, encourage volunteers to work through the disagreement with the pupils to help them empathise with other people's points of view.
- Find out how your institution carries out criminal record checks for volunteers, and start in plenty of time.

The HE experience
- Give pupils a chance to have an experience of higher education. Give them responsibilities and treat them as adults.
- Invite parents to attend awards ceremonies and other events: they may make the decision as to whether their child progresses into HE.
- HE language and jargon needs to be broken down into understandable chunks, with a simple glossary of terms included in the course workbook. Appropriate

language should also be used at the parents' ceremony to make them feel comfortable and relaxed.

- Misguided perceptions of higher education and university life can be dispelled by using appropriate student volunteers and staff from a variety of backgrounds.
- *'I thought all university lecturers wore cord jackets and leather patches. I was surprised to see such a young teacher!'* (Pupil on one of the summer schools)
- Industrial visits help confirm to pupils that it is financially beneficial to study in higher education.