Voluntary Action

One size does not fit all: Four models of volunteer management

Volume 1 Number 2 Spring 1999
The Journal of the Institute for Volunteering Research

Internet Review

plus: Heritage, Voluntary Boards, Members, Third Way

Voluntary Action:
The Journal of the Institute for Volunteering Research

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The Institute for Volunteering Research is an initiative of the National Centre for Volunteering in association with the University of East London.

It is supported by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales.

Voluntary Action:
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Published by the Institute for Volunteering Research,
Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL.

Registered Charity Number 265866

ISSN 1465-4067

Typeset by Voluntary Sector Publishing, London N8
Printed by Spider Web. London N7

An initiative of

In association with

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Editorial

This second issue of *Voluntary Action* kicks off with a timely discussion about management. The prevailing orthodoxy in recent years has been to treat volunteers as unpaid staff members, subject to the same management systems and controls as their paid counterparts. This push for parity has come both from organisations (anxious to be seen to take volunteering seriously) and from volunteers themselves (who have been demanding better treatment), and the result at one level has been positive, with more attention being paid to the support, training and development of volunteers.

However, less positive effects have also become apparent as the same push for parity has led to an undermining of the distinctions between volunteers and paid staff. Not only does such an approach ignore the different motivation and needs of volunteers, but as recent Industrial Tribunal rulings have made clear, it raises the concern that for the purposes of employment law volunteers and paid staff will be treated as one and the same. So the search is on for an approach to management that recognises the need to support and develop (and control) volunteers, but without simply embracing the workplace model.

Colin Rochester takes this debate an important step further by arguing that one of the failings of existing management theory is that it does not recognise the diversity of settings in which volunteering takes place. In some agencies, where volunteers play a key role alongside paid staff in the delivery of services, formal systems might be appropriate for involving and managing the volunteering resource. But in other agencies, especially those entirely composed of volunteers, such formal management systems may make little sense. The problem with most management literature is that it tends to be written from the viewpoint of the larger, more formal agency, and as such often has little to say to most smaller agencies. Rochester identifies four different models of volunteer involvement in small voluntary agencies and begins to tease out the lessons for management.

Similar issues are picked up in an article by Helen Cameron, who also addresses the question of blurring of boundaries - not this time between volunteers and paid staff, but between volunteers and members. Drawing on her own doctoral research into religious congregations and on the theoretical work of David Billis, she examines the complex management challenges facing organisations operating in the ambiguous zone between membership association and more formal voluntary agency.

Kirsten Holmes also looks at issues of professionalisation as part of her review of the changes in volunteer involvement in the heritage sector over the past fifteen years. Her analysis suggests that museums and heritage bodies have become increasingly formalised in their involvement of volunteers, although basic 'good volunteering practice', such as the payment of expenses, is as yet far from universally applied.

With his examination of the workings of voluntary boards in four public and voluntary organisations, Chris Cornforth reminds us that volunteers are not confined to service delivery roles. The article focuses on the key challenges facing boards - including the recruitment and development of board members and the management of relations between boards and staff - and sets out recommendations for improving their value.

In the final article, Steven Howlett and Michael Locke explore the concept of the Third Way as it is currently expounded by the British prime minister Tony Blair, and ask what relevance, if any, it has for volunteering and voluntary action. Critics have dismissed the concept as simply another search for the middle ground and as 'so much waffle', while advocates have seen it as a courageous attempt to break free from the sterile confines of traditional left-right thinking. Volunteering, through its fostering of civil society, has been identified as having a key role to play in the Third Way, and the article examines the extent to which the rhetoric of support is borne out by current government policy.

As in Issue 1, the journal concludes with an update section where we report on recently completed and newly undertaken research on volunteering, both in the UK and internationally. We also introduce a new Research Supplement section, which we hope to make a regular feature of the journal. The aim of this section will be to provide articles on topics of interest to both academics and practitioners. We start off with a review by Mark Gannon of Web sites and associated electronic resources on volunteering. Future issues will include a review of university-based courses on volunteer management and of key sources of literature on selected volunteering subjects.

Justin Davis Smith
Editor

This article is an attempt to address a perceived gap in the large and growing body of literature about volunteering. It argues that this literature has tended to neglect the variety of organisational contexts in which volunteering take place, and draws on two pieces of ongoing research to identify four distinct models of how volunteers are involved in small voluntary organisations. It concludes by discussing some of the implications of these findings for the practice and theory of volunteering.

One size does not fit all: four models of involving volunteers in small voluntary organisations

Colin Rochester, Centre for Voluntary Organisation, London School of Economics

Introduction

The establishment of an Institute for Volunteering Research and the launch of its new journal are important milestones in the development of a significant body of UK literature about the theory and practice of volunteering. The three decades since the publication of the Aves Report (1969) and the establishment of The Volunteer Centre UK (now the National Centre for Volunteering) have seen a steady stream of publications for practitioners and a rather more modest trickle of academic work, which provide a solid basis on which the new enterprise will be able to build. Researchers and practitioners can also draw on the extensive and substantial material produced over much the same period in North America.

There is, however, a major gap in this body of literature, academic and practitioner, British and North American: it does not take sufficient account of the variety of organisational arrangements within which voluntary action takes place. Volunteering takes place among family and friends at one end of the spectrum, in large bureaucratic organisations at the other, and in a variety of organisational contexts between these two extremes. The present article argues that the motivation of volunteers and the ways in which their work can be organised effectively will vary according to the location along that spectrum of the organisational context in which the work is undertaken. It offers a contribution towards filling the gap in

the existing literature by presenting four models of how volunteers are involved in voluntary organisations, drawn from two ongoing studies of organisations with few staff (no more than four full-time equivalent) or none.

Existing literature

The literature concentrates very heavily on four principal themes: measuring the overall extent of voluntary action; defining volunteering; understanding the motivations of those who volunteer; and looking at the organisation and management of the work of volunteers.

We have a wealth of information from major surveys conducted by the National Centre for Volunteering (Field and Hedges, 1984; Lynn and Davis Smith, 1991; Davis Smith, 1998) about the numbers of people involved in volunteering, their demographic profile, the scale of their involvement, the kinds of activities in which they are engaged, and the fields in which they are active. But beyond making a basic distinction between formal volunteering undertaken in an organisational context and informal or personal acts of service to others, these surveys do not provide us with a map of the various contexts within which volunteering takes place.

These and other surveys undertaken in the UK between 1976 and 1990 provided very varying estimates of the extent of voluntary action. Although some of these variations can be attributed to differences in methodology, they also reflect the lack of a common definition of what was being measured (Davis Smith, 1992). Nor are problems of definition solely a British phenomenon: Cnaan and his colleagues (1996) have noted the absence of any attempt to define volunteering in much of the extensive US literature. Cross-national comparisons have in particular proved extremely difficult. A recent discussion of the problems involved in 'comparative studies which aim to measure the extent of volunteering and explain the differences in levels of volunteering in different countries' (Lyons et al, 1998) suggests that the difficulties may be explained by a fundamental difference of perspective about the phenomenon that is being studied. Those working within the first of these perspectives - 'the non profit sector paradigm' - see volunteering as an activity based on altruism or philanthropy that is found in organisations which deliver public services. The alternative 'civil society paradigm' views voluntary action as collaborative activity 'to meet shared needs and address common concerns' and focuses on exclusively voluntary, member-benefit associations.

The largest body of writing about volunteering - especially in the US - deals with the key questions of motivation: 'why they come' and 'why they stay'. By 1990 Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen had already identified more than two hundred articles on this theme and had distilled from them twenty-eight different reasons for volunteering. There is abundant evidence that the motivations of volunteers can be a complex mixture of the instrumental and the expressive and that they can change

over time. We know something about the circumstances under which people become volunteers: they will be more likely to volunteer if they are asked to take on a specific task and if their fellow employees, family or friends are already involved in voluntary action (Thomas and Finch, 1990). We can trace a link between life circumstances and motivation: younger volunteers may be interested in the value of the experience to their career, while older people may take up volunteering in response to a change in their lives, such as the loss of a partner (Moore, 1996; Tihanyi, 1991). On the other hand, we know little about the importance of the organisational context in determining why people volunteer (Tihanyi, 1991; Rochester, 1992).

The fourth major theme in the literature of volunteering is a concern with the organisation and management of volunteers. This appears to be driven by two main concerns. On the one hand, volunteers are seen as valuable human resources which need to be deployed efficiently and effectively in order that the goals of the organisation can be achieved. On the other, they are seen as people with their own needs and aspirations which the organisation has to meet if it is to retain their services (Hedley, 1992). In response, many voluntary agencies have adopted a bureaucratic approach to the organisation of volunteering, and a model of good practice has been developed which informs much of the prescriptive literature. This involves treating the volunteer as an unpaid employee whose role is specified in a job description and whose rights and responsibilities are defined in a written agreement between him/her and the organisation. Although the value of this 'workplace model' has been challenged (Davis Smith, 1995), it continues to influence and inform the practice of many agencies.

The organisational context

With the important exception of Lyons and his colleagues' identification of the undisclosed alternative paradigms that underpin attempts to measure the extent of volunteering, the principal themes in the literature pay scant attention to the variety of organisational contexts in which voluntary action takes place. These range across the whole spectrum of human activity from the private, informal world of family and friends to the highly formalised bureaucracy with its detailed 'rule book' and its sharply differentiated statuses and functions. A good deal of volunteering takes place at the bureaucratic end of this spectrum: some of it in statutory agencies such as hospitals and social services departments, and some in the large, formally organised voluntary agencies which share many of the characteristics of the governmental bureaucracy. However, much voluntary action also takes place nearer the other end of the range, where groups of people with common interests or problems band together in self-help groups or grassroots associations to produce a collective response to perceived needs. And between these two poles, there are a variety of ways in which social needs and community

interests are addressed by different combinations of volunteers and paid staff.

There appear to be two implicit assumptions in the literature which could explain why the diversity of ways in which volunteering is experienced receives little attention. The first of these is the view that 'volunteering is volunteering is volunteering', that what is being measured or described is essentially the same activity, regardless of context. The second, which is perhaps more potent, is the tendency to work within the 'non-profit paradigm' (Lyons et al, 1998). This is unsurprising, given the thrust of UK social policy towards a greater role for voluntary agencies in providing social welfare, and the resulting adoption of the managerial language of effectiveness and efficiency by much of the sector (Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector, 1996). In such a climate, volunteers are seen primarily as people who make an unpaid contribution to the work of a voluntary agency under the supervision and control of paid staff, and the workplace model is the accepted means of organising their activities. As a result, we have a body of literature that does not disaggregate voluntary action at various points on the organisational spectrum described above, and which tends to assume that the motivation of volunteers on the one hand and the ways their work can be organised on the other do not vary according to the organisational context of their work.

Four models

Two ongoing pieces of empirical research undertaken by the LSE's Centre for Voluntary Organisation have made possible the identification of four models of volunteer involvement, suggesting that the differences between organisational contexts have important implications for how voluntary action can be encouraged, supported and organised. The first of these pieces of research is a project funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation of England and Wales aimed at building the capacity of small voluntary agencies. The first stage of this project has involved identifying the key organisational challenges facing small voluntary agencies (defined as those with no more than four full-time staff or their equivalent) through interviews and focus groups with trustees and staff of agencies in two localities and with those who fund their work or support them in other ways (Rochester, 1998a). The second piece of research has focused on community sector organisations that are entirely dependent on voluntary effort. Funded by the Charities Aid Foundation, it aims to develop a framework for identifying the nature and value of the contribution made by organisations of this kind to our collective life and living conditions (Rochester, 1998b).

The second of these two studies is clearly framed by the 'civil society paradigm'. The idea of the 'community sector' has provided a rallying call and a badge of identity for organisations which have felt neglected or excluded by the prevailing view that the voluntary sector is largely

composed of service-providing agencies that are professionally staffed and formally structured. The research has mapped a complex patchwork of benefits accruing from the activities of community sector organisations both to their members and to the wider community. It distinguishes between 'passive' and 'active' members and the inner core of 'leaders', and finds, not surprisingly, that the benefits of participation in terms of personal development and social education increase in proportion to the member's level of activity: 'The more you put in, the more you get out.' Activists tended to become involved initially in specific activities - such as starting a parent and toddler group for the benefit of their own and other people's children - and found increasing satisfaction in taking on greater responsibilities. They felt they were doing 'something useful', they reported that they had opportunities to do things - such as running a community centre - they would otherwise never have experienced, and they said that they were expressing a deeply held belief about the importance of community.

The focus of the small agencies study is on the hybrid bodies which are found on the cusp between the association that is entirely dependent on the voluntary efforts of its members and the fully-fledged non-profit agency where the great majority of the work is undertaken by paid staff. These organisations can be distinguished from voluntary associations because they employ staff to undertake some or all of their operational activities (Billis, 1993). But unlike larger agencies, their staff teams are not large enough to meet the full range of demands on the organisation and are too small to be organised in a straightforward formal hierarchy.

The research identified ten organisational challenges that posed distinctive dilemmas for small agencies, and looked at some of the ways in which the organisations had responded to them. One of these was the 'challenge of involving volunteers', which included issues about recruitment and retention; maximising involvement; providing support and supervision; and defining volunteer roles and setting boundaries to their commitment. These problems were common to the great majority of the agencies studied, but the responses to them varied according to the roles played by volunteers in the different organisations.

Responses to the challenge of involving volunteers - like the responses to the other organisational challenges identified in the study - followed one of two broad approaches. The first was to adopt some of the systems used in larger agencies, which involve reducing uncertainty by defining roles and responsibilities and clarifying expectations by developing written policies and procedures. The alternative approach was based on the desire to retain the informal characteristics of an organisation in which flexibility is prized and where relationships between individuals are seen as more important than defining their roles and the responsibilities of the positions they occupy (Rochester, 1998c).

An analysis of the different roles played by volunteers in the organisations covered by the two studies, and of the application of the above-mentioned strategies to the organisation of their work, led to the identification of four distinctive kinds of volunteer involvement in small voluntary organisations. These are:

1. *The service delivery model*, where the lion's share of the operational activities of the organisation are carried out by volunteers.

2. *The support role model*, where the role of the volunteer is to support and supplement the work of the paid staff.

3. *The member/activist model*, where all roles are played by volunteers.

4. *The co-worker model*, where the differences in role and distinctions of status between paid staff and volunteers are unclear.

The service delivery model
This model is characterised by unambiguous organisational arrangements and a clear distinction between the roles of volunteers and paid staff. Volunteers are recruited to carry out predetermined and specified tasks, such as providing support to the victims of crime or mediating in disputes between neighbours. The role of paid staff in bodies of this kind is essentially one of recruiting, training, deploying and supporting the work of these front-line workers.

Questions of volunteer motivation are also relatively straightforward. Although those coming forward will be in sympathy with the organisation's mission, it is likely that they will also be attracted by the nature of the activity involved. This may be for reasons of personal development or as a preparation for specific kinds of employment, notably in the provision of advice and counselling services.

There is little difficulty, moreover, in applying the template of the 'workplace model' to the organisation and management of the volunteers in an agency of this kind. The work to be undertaken and the skills and personal qualities required can be specified to a significant degree and form the basis of a selection process similar to that used for paid staff. Potential volunteers can understand the relevance and importance of a formal interview process and the need for character references. And expectations of the nature, range and scale of their contribution to the work of the agency are clear and explicit.

Many organisations of this kind invest quite heavily in an initial training process, which is made possible by the practice of recruiting volunteers in batches rather than singly. This initial training has a number of functions and benefits. As well as equipping the recruits with the skills and knowledge required for their role, the training period inducts them into the language and culture of the organisation and enables them to form appropriate relationships with its paid staff and other

volunteers. It also serves as a final selection process: those who complete the course have demonstrated not only their capability but also their commitment to the agency and its work.

Once they have been trained, the volunteers can look to the paid staff to organise the workload so that they have enough to do to keep them interested but not so much that it becomes a burden. They can expect regular support and supervision on a one-to-one basis and opportunities to exchange experiences with their fellow volunteers. And they may be able to undertake further training to equip them to take on more complex work that involves greater responsibility.

The role of the governing body also tends to be unambiguous: although it is common for the operational volunteers to be represented on the governing body, the distinction between the roles of management committee member and service-delivering volunteer is quite clear. In fact, although it is not uncommon for former service users to become volunteers, or for management committee members to assist with the recruitment and training of the volunteer service-deliverers, the service delivery model is characterised by the clarity and distinctiveness of the roles played by the major elements in the organisation: the users, the service delivery volunteers, the staff and the committee.

The support role model

While the service delivery model is based on an assumption that it is appropriate for the operational activities of the agency to be undertaken by volunteers, the support role model is found in organisations where this responsibility has been given to paid staff. In order to maximise the time that staff can spend on these activities, volunteers are recruited to play a variety of support roles. They may, for example, act as receptionists, secretaries, administrators or bookkeepers.

In theory, these volunteer 'jobs' may appear to share some of the characteristics of those found in the service-delivery model: the tasks the agency needs to be undertaken and the skills and qualities required to carry them out can be specified with some clarity and in some detail. In practice, however, the situation tends to be more complex. Small agencies lack the resources to conduct major recruitment exercises for two or three ancillary voluntary workers, while the supply of potential recruits with relevant skills and experience is in any case limited. Organisations are more likely to draw on personal contacts to recruit people who are willing to 'lend a hand' and appear to have the ability or potential to contribute in some way to the support needs of the agency.

In the support role model, therefore, at least some volunteers are involved in part because of a direct request for help from a friend, colleague or acquaintance. Others offer their services because they have had experience of the agency and its work, perhaps as a user or a relative of someone who had received services

from it. These points of contact provide opportunities for people with a range of motivations to become involved. These motivations may include a change in life circumstances, such as retirement from paid work or a reduction in the responsibility for child care. In some cases, volunteering of this kind may provide a bridge into paid work. Unlike the service delivery model, where the experience offers the chance to acquire, develop or demonstrate specific skills or competence, the benefits of involvement in a support role may be more general, in the form of improved self-confidence or the demonstration of an ability to work regularly and reliably.

The application of the 'workplace model' to the organisation and management of volunteers in support roles has a number of limitations. The exact scope and nature of the 'job' to be done by a volunteer of this kind is not completely predetermined, but a product of the fit between the tasks the agency needs doing and the ability of the volunteer to undertake them which is negotiated between the two parties. The agreement reached may then need to be renegotiated from time to time as the agency's needs change and the capacity of the volunteer develops. Training will tend to be ad hoc and may be based largely on the 'stand by Nelly' method. Arrangements for support, supervision and appraisal may range from the very informal to the quite tightly structured, depending to a large extent on the culture of the agency, the nature of the work to be done and the needs of the volunteer.

On the whole, the roles of the various elements in the agency - staff, volunteers, committee and users - are separate and distinct, as with the service delivery model. There is, however, one possible area of complexity or ambiguity. Among those who volunteer in support roles may be people who are already involved with the organisation as members of its governing body. Alternatively, volunteers may extend their commitment to the agency by joining the committee. In these circumstances they have to shift between very different roles: as committee members, they are the employers of the paid staff who manage their work as volunteers.

The member/activist model

The third model appears at first sight to be less complex than the others because it lacks one of the four organisational elements: the paid staff. It is the phenomenon defined by Billis (1993) as an association, a group of people who have come together to pursue a common goal, have drawn a boundary around themselves by distinguishing between members and non-members, and have adopted a set of rules by which their affairs are regulated. The goals are pursued and the operational activities are conducted by the members themselves, and not delegated to a separate group of staff, paid or unpaid.

Thus, all the organisational roles are undertaken by the members acting in a voluntary capacity. This is not to say, however, that the work is shared widely or equally: one can easily distinguish between, on the one hand, passive

members who support the aims of the organisation with their name and their subscription and on the other, those who play an active part in its work. And within the latter category, there is a further distinction to be made between the majority and the inner group of very active volunteers on whom the association is heavily dependent.

It is commonly suggested that membership of an association is based on an exchange relationship in which the member secures certain benefits in return for his or her contribution (Knoke and Prensky, 1984; Lansley, 1996). Certainly, any association that failed to deliver some benefits to its members would have difficulty in retaining their involvement, but the notion of exchange tends to suggest that organisations of this kind exist solely for the benefit of their members. Many associations, however, exist to secure public benefits as well as member benefits; indeed, balancing the two concerns is seen as a key challenge for those who lead them (Harris, 1998). Nor does the notion help us to understand the motivation of those who make up the inner core and other active members.

Part of the reason for their involvement is to secure direct benefits. Mothers help to start a parent toddler group because they want their own children to have the stimulus and the social contact with others. Many then find that their active involvement is bringing other advantages in terms of personal development, social education and enhanced feelings of self-esteem. This can lead to an upward spiral in which successful activity encourages increasing levels of involvement with greater and greater rewards. In addition to these instrumental and expressive personal motives, moreover, many activists are driven by a deeper set of values about the importance of active citizenship and the idea of community.

Involvement in these kinds of organisation can be seen as a journey with an unknown destination. Except in the very short term, the role to be played by any member activist cannot be defined in advance; it will be developed over time in the light of experience, personal growth and reflection. The organisation and management of the work is less about selection, formal training, putting clear boundaries around roles and responsibilities and providing supervision, and more about inviting people to find out what contribution they can make, offering opportunities for personal and social learning and providing mutual support.

Associations are also characterised by high levels of organisational ambiguity. There is no clear-cut division between those who 'own' the organisation, those who undertake its work and those who benefit from its activities - they may in fact be one and the same. As a result, there can be problems over reconciling the pursuit of long-term goals with meeting the immediate needs of individual members, setting priorities, controlling the work of member volunteers (Harris, 1998) and with over-commitment and 'burn-out'.

The co-worker model

The fourth model has something in common with the support role model in that the work of the organisation's staff needs to be supplemented by the efforts of volunteers if the total activities of the agency are to be covered. The difference, however, is that the division of labour is less straightforward and the distinctions of role and of status are blurred. Tasks and responsibilities are allocated through a process of discussion and negotiation which takes full account of the knowledge and skills of each individual in the team - paid staff and volunteers alike - and of the amounts of time they are able to commit to them.

'Co-worker' volunteers share some of the characteristics of member activists. They are not recruited in order to undertake a specific and predetermined set of tasks, or chosen on the basis that they possess the particular skills and qualities required for that role. They participate in the work of the organisation because they identify strongly with its aims and purposes and are prepared to contribute to the collective effort needed to achieve them. The extent to which they remain actively involved may well depend on the extent to which they receive personal and social benefits from the involvement, but much of the initial impetus to take part tends to flow from a commitment to the organisation's mission. Activism of this kind may be rooted either in personal experience of a social need or in deeply held social and political values.

It is not uncommon for the paid staff in organisations of this kind to share the motivation, commitment and values of their volunteer co-workers. In a situation where the agency does not have sufficient resources to pay all of its activists, they may be seen as the fortunate minority who are receiving a salary in return for the kind of activities they previously undertook in a voluntary capacity.

In theory, the work of the volunteer co-workers (and their paid colleagues) is organised and managed by a non-hierarchical team or collective. But while there are no visible 'managers' and no overt 'management', there are leaders within the team, usually - but not always - drawn from the paid staff. The style of leadership used has been described by Elsdon (1995; pp 144-5) as 'nurturing and enabling' rather than based on 'dominant authority', and 'exerted modestly by example rather than . . . aggressively by demands'. It is exercised at a considerable cost to the key member of staff who takes on the role. Unlike the senior staff member in the first two models, she or he may have to accept that her or his commitment to the organisation is relatively unbounded and that the distinction between their work and their personal life is blurred.

There are also major problems of ambiguity in the governance system of such an agency. If the distinction between the roles of paid staff and volunteers is unclear, so is that between both those groups and the members of the governing body, especially where the volunteer co-workers are also active members of the committee.

Summary: some key differences

These models illustrate the huge diversity in the ways in which volunteering is experienced and in which unpaid work may be organised. Some of the key differences appear to be:

Differences in how volunteers become involved

There are three main variations here. Volunteers may be recruited by an open process to carry out specific tasks and selected according to their ability to meet the demands of these roles (Model One). Or they may be recruited to take on some of the 'non-operational' work of the organisation through a process of networking, and given a role if they appear to have the potential to help with some aspects of the work to be done (Model Two). Or they may be encouraged to associate themselves with the aims and purposes of the organisation and given a series of opportunities to play a more active part in its work in a role that will be defined to a large extent by the volunteer herself or himself (Models Three and Four).

Differences in motivation for volunteering

Although the motivation to volunteer is a complex phenomenon, the emphasis on particular reasons to become a volunteer and to stay involved can be seen to vary. Some become involved because of the nature of the task to be performed and its potential relevance to paid employment (Model One). Others are motivated by the need to feel they are doing something useful, both in terms of the task itself and the purpose of the organisation (Model Two). Others become involved in order to develop or maintain a particular service or activity (Models Three and Four) and remain active as a result of the opportunities they find for personal growth and development (Model Three).

Differences in the organisation and management of the work

The work of the volunteers in Model One is organised and managed according to the 'workplace model'. The work to be done and the 'conditions of service' are the subject of an explicit agreement comparable to a contract of employment; formal training is provided; there is a clear set of arrangements for support and supervision; and there may even be opportunities for 'promotion'. By contrast, Model Three and Four organisations operate on very different principles and according to a completely different set of 'rules', where roles are negotiated and subject to change rather than fixed and specified in advance. Here, training is seen in terms of the personal development of the individual rather than equipping the work force to tackle certain tasks. Similarly, management concepts such as control and supervision are alien to these kinds of organisation, which operate on the basis of teamwork and personal leadership. Model Two agencies can be located between these two ends of the spectrum. The role played by volunteers is defined to the extent that important areas of work are reserved for the paid staff. Within that boundary too, decisions about the actual tasks to be carried out by an individual volunteer may be a matter of negotiation, but will

in the end be taken by paid staff. Training may address both the needs of the agency for specific skills and the aspirations of the individual volunteer for self-improvement. And crucially, the paid staff will take responsibility for monitoring and supervising the work of the volunteers.

Differences in the governance system
The final set of differences identified by the models concerns the relationship of the volunteers to the governing body of the organisation. (The members of the management committee are themselves volunteers, but it is beyond the scope of the present article to examine their role in detail.) Again, Model One can be placed at one end of a spectrum, where the differentiation of role between the volunteers and the management committee and the relationship between them is fairly unambiguous. At the other end of the spectrum we find Model Three, where the members of the governing body, the volunteers carrying out the work of the organisation and some at least of those using its services are one and the same. A similar degree of ambiguity is found in Model Four. Again, Model Two falls between these two extremes; to a considerable extent, roles are clear and distinct yet there are important areas of ambiguity.

Conclusion: implications for practice and theory

The four models described here are offered as a means of achieving a better understanding of the variety of organisational arrangements through which voluntary action takes place. Such an understanding is crucial to addressing two key issues in the practice of volunteering. The first of these is the objective adopted by successive governments, among others, of securing the involvement of a larger proportion of the population in volunteering, 'active citizenship' and community action. The recognition that there is no single approach to involving people in voluntary action is an essential precondition for adopting methods that are appropriate to the particular organisational context in which volunteering is to take place. And successful recruitment or involvement strategies will also take account of the different emphases in the motivation of people to get involved with specific kinds of organisation.

The second key issue for practice is how volunteering can be organised so as to maximise not only the contribution made by voluntary effort to the organisation and the achievement of its goals, but also the sense of personal satisfaction and the perceived benefits of the experience to the volunteer. One acknowledged way of tackling this challenge has been to adopt the workplace model and it is clear that such an approach is appropriate to some organisational contexts. On the other hand, it is clear from the models presented here that this is only part of the answer. In some situations, the limitations of the approach may need to be recognised and a modified version will be appropriate. In others, a completely different approach based on another set of rules will be required.

The importance for the practice of volunteering of understanding the variety of organisational arrangements for voluntary action is twofold: to help us increase the numbers involved in volunteering and make the experience more rewarding for all the parties concerned. What then are the implications for the academic study of voluntary action? The models presented here are put forward tentatively, and in any case are drawn from a limited section of the whole spectrum of organisational arrangements - confined firstly to the voluntary sector and secondly to small organisations with few or no paid staff. They are offered not as a final word on the subject but with a view to establishing the importance of studying the organisational context of volunteering. If, as I hope, this case has been made, there are three immediate implications. The first of these is for the design of future surveys of the extent of voluntary action: we need to know not only who is doing what but also under what circumstances. The second is for the study of the motivation to volunteer: here we need to know much more about the reasons why people become involved in different kinds of volunteering, and to what extent this is due to personal psychology on the one hand and social situation on the other. The third, and perhaps most demanding, is the need to develop our understanding of the organisational behaviour of volunteers and the people with whom they interact in different institutional arrangements. Then, and only then, will we begin to understand the complex phenomenon of voluntary action in all its rich diversity.

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This is a report of a survey of volunteering in UK museums and art galleries conducted in April 1998. It replicated a survey commissioned in 1984 by The Volunteer Centre UK (now the National Centre for Volunteering); the aim was to see how far the recommendations of the earlier survey have been followed and whether they are still relevant today. The survey was conducted as part of a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. This report is adapted from a session at the 1998 Museums Association Conference.

Changing times: volunteering in the heritage sector 1984-1998

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The survey

In 1984 Jenny Mattingly undertook a survey of voluntary activity in UK museums and art galleries, commissioned by The Volunteer Centre UK (now the National Centre for Volunteering) and the Museums and Galleries Commission, who wished to establish the nature and extent of voluntary involvement in museums and galleries (Mattingly, 1984). Although nearly fifteen years old, this is still the most comprehensive survey of voluntary activity in the UK heritage sector, and its findings are still quoted as indicators of volunteer involvement in museums.

Mattingly's survey showed the importance of volunteers to the sector: 91 per cent of her respondents involved volunteers, and an average of 9.2 volunteers worked in each museum. This finding is supported by the Museums Workforce Survey (Klemm, Scott and Wilson, 1993), which estimated that volunteers accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the work force in museums. Yet despite this extensive involvement, the Job Attitudes and Potential Stress in the Museum Sector pilot study showed that the management of volunteers was still inadequate:

Many museums rely on volunteers without knowing how to use them effectively, or the particular motivations of volunteers (Kahn and Garden, 1993).

At the 1997 National Volunteering Convention in Manchester, researchers and managers from outside the museums sector expressed surprise at the lack of data on voluntary activity in museums, given the importance of volunteers to the sector. It was therefore decided to update Mattingly's 1984 survey to

discover whether the situation has changed since then, and if so, how. There was particular interest in seeing how far Mattingly's eighteen recommendations had been followed, especially where the 'professionalisation' of volunteer management was concerned

The potential for professionalisation has been the subject of much discussion in the heritage sector, including sessions at the 1996 Museums Association Conference and a steady stream of literature from the USA and Canada (for example, Brown Fletcher, 1987; Kuyper, Hirzy and Huftalen, 1993; Cooper, 1998; and Goodlad and McIvor, 1998) that has drawn up a blueprint for a structured museum volunteer programme. Such a programme would include job descriptions, well-planned recruitment and training, supervision, appropriate rewards and recognition, and systematic evaluation.

During the past decade both the number of volunteers and the number of museums and heritage organisations have greatly increased, with the biggest growth taking place in the independent sector (Middleton, 1990), where the largest proportion of the volunteers are involved. Thus the need for good management is more pressing than ever.

The 'professional' approach is not supported by everyone in the voluntary sector, however. Efforts to simulate the working conditions of paid staff may be welcomed by those who seek museum work experience, but the larger number of volunteers who are retired do not necessarily appreciate this intrusion of work-related practices into their leisure activity. Moreover, although the 'professional' approach has been shown to work well when a programme is set up from scratch (Goodlad and McIvor, 1998), volunteers can react adversely to attempts to introduce the same approach into an existing volunteer scheme. In such situations, heritage organisations have tended to introduce new procedures gradually as new volunteers join, while allowing long-standing volunteers to continue as before.

There are other questions of enduring interest. Why do museums involve volunteers at all? Is it because they can no longer afford paid staff? Or is it because they believe that the community should have greater access to the collections and that this is one way of achieving it? Are volunteers treated like professional staff or like amateur helpers? What kind of work do they do, and are they trained or qualified to do it? More importantly, what do the volunteers get in return for their contribution, and how can museums and heritage organisations keep them happy?

Methodology

The survey aimed to repeat Mattingly's 1984 survey as accurately as possible, so that changes (or otherwise) over the past fifteen years could be observed. Hence it was planned not as a comprehensive survey of museum volunteers today, but rather as a study of how voluntary activity at a particular group of museums has changed over time. This

group consisted of the museums and galleries included in the *Museums Association Yearbook*. But whereas Mattingly's sample came from the 1982-83 yearbook, the updated survey used the 1997-98 yearbook, which showed that nearly 25 per cent of the original group of museums were either no longer open, or were not open in their 1982 format. Moreover, developments within the museum sector as a whole since 1982 should not be ignored, particularly the growth in independent museums (Middleton, 1990), which, as both Mattingly and the updated survey show, rely most heavily on volunteers. Stratified random sampling was used, with museums stratified by governing body, the distinction used by Mattingly in her original survey.

The questionnaire itself was reconstructed from Mattingly's report, as no copies of the original 1984 survey remain; when interviewed, Mattingly confirmed that it was similar to her original. The questionnaire responses were supplemented by volunteer interviews at ten case studies. Throughout the discussion, Mattingly's 1984 recommendations are compared with the results of the 1998 study.

The sample

268 museums were surveyed, from which 188 usable responses were received, giving a response rate of 70 per cent. Table 1 shows how the breakdown of the respondents by governing body compares between both the surveys, and illustrates how the proportion of independent museums has grown.

Table 1: Sample breakdown

	1984 Survey	*1998 Survey*
National	6	8
Local authority	55	64
Independent	22	81
Regimental	4	9
University	7	8

Eighty per cent of respondents involved volunteers at their museum, a decrease on Mattingly's 91 per cent. However, a quarter of respondents were all-volunteer museums, compared with only 2 per cent for Mattingly. Since all-volunteer museums tend to be independent, this was clearly a result of the growth in independent museums; this is supported by a 1989 survey of members of the Association of Museums, which found that 23 per cent of its members had no paid staff (*Cultural Trends* 4, 1989). Volunteers are involved in the majority of governing bodies, except in the national museums, where only 25 per cent of respondents involved volunteers in their governing body. National and local authority museums also have far greater trade union presence, which can make the introduction of volunteers a more complicated process.

Reasons for involving volunteers

So why do museums involve volunteers? Mattingly did not directly ask this question in her survey, although her impression was that some respondents felt it was a 'professional duty' to provide opportunities for work experience, while the remainder implied it was because they needed to, without giving explicit reasons.

Table 2: Why museums involve volunteers

	%
Volunteers undertake tasks that would otherwise not be done	65
Volunteers work on specific projects	53
Volunteers help with backlogs of work	51
Volunteers provide a link with the community	47

Table 2 shows what the 1998 survey found to be the most important reasons for involving volunteers.

Other reasons were also given: seven museums said that involving volunteers enhanced the visitor experience. One respondent commented:

It is another way of allowing access to the collections and passing on information.

And another said:

Volunteers are an essential addition to the resources of any museum, but they do need structured supervision.

The number of volunteers per museum

Although the proportion of respondents that involve volunteers has decreased, what about the number of volunteers at individual museums? Thirty-five per cent of museums said that their volunteers had increased over the past two years (slightly lower than Mattingly's 41 per cent), while only 9 per cent said they had decreased (compared with Mattingly's 11 per cent).

What volunteers do

In her 1984 report Mattingly recommended that museums should define appropriate areas of work for volunteers: these should be additional and desirable extras rather than the basic functions of the service; more specifically, volunteers should not be involved in conservation, which is highly skilled work within the job description of paid and trained staff.

The 1998 survey shows that involvement in most of the activities mentioned by Mattingly has increased, although there appears to be a trend towards involving volunteers more in 'front of house' activities than behind the scenes; there has been a rise in guiding and interpretation and a fall in conservation and restoration. This move towards involving volunteers in more supplementary roles, rather than in curatorial work, may be a response to the threat of staff cuts and the demand for professionalism.

Some heritage organisations employ paid staff for the essential tasks of security, selling tickets and working in the shop and cafe, while volunteers act as information stewards and guides. At other museums, however, all these front of house activities are carried out by volunteers.

Table 3: Tasks undertaken by volunteers

	1984 Survey %	*1998 Survey* %
Cataloguing and documentation	67	72
Display and exhibitions	26	58
Guiding and interpretation	33	55
Administration, funds and committees	11	42
Research	16	53
Sales and information	32	45
Conservation and restoration	47	38

Table 3 shows the tasks undertaken by volunteers in the 1998 survey. This increase in all activities - apart from conservation - is another consequence of the growth in all-volunteer museums. Although the biggest increase is in 'research', it was not clear what this involved; however, one might assume that this is once again a supplementary activity for which paid museum staff have difficulty finding the time.

Who volunteers?

Museums and heritage organisations are often criticised for being white-dominated and middle class (Millar, 1991), and attracting volunteers from a wider range of backgrounds has been suggested as a remedy for this. Mattingly recommended that museums should seek to recruit volunteers from a wider social and educational spectrum. The 1998 study showed that the make-up of the volunteer work force varies considerably according to the governing body and the subject of the museum.

Although the 1998 respondents as a whole involved a larger number of female volunteers than male, there were more all-male volunteer work forces than female: 51 per cent of museums had more than 50 per cent female volunteers, but only five were all female, whereas sixteen were all male.

As Mattingly found, there is a connection between the subject matter of museums and the gender of their volunteers. In art museums, the ratio of men to women was 25:75; in historical museums, the ratio was 60:40; in science museums, it was 75:25; at site-based museums it was 30:70; and in mixed-subject museums it was 40:60. Interviews conducted at transport and industrial museums found mostly male volunteer teams; two female volunteers said they had encountered some sexism when they first started, but this had since disappeared. It may be that once a volunteer team is established as either mostly male or mostly female, it becomes difficult to attract volunteers of the opposite sex; in the same way, a group consisting predominantly of people from one social class may be off-putting to people from other classes.

The stereotype of a heritage volunteer is a retired professional, and the survey responses support this view: 43 per cent of respondents said that most of their volunteers were over 61 (an increase on Mattingly's 20 per cent). This may be connected with the growing tendency to involve volunteers in front of house activities (see above): these usually require volunteers to work on weekdays during the daytime, thus placing them out of bounds to people in full-time paid work. There is likely to be a greater age mix of volunteers at weekends.

Mattingly also recommended further research to discover whether younger people and children are being excluded from a potentially valuable activity. A handful of large museums or heritage attractions do offer separate volunteer programmes for children, but they were the exception.

Respondents were asked to describe the socio-economic status of their volunteers. Although their answers were not really expected to be accurate, they do give a general picture. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents said that most of their volunteers had either received further education or were university graduates, 27 per cent said their volunteers were generally middle class, and 14 per cent said they were professional or managerial.

Heritage volunteers are very committed to the museum or attraction at which they work, often travelling over long distances: 17 per cent travelled more than ten miles each way. An hour's journey each way is not uncommon, regardless of whether the volunteers get travel expenses or not.

Why do they volunteer?

Mattingly recommended that the work of volunteers in the museum should wherever possible - and without conflicting with the interests of paid staff - be so organised that it provides a fulfilling and developmental experience. If volunteers are not being paid, what is it that motivates them to give their time freely? In both 1998 and 1984 respondents were asked to rank the main reasons why volunteers were attracted to work in their museum. Table 4 compares these reasons with those given in Mattingly's survey, beginning with the most important.

Table 4: Why volunteers are attracted to the museum

1984 Survey	*1998 Survey*
Interest in the subject	Interest in the subject
To obtain museum work experience	To support the museum
To support the museum	They like the work involved
To fill spare time	To gain museum work experience
They like the work involved	To fulfil a social need
To fulfil a social need	To fill spare time

The proportion of people who volunteer to gain museum work experience has fallen, perhaps because (as mentioned above) the proportion of museum volunteers who are retired has increased. Also, as the type of work done by volunteers has changed, so the desire to do work that is enjoyable has become a more prominent motivation.

Although the fulfilment of social needs comes low on the list of suggested reasons why people volunteer, a quarter of respondents said that social interaction was the main benefit that volunteers derived from their work; thirty-five respondents mentioned job satisfaction or a sense of achievement, and fifteen mentioned pride in their heritage or a chance to give something back in return for the pleasure they have derived from their heritage. In this respect, the 1998 survey results appear to be more in line with national sentiments: the 1997 National Survey of Voluntary Activity (Davis Smith, 1998) lists the main personal benefits derived from volunteering as enjoyment of the activity, the satisfaction of seeing the results, meeting people and a sense of personal achievement.

The interviews with volunteers supported the survey findings. Interest in the subject of the museum was a primary motivation, particularly for people who had always wanted to work in that area, or had actually done so: for example, the retired engineers who volunteer at industrial museums. For some people, volunteering offered a chance to achieve a lifelong dream, such as becoming an engine driver on a restored railway. The museum itself often has a special meaning for the volunteer: they want to be part of the place, to give something back for the enjoyment they have experienced there in the past.

Of the interviewees who were retired, many said that they volunteered to fill their time in an interesting way, to keep their minds active, and to meet people now that they no longer had the opportunities for socialising provided by paid work. At industrial museums, where the work is very 'hands-on', there was a chance to do something physical that would offer a change from, say, gardening. In more than one case, the retired male volunteer had been told by his wife, also retired, to get out of the house and do something!

Are museum volunteers a distinct group?

Mattingly found that museum volunteers often developed a volunteering 'career' (Stebbins, 1996); they were not just involved in heritage organisations but also in a variety of other organisations and activities. This was also true of the 1998 survey: the range of different places in which interviewees said that they volunteered showed that heritage volunteers could not be considered as a homogeneous group distinct from volunteers in other sectors. However, the other places where volunteers choose to donate their time differ according to the type of museum: the interviews showed that volunteers at industrial and transport museums are most commonly to be found at another preserved railway

or transport museum (although some had worked as, for example, a scout leader, a Red Cross driver or a helper in a cathedral tea-room). Volunteers at National Trust properties had helped at the local theatre, a nursing home, a hospice, the Age Concern branch and the Tourist Information Centre as well as at other National Trust properties.

Expenses and other perks

Mattingly recommended that museums should pay the expenses of volunteers, so as not to exclude further those who may not be able to afford the costs of volunteering. Yet in spite of the long distances volunteers are willing to travel (see above), only 43 per cent of museums offer their volunteers travel expenses; this is the same percentage as Mattingly found, and lower than the national average of 48 per cent of volunteers receiving expenses found by the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering (Davis Smith, 1998). Twenty-eight per cent of museums offer their volunteers other perks, such as free admission and discounts in the shop or cafe, but 37 per cent of respondents admit to providing no recompense at all.

However, only 8 per cent of the museums that do not offer travel expenses had experienced a decline in the numbers of volunteers working there during the past two years, compared with 11 per cent of those that do offer expenses. The fact that they do not receive travel expenses apparently does not put people off volunteering (however, the interviews showed that it does not necessarily make them think any better of the management or the organisation). Interestingly, the findings showed that the absence of other perks - such as free admission, discounts in the shop and cafe, and trips to other museums - apparently had a more detrimental effect on volunteer morale: 11 per cent of the museums that do not offer these perks had experienced a decrease in volunteer numbers, compared with only 5 per cent of museums that do. It may be that providing these perks is perceived as a more reliable indicator of management's attitude towards volunteers than providing travel expenses.

Volunteers sometimes viewed the lack of expenses as a disadvantage, although they all said that they understood the tight financial position of the museum and that if they were really unhappy they would simply leave. However, volunteers do seem prepared to travel further to work if travel expenses are on offer: 21 per cent of respondents that do not offer travel expenses said that their volunteers travel on average more than five miles to the museum, whereas 30 per cent of the museums that do offer such expenses found that their volunteers travelled up to 21 miles. The interviews showed that, even so, expenses did not always cover the full costs of travel, as they often took the form of a fixed sum rather than a mileage rate:

Expenses don't cover the full costs, so you're giving something besides time.

Contributing to policy making

Fifty-one per cent of respondents said that volunteers were able to contribute to policy making, compared with the 30 per cent found by Mattingly. It was unclear from the responses how this contribution worked in practice. The majority of volunteers interviewed felt that they could make comments to the museum director or their volunteer co-ordinator, and that their comments would be listened to. However, poor communication between the organisation and its volunteers was listed as the major obstacle here; this was particularly difficult when there were a lot of volunteers who came in to work at infrequent intervals.

How are volunteers managed?

The management of volunteers in the heritage sector has increasingly become a specialised function. Volunteer co-ordinators, both paid and unpaid, have been introduced. Many organisations have produced volunteer handbooks. Some Area Museum Councils (such as the South Western Federation of Museums and Art Galleries and the Scottish Museums Council) have run training sessions on volunteer management, while others (such as the Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council) have run support workshops for volunteer managers. The British Association of Friends of Museums has conducted a study of volunteer management and has just published its Heritage Volunteer Charter and Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators. Yet what changes in volunteer management have taken place at grassroots level?

Mattingly recommended that each museum should formulate a policy for volunteer involvement, defining the nature and extent of that involvement in consultation with the appropriate trade unions; that museums should carefully examine their management of volunteers and where standards fall below those observed in the management of paid staff, the shortfall should be remedied; and that, wherever possible, a member of staff should be specially appointed as a volunteer co-ordinator, with responsibility for the training, organisation and management of volunteers throughout the museum.

Although only 65 per cent of respondents had one person who was responsible for the volunteers, this was higher than the 52 per cent Mattingly found. The person concerned is most likely to be a curator (28 per cent) or the museum director (25 per cent); indeed, in small museums there would be no other paid staff. Only 6 per cent of respondents had a paid volunteer co-ordinator. The interviews confirmed that responsibility for volunteers was in most cases only a part of someone's job: for example, the visitor services manager if the volunteers work front of house. Obviously, though, small organisations will have difficulty in allocating one person to be entirely responsible for volunteers, and in cases where there are only a small number of volunteers, this is probably not warranted. Since half the respondents that involved volunteers had five or fewer of them, the size of the organisation and the number of volunteers involved will determine the need for volunteer management.

Table 5: How volunteers are recruited

	1984 Survey	*1998 Survey*
	%	%
Volunteers offer their services	94	88
Volunteers invited	48	62
Interest through schools and projects	48	17

Recruitment and selection

The volunteer management literature suggests that a well-structured volunteer programme should have planned recruitment and selection policies. Table 5 shows how recruitment methods have changed since 1984. The increase in the number of volunteers who are approached by the museum, rather than vice versa, suggests that heritage organisations are adopting a more positive approach to their volunteer programmes. Yet although 60 per cent of respondents use formal selection methods for volunteers, this is a lower proportion than the 76 per cent Mattingly found. The most common of these methods were interviews (79 per cent, compared with Mattingly's 93 per cent) and references (48 per cent, compared with Mattingly's 26 per cent).

Only 20 per cent of respondents had written conditions of service for their volunteers - a small proportion, it is true, but still a substantial advance on Mattingly's 7 per cent - and 19 per cent had an evaluation procedure for voluntary work. The interviews did reveal well-structured volunteer programmes in organisations where there were significant numbers of volunteers engaged in similar work. Volunteer handbooks - typically containing information about health and safety procedures, useful phone numbers and historical information that would enable volunteers to help visitors - were quite common. Moreover, at transport preservation museums where machinery was being operated, the safety procedures were very stringent, as the law demands.

The interviews also revealed the extent to which volunteers manage each other. At one National Trust site, the volunteers were a separate and entirely self-managed group, whose chairman would liaise with the property manager. The volunteers organised customer care training for themselves with the regional office. In such cases, shortage of staff time need not prevent a volunteer programme from thriving.

Disciplinary procedures

Three-quarters of respondents had no disciplinary or dismissal procedure for volunteers: perhaps because, as the interviews revealed, no such procedures had so far been needed. One volunteer manager said that a troublesome volunteer would simply be omitted from the rota.

The disciplining and dismissal of volunteers is a contentious issue, however. Some of the volunteer interviewees said that they would not stand for being disciplined; yet

organisations must exercise some form of quality control over volunteers working in positions that bring them into contact with visitors. Fortunately, as the interviews show, incidents requiring the use of disciplinary procedures are few and far between, but heritage organisations do need to have a policy in place - not least because they have a duty of care towards their visitors.

What training do volunteers receive?

The 1984 report made three recommendations about training. Firstly, that museums should develop measures to recognise the skills developed by their volunteers while working for the museum; the best possible training should made available to volunteers if they are to be involved fruitfully. In order to benefit both the volunteer and the museum, training should be project-based, which will make it more coherent, more efficient and less labour intensive. Museums should consider whether the educational potential of volunteer involvement in their museum is fully deployed.

Despite these recommendations, training provision is still not entirely adequate. Although 75 per cent of respondents said that they offered their volunteers training (fewer than the 80 per cent Mattingly found), this usually seems to consist of a basic induction followed by on the job training, rather than the structured training programme recommended in the management literature. Sixteen respondents said that training was on the job, and many others said that it was provided for individual jobs when needed. This shows no change from Mattingly's finding that most training for museum volunteers was ad hoc and task-specific. Mattingly mentioned that the structured training programmes that did exist were mostly for volunteer guides; since these activities typically involved large numbers of volunteers, it was cost effective to introduce a programme. Both the 1998 survey respondents and the volunteer interviews confirm that volunteers working front of house have a more structured programme in general, including training.

Small museums may have difficulty in finding the time to allocate to training volunteers, yet the basic health and safety regulations must be adhered to, especially if the volunteers are dealing with the public.

Have attitudes towards volunteers changed?

Whatever has happened since 1984 in volunteer management, Table 6 shows clearly that attitudes towards volunteers have changed.

The findings of Table 6 are positive, and in some cases may be a consequence of the recent changes in the work that volunteers do: for example, if there are fewer volunteers involved in curatorial work, there is less chance of them damaging museum property. It is interesting to note that volunteers are still considered time-consuming (although less so than in 1984); this is an acknowledgement that they are not free labour, but an investment.

Table 6: Attitudes towards volunteers

	1984 Survey %	*1998 Survey* %
Time-consuming	66	42
More trouble than they are worth	18	0
A danger to museum property	8	0
A link with the museum's community	78	89
A source of skills rarely found in the modern world	15	69

Museums with no volunteers

The 26 per cent of respondents that do not involve volunteers in their museum were asked their views on volunteers. Eleven respondents expressed concern about the loss of paid jobs that might be caused by involving volunteers; one commented:

I would rather pay staff. I can then demand a high standard of work and turning up on time.

The remaining respondents who did not involve volunteers fell into two groups. Eighteen thought that volunteers were useful only if they were properly organised and had relevant training; one respondent said:

We are at present producing a volunteer policy which will lead on a specific project basis - without volunteers, vital projects such as documentation will not be completed.

A further ten respondents simply said that volunteers were 'a good idea'.

Conclusions

How much has volunteering in museums changed since 1984? Have Mattingly's 1984 recommendations been followed - and are they still relevant?

Volunteers are still very important to heritage organisations: forty-seven respondents said that they would not function, or could not function at their current level, without their volunteers, even though Mattingly recommended that, at a time when museums are understaffed and subject to establishment cuts, a volunteer work force should not replace paid staff. Museums involving volunteers should therefore ensure that the volunteers make a desirable addition to the museum service rather than actually providing the service itself. Yet Mattingly found that nearly two-thirds of her respondents had volunteers who were carrying out work essential to that service. The heritage sector needs to decide what is essential work for paid staff and what can be undertaken by volunteers. To foster a mutually beneficial working environment, organisations that involve volunteers must reassure paid staff that their jobs are not under threat from the volunteers.

Having said this, there has been a growing tendency for volunteers to take

on the kind of jobs that museum professionals would not do (such as room stewarding) or that would not otherwise be done because of time and budget constraints (such as documentation). These activities may be considered essential by the museums who responded to the 1998 survey, but they are not what Mattingly meant in her recommendation above. One respondent commented:

There is no guarantee that paid staff would be any better.

Mattingly also recommended that museums using volunteers should become less insular: by looking outward and comparing practice and achievement, they could improve standards, efficiency and the level of personal fulfilment. The regional events, such as joint training sessions, organised by the Area Museums Councils and the collaboration between similar museums to save staff time and money show that the heritage sector has made progress in this direction. The sector is fortunate in having local statutory bodies, such as the Area Museums Councils, that can provide accessible advice and training.

It is important to understand not only what attracts volunteers to museums, but also what keeps them there. The survey findings and the interviews show that the payment of expenses is not necessarily what makes volunteers stay, but rather the fact that they feel appreciated by the management of the organisation - as demonstrated, for example, by discounts in the shop and cafe, free training sessions, and a newsletter to keep them informed of what is going on at the museum. One volunteer told of her embarrassment at first hearing about certain changes from the visitors, when it was the volunteers who were supposed to be informing the visitors. Involvement, genuine or at least apparent, in decision-making processes and the awareness that they were being listened to by museum staff were also valued highly by the volunteers interviewed:

I know we're appreciated and that's what matters.

The debate continues about the benefits of 'professional' volunteer management. Although there are examples of programmes (usually based on American models) being set up in UK museums and heritage organisations, the survey responses show that it is much easier to plan a volunteer programme from scratch than to try to introduce new procedures to volunteers who may have been at the museum for years, perhaps even since it first opened.

The nature of the work volunteers do has itself changed, away from behind-the-scenes curatorial tasks and towards more visitor-orientated activities. The heritage sector is competing for visitors with other leisure facilities (Davies, 1994) and as a result has revised its view of what it wants from its volunteers. They are increasingly involved front of house, where they meet the public and are considered part of the visitor experience.

This has meant that there are now more volunteers, with a correspondingly greater need for good training - especially in basics such as health and safety - and good management. However, these changes have meant that volunteers are now required on weekdays and throughout the day, which naturally favours retired people. So although 53 per cent of respondents said that they involved volunteers because they were a link with the community, there has been little response to Mattingly's recommendation that people from a wider range of social and educational backgrounds should be encouraged to volunteer. The failure to offer travel expenses may also have had an effect here, by limiting the number of people able to volunteer.

Most importantly, attitudes towards volunteers have changed for the better, perhaps reflecting their changed role and an awareness that volunteers have great potential to enhance museums and heritage organisations. One respondent summed up the new role of museum volunteers by describing them as:

a wonderful asset. They look after the visitors and make them welcome. They give their knowledge and experience freely. They help us develop activities for children . . . Many letters of thanks mention their role in making visits to the museum a success.

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In recent years there has been growing concern about the ability of voluntary boards to govern public and voluntary organisations effectively. This has led to a burgeoning prescriptive literature that attempts to set out the responsibilities, roles and tasks of governing bodies. Yet there is often a large gap between these prescriptions and the reality of governance as revealed by empirical studies. This study aimed to help reduce that gap by examining in detail the working of boards and the constraints and dilemmas they face. The research examined how boards select and develop board members, the relationship between boards and senior management or staff, and what boards contribute to their organisations. Based on these findings, the paper sets out some recommendations for improving the value of voluntary boards.

Improving the value of voluntary boards

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Introduction

A distinguishing feature of many public and voluntary organisations is that they are governed by voluntary boards. These boards play an important role in ensuring the accountability of voluntary organisations and maintaining public trust in the sector. Participation on boards is also an important area of voluntary activity in its own right. It has been estimated that approximately half a million people volunteer as charity trustees alone (Kirkland and Sargant, 1995).

For a long time, however, the governance of voluntary organisations has been regarded as problematic (Middleton, 1987). As Harris (1999) notes, voluntary sector staff seldom seem to be satisfied with the performance of their boards. Boards are accused either of meddling in the affairs of management or conversely of being not involved enough and serving a largely symbolic function. There has also been wider public concern. A survey by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charity Commission (1992) rather alarmingly revealed that many trustees of charities were not even aware that they were trustees. In the USA, a variety of public scandals in the

non-profit sector has raised concern about the ability of voluntary boards to supervise management effectively (Gibelman et al, 1997). Recognising the need for better information and support for trustees, the NCVO established the Trustees Services Unit in 1993. In response to changing demands, the Unit in 1998 launched a new service to assist board development, focusing on the collective role of boards.

In the public sector, government reforms of the 1980s and 1990s designed to introduce the market and business practices, with the aim of improving efficiency, have led to widespread changes in the governance structures of public organisations (Plummer, 1994). One such change has been the introduction of non-elected boards, modelled on the boards of public companies, to oversee public bodies such as NHS trusts and Further Education (FE) colleges. In a somewhat different vein, parents have been given a bigger role in the governance of schools at the expense of political representatives. These changes have raised concerns about a possible loss of local public accountability (Skelcher and Davis, 1995). Also, as in the private sector, a few notable failures have again raised concerns about the ability of boards to oversee management.

One of the most significant attempts to address these and related problems was the Nolan Committee's Second Report on Standards in Public Life (Nolan, 1996), which focused on various local public spending bodies including further and higher education colleges, grant maintained schools and housing associations. A major thrust of this report was to establish general principles and standards that such organisations should aspire to. This greater emphasis on the codification of good practice has spread through both the voluntary and public sectors. For example, the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA, 1995) established a code concerning the governance of housing associations. More recently, NCVO has put forward a model code of conduct for trustees based on the Nolan principles.

Against this background, it is not surprising that much of the emerging body of work and literature on governance has been prescriptive in nature, trying to set out the responsibilities of board members and how they should behave. Much valuable work has been done in clarifying the role of governing bodies and raising awareness among board members of their responsibilities. Yet there is often a big gap between these prescriptions and the reality of governance revealed by empirical studies (Herman, 1989; Cornforth, 1996; Murray, 1996; Harris, 1999). There is a danger that if these prescriptions do not adequately take account of the constraints and dilemmas that board members face, they will be found wanting and ignored.

One aim of this research was to help bridge the gap by examining in detail how governing bodies worked in practice. Empirical studies of board behaviour have been criticised for their

over-reliance upon one source of data - usually the perceptions of board members, gathered through interviews or questionnaires - because of the lack of any independent confirmation of actors' accounts (Peck, 1995). In particular, there have been few studies that have managed to 'get inside the boardroom' and actually observe what happens there. In order to overcome these weaknesses, this study adopted a case study methodology drawing on three different sources: observation of meetings, actors' accounts and board documents. Four cases were examined: a school and an FE college from the public sector, and a small overseas development agency and a community organisation from the voluntary sector.

The research examined:

- How each organisation chose and developed its board members.
- The contribution that the boards made and how this added value to the organisation.
- The relationship between boards and senior managers and how this influenced the working of the board.

This paper presents a summary of some of the main findings from the research (for a fuller account see Cornforth and Edwards, 1998). Then, based on these findings and supporting evidence from other studies, it makes recommendations for improving board performance that take into account some of the dilemmas and constraints boards face. First, the four case studies are described in more detail.

The four cases

The local voluntary organisation (LVO)
The LVO was set up in the UK in the 1970s by a group of volunteers concerned at the lack of support for victims of domestic violence in the area. By 1996, the LVO ran six homes for families in need of temporary accommodation, two advice centres and a telephone advice line.

In the 1980s, under the influence of its present chief executive, the LVO changed from being run as a collective to a more formal, hierarchically structured organisation. The LVO's board had six directors, a company secretary and attending representatives from local housing associations, the local authority and staff. The board also served as the trustees required by charity law. Four staff did most of the servicing of the board - the chief executive, her deputy, the finance officer and the minute-taking administrative officer - but all other staff were invited to observe executive committee meetings. Committee meetings took place approximately every six weeks.

The school
The school was a stable and efficiently run urban primary with approximately 400 pupils that employed one head teacher, fifteen full-time teaching staff and various support staff. It was run by the local education authority (LEA), which delegated 85 per cent of the budget to the school to manage.

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act and subsequent legislation, the power of

central government in matters of curriculum, inspection and funding arrangements increased at the expense of local authorities' powers. There was a parallel increase in the formal responsibilities of school governing bodies over matters such as expenditure, reporting to parents, producing school development plans and health and safety. As schools were given greater autonomy, so the way that governors are chosen changed. In the past, a system of political appointments operated, where most governors were nominated by the local authority.

The changes increased the number of elected parent governors. There were sixteen governors, comprising four elected parent governors, two teacher governors, five local authority appointed governors, four co-opted governors and the head. A number of the local authority appointed governors were also parents of children in the school, so parents were a majority on the board. The full governing body normally met once a term, with agendas averaging seventeen items and meetings typically lasting two to three hours. There were five sub-committees that met more frequently.

The national voluntary organisation (NVO)

The NVO is an overseas development charity. It was set up in 1979 to work with partner organisations in some of the world's poorest countries by providing technological aid and support appropriate to their needs and circumstances. The NVO also ran a development education programme in the UK and lobbied government and larger aid agencies. It had seven paid staff operating from two UK sites.

The NVO was set up by a group of volunteers, but in 1995 its founder left. In 1997 the organisation was in a period of transition, with the majority of staff being recent appointments. The NVO was a membership organisation. Members elected the seven trustees (who also acted as directors under company law). In addition, there were about seventy local groups affiliated to the national organisation. Many of the board members were active in these local groups. The board of trustees met approximately four times per annum, in different locations. There were five sub-committees, each meeting between two and four times a year. There was also an annual weekend meeting after the AGM for board members and staff to get to know each other and to consider strategic issues.

The college

The college provided post-school, predominantly vocational education from four principal sites to the young and adult population of the semi-urban county it covered.

Central government legislation removed all FE colleges from local authority control in 1993, and they were then established as independent incorporated bodies whose governors took on responsibilities equivalent to those of company directors. The college had an annual budget of about £25 million, and

was funded and regulated by a government appointed body, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The FEFC specifies in detail how colleges are governed, and prescribes (with varying degrees of discretion) what services they may and may not provide. All colleges are subject to rigorous FEFC quality assessments every four years. A principal (chief executive), supported by two associate principals and a matrix of faculty deans and site managers, managed the college. The board (or Corporation) consisted of sixteen members, of whom eight were independent, three were co-opted, one was nominated by the local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), two were elected from the staff, one was elected from the students and one was the Principal. The board was serviced by the Clerk to the Corporation, who was accountable to the board, had office facilities and attended all meetings.

Senior managers attended and reported to both the full board and relevant sub-committees. The full board met six times per annum, and also outside the formal cycle: typically, one 'awayday' per term to tackle strategic matters free from the normal agenda. The sub-committees met to tie in with the full board cycles and with key stages in the accounting and budget-setting cycles. Individual board members were also tasked to work with individual managers on particular issues.

The findings

The 'recruitment' of board members

In both the public and voluntary sectors there has been a strong tradition that boards should represent or reflect the communities the organisation serves. Two different mechanisms have been used to achieve this end: direct elections of board members from a defined constituency, or through key stakeholders, such as the local authority, having the right to appoint members to the board. Over the last decade, owing in part to the changes in public policy, there has been a shift in emphasis towards a more managerial model of governance, with its stress on efficiency and effectiveness, and the competencies that board members need to fulfil their role effectively. This creates a major dilemma for voluntary and non-profit organisations: should board members be 'chosen' for their expertise, or as representatives of particular groups? In selecting our case studies, we deliberately chose organisations to include those where most board members were elected or appointed by external stakeholders (the NVO and the school) and those where they were mainly selected (the LVO and the college). A number of our findings have relevance for this dilemma.

Perhaps surprisingly, the differences between selected and elected boards were not as clear-cut as might have been expected. In all four cases, irrespective of whether board members were elected, selected or appointed by external stakeholders, extensive use was made of informal networks in order to find potential board members. In the NVO, which had an entirely elected board, positions were often not contested, so in

effect these positions were filled through an informal selection process. There is a danger that such processes are not open or transparent to outsiders and could lead to a narrow, closed group of board members. One governor at the college said:

My only concern is the fact that it's the middle aged, middle class, comfortably off syndrome if you are not careful. You're not representing the majority of the college in that respect . . . Sometimes I would like to see a bit more youthful dynamism . . . I feel as though you're probably a very narrow field of people controlling the whole college.

Senior managers at both the school and the college felt that the government changes that reduced or removed political appointments to their boards had improved the governance of their organisations. At the school, parent governors were seen as more committed and involved. At the college, the selection of independent governors was seen as an opportunity to bring in new skills and experience from the business and professional community. In addition, it was felt that the changes prevented wider political conflicts being imported into the governance arena. A college governor commented:

The old board was not as committed - it was an extension of the old boy network whose time had passed. Gradually, we have asserted a more vigorous role.

Whatever system of choosing board members is used, there are likely to be gaps on the board in terms of people who have particular expertise or who can reflect the views of important stakeholders. Co-options and advisers to the board can often be used to fill these gaps and achieve a more balanced composition. Both the NVO and the school had at different times co-opted people with accountancy skills to help improve their financial oversight of the organisation. However, the experience of the school also showed that small organisations could experience problems in attracting people with these skills.

The development of new board members

At both the school and the college, board members had access to initial training in the role and responsibilities of a board member. In the voluntary sector, the availability of local training courses for board members is much patchier. Some of the members of the LVO had attended a local course a few years after they joined the board. At the NVO, few opportunities for training were available locally. Although the training undertaken was valued, it concentrated mainly on the legal and financial responsibilities of board members, and did little to develop board-level skills or an understanding of different approaches to governance: for example, one school governor who thought the course was excellent also felt completely unprepared when she was asked to take over chairing one of the board's sub-committees.

In both the voluntary organisations, the information available to new or prospective board members about their role and responsibilities was non-existent or very inadequate.

Most board members learn about governance on the job, through personal experience. For most of them it took at least a year to become really effective. The head of the school commented:

For any governors it takes the best part of a year to become fully effective.

This experience was borne out elsewhere. The most recently elected governor at the NVO still felt after eighteen months that he was very much a 'new boy' learning the ropes.

Attention to team building and board development was important in developing effective boards. Senior managers and chairs could play an important role in encouraging or discouraging these processes. At the college, the chair and principal used informal meetings and governors' workshops to tackle particular problems and develop more effective team working. The NVO held a weekend meeting after the AGM so that new board members and staff could get to know each other, work on team building and think about strategy. At the LVO, by contrast, it was the absence of any opportunities for review and team building that partly explained why some board members felt ineffective and the board relied so heavily on one long-standing member and the chief executive. Here, the chief executive actively discouraged board members from getting together outside formal meetings. One board member reflected:

I would like to discuss roles and have an afternoon session or something with the full board, maybe with a facilitator, to look at how we work and just get to know each other. Team building, I suppose.

Another added:

I don't think there's any space for us to review our decision-making process and whether that could have been assisted or changed.

The role and contribution of the board

Garratt (1996) distinguishes between what he calls the 'conformance' and 'performance' roles of boards. Conformance includes supervising management and accountability to external stakeholders. Performance includes policy formulation and strategic thinking. The achievements of the boards in each of these areas is examined below.

The ability of boards to supervise management effectively varied quite widely, depending upon the balance of power between managers and board members, the expertise of the board, and the systems and procedures the organisation has developed for monitoring performance. The boards with the most influence were those of the college and the NVO. The new college board was seen as more powerful than the old board by board members and the principal, who observed:

They are enhancing [this organisation] in so far as I feel that they have the self-confidence to sack me. Now that is a very significant change.

This power was attributed to the fact that the board members had both the expertise and the confidence to challenge management. An example was when members of the finance and general purposes committee refused to accept managers' explanations for a serious shortfall in budgeted income during the year. Board members felt knowledgeable and confident enough to force through a change in both the information that the board received and in the organisation's operational systems.

At the LVO and the school, the boards appeared much weaker and were hampered by lack of expertise, particularly about financial matters, and in the case of the LVO by the poor quality of management information available. However, even these apparently weak boards were still capable of serving as an occasional check to managerial power if there was something they were particularly unhappy about. This happened at the school, when the governors refused to sanction a decision by the head because they felt he had overstepped his powers.

In all four cases the boards undertook two basic functions of financial monitoring openly and essentially adequately: routine consideration of actual income and expenditure against budget; routine considerations of projections of future income and expenditure. However, there was little evidence that boards contribute to questions of efficiency. A financial accounting tradition holds sway over a management accounting tradition, resulting in the under-use of methods that could help boards to assess and develop the financial performance of the organisation. However, as might be expected, larger organisations appear more able to oversee financial procedures than smaller ones, who lack resources, expertise and an awareness of what is possible. One of the key factors in the effectiveness of a board's contribution to financial issues is the financial expertise of both the board members and the managers who report to them. Board members with accountancy and/or financial management experience can make a real difference to an organisation's capacity to define a financial role for the board, generate appropriate financial information, and then to understand and use it. Conversely, where board members lack this expertise, managers may be required to devote a substantial amount of time simply to explaining financial information.

All the organisations fulfilled their statutory responsibilities concerning accountability: filing accounts with the appropriate authorities, holding AGMs, producing annual reports etc. However, few of the boards had explicitly thought through their accountability and how it could best be achieved. At the college some board members recognised this:

The Corporation is the mechanism for bringing together the multiple accountabilities of the College to the local community, but it's yet to develop . . .

At the LVO the situation was confused. It

used to hold annual general meetings for interested parties. But as it is not a membership organisation, it had decided to stop these. Apart from the NVO, few of the organisations had very developed strategies for communicating with stakeholders. Perhaps the existence of boards meant that management did not give a high priority to issues of stakeholder consultation and involvement - if the board is there, why is there a need? There is a paradox here. Boards do provide one vehicle for accountability, but may relieve management from the responsibility of addressing this issue in other ways.

The contribution that boards made to policy and strategy varied between the organisations. At both the college and the NVO the boards made an important contribution to strategy, but at the school and the LVO they contributed much less. The size of the contribution was influenced by a complex interplay of factors: the system of regulation, sectoral traditions, board members' skills and experience, size of organisation, and the way governance function was managed (for a detailed discussion see Cornforth and Edwards, 1999). In all the organisations, but particularly the school and the NVO, there was a drift towards dealing with operational issues. Three factors were important in this tendency. In both organisations, agendas for board meetings consisted of a long, unstructured list of items. There was no attempt to prioritise items of importance, or to distinguish items that were for report from those requiring decisions. As a result, the boards were often unclear about where it would be most profitable to concentrate their efforts. Secondly, boards received detailed information and reports from sub-committees and from managers that did not make much effort to draw out what were the main implications for the board. Thirdly, some board members or staff tended to go into great detail when giving reports to the board, perhaps because they felt the need to justify the decisions made. However, the college (and to a lesser extent the NVO) showed that the strategic contribution of boards could be enhanced by deliberately setting aside time at regular intervals to review strategy, away from the routine business of board meetings, and by careful attention to agenda setting and chairing board meetings.

Apparently excessive attention to operational matters does not necessarily mean that governance serves no useful purpose. There is a safeguard in having a board separate from management that has some knowledge of and commitment to the organisation. It may also add value in other ways: for example, by supporting management, helping to legitimise difficult decisions, and acting as a link with important stakeholders.

Relations with senior managers or staff

It is far easier for managers than for boards to exercise real power in non-profit and public organisations, because of their operational knowledge, professional expertise and control of information and agendas for meetings. This was perhaps most apparent at the school and the LVO, where the head and

chief executive largely controlled the agenda and what information went to the board. Two quotes from members of each of the boards illustrate this point:

We do feel that at present he has a powerful say. Governors fall in behind him rather than discuss matters fully and properly. Often the time pressure of the agenda limits debate. The head puts situations verbally at the meetings and things go through on the nod. It's not necessarily healthy to be always leaving things to the head's professional view.

We board members . . . who are not part of the organisation, are so dependent on [staff] for the information and the understanding of what is going on, that it is almost like guiding and ratifying what they are proposing rather than much initiative coming from us.

In contrast, the college had moved from a position of dominance by the principal to one of a partnership with a much more powerful board. These changes had the support of the principal, who saw the increase in the board's power as a way of sharing some of his responsibilities:

Up until a year ago [the board] was operating in the old style . . . essentially advising the principal . . . the Corporation members now truly exercise a sense of responsibility as owners.

This change was attributed partly to the new legal powers of the board, but in particular to the recruitment of new board members with relevant professional and senior management skills. At the NVO, the long-term involvement of many board members with the organisation and its past history of collective working meant that board members were knowledgeable about many aspects of the organisation's work. In addition, a number of the board members brought outside managerial or business experience. The board's expertise and knowledge of the organisation meant that it could exercise considerable influence.

The two principal conditions for boards to exercise power seem to be, first, that the board contains members with relevant skills and experience (for example, in management or finance) and second, that management welcomes and/or expects boards to make an important contribution.

Research suggests that relations between board members and staff are often fraught and characterised by tension and ambiguity, because of the interdependence of staff and boards and the difficulty of clearly separating roles (Middleton, 1984; Harris, 1999). Harris (1993) suggests that the best way forward is for organisations to recognise the inevitability of these tensions and for boards and staff explicitly to negotiate their respective involvement in different organisational activities. These tensions were demonstrated to some degree in all the organisations, but they were most obvious at the NVO. The NVO board through its sub-committee structure had a history of being involved in the detailed planning of various operational areas within the organisation. This

position was challenged when a new co-ordinator arrived. One board member described relations as:

In a state of flux, because . . . the new co-ordinator's . . . come in with very different ideas about how roles should be apportioned. In the past, directors tended to stick their fingers in almost any pie they felt like, and certainly there was a lot of resentment by staff, who felt that the staff should be allowed to get on with their bit and the directors should jolly well give a general overview and then let the staff get on. [The new co-ordinator] is very keen on defining . . . what is policy and what is operations, and that she has to get on with the operational bit and we [the board] should shut up.

As a result, the different roles of the board and staff were being opened up for discussion and new patterns of working relationship were beginning to be established, but not without some tensions and difficulties. In particular, there was recognition that it was not easy to separate policy from operational decisions.

There is a permanent tension between board members having too much information and too little information, both of which can hamper effective governance. This was nicely illustrated at the school. On the one hand there was a feeling that governors had to wade through too much information:

We get the agenda, and with the agenda we get all the minutes of the previous meetings. We get any papers that have come from County. We get all the draft policies. I think it wasn't so much the fact that we get those, but then we get them all again for the full governors' meeting. But then, if you haven't sat on the curriculum committee, you need to know what those policy documents are. So we do get wads of it to wade through.

On the other hand, when the head did not circulate a policy document that had been revised by a sub-committee, the governors objected:

It didn't really feel that we ought to be passing a policy without having the full policy documents available - passing it from the full governors' meeting, even if a sub-committee had looked into it and passed it. Somebody said, 'Well, no, if as a governor I'm putting my name to it at the full meeting, I want to see the whole policy.'

There was also a concern, particularly in the college, that the board did not always get the right sort of information. There was a general consensus that the information should be less in volume and more geared towards the needs of the board. In particular, more information was required that would allow the organisation's performance to be compared with that of other colleges.

Conclusions and recommendations

The cases show that governance can be carried out in a variety of different ways. No one model of governance will be suitable for all circumstances. However, the cases do suggest a number of factors linked to the effective performance of

voluntary boards. The first, not surprisingly, concerns the competence of board members themselves. To be effective, board members need relevant skills and experience and the will to use their formal power. In some of the cases we saw board members who were unsure of their expertise or lacked an understanding of key issues such as finance, and as a result took a back seat on their board. Second is the relationship between the board and chief executive. The most effective boards were those where the relationship was characterised by quite a high degree of trust and openness, and where the chief executive welcomed the board taking an active and sometimes challenging role. A third factor was how the governance function was managed. The most effective boards were those where the board and senior staff had explicitly thought through the role of the board and how it should be serviced and managed.

This last point brings us to the paper's recommendations. Whilst there may be no one model of governance, the research does suggest that organisations that are aware of some of the tensions and dilemmas of governance, and have consciously thought them through with management, are more likely to be effective. The recommendations that follow are designed to encourage and aid this process.

1. Boards and senior management need periodically to review their respective roles and the contribution they make to governance in the light of the constraints they face.

One of the key dilemmas that board members face is that, in law, they have extensive responsibilities, yet they carry out their job in a voluntary capacity, which means that they can often devote only limited time to it. Hence it is important for board and senior managers to examine explicitly what functions they think governance involves in their organisation and how each of the parties will contribute to carrying them out. Harris (1993) advocates a similar approach and provides a methodology for doing this. A useful question for all boards to ask periodically is, 'How do we add value to the organisation?' Often the most problematic areas are strategy and policy-making. Because they have greater operational knowledge, it may be more realistic for senior management to play the lead role in policy and strategy formulation, rather than pretend that the board can perform this function. Regular review can help boards and staff to clarify their respective responsibilities, and enable boards to identify the areas where they can add real value to the organisation.

2. Board members need to clarify with staff what degree of involvement within the organisation is appropriate.

Another common dilemma for board members concerns their degree of involvement in the organisation. If they become too involved, they may interfere with management in the operational aspects of running the organisation. On the other hand, if they are too detached, or solely reliant on the chief executive for information, they may not know whether the organisation is being well run and be unable to supervise

management effectively. We observed various ways in which organisations have sought to involve board members effectively: for example, through board sub-committees involving board members and staff, linking board members with particular staff, or giving board members a watching brief over a particular area of an organisation's work.

3. Boards need to review periodically how they can achieve an appropriate mix of skills and experience among members.
Boards are often expected to serve both a political function, representing the interests of the public and other stakeholders, and a managerial function, as a top level of management. In order to carry out these functions effectively, boards must contain the right mix of skills and experience. Each of the main methods of 'recruiting' board members has its strengths and weaknesses. Boards need to consider whether they are getting the right mix of members, and if not, how their methods of recruiting can be improved. Some organisations are making use of advertising and formal selection procedures to improve the pool of candidates from which board members can be drawn and to ensure that the best candidates are selected. Others are employing professional recruitment firms or brokerage services to find suitable board members (NCVO, 1998). Co-options and advisers can also be used to get a better balanced and better informed board. As organisations grow and change, the types of skills and experience needed on the board are likely to change, so it is important that these matters are reviewed periodically.

4. The chair and chief executive must ensure that board development is on the board's agenda.
Because board members are volunteers with limited time, and senior managers are busy people, there is a tendency for board meetings to focus exclusively on the business in hand. As a result, matters such as team building or board development are often overlooked, to the detriment of board performance and board/management relations. In theory, it is the responsibility of the chair to ensure the maintenance and development of the board. In practice, the chief executive is often better placed to ensure that this happens (Drucker, 1990). Consequently, board effectiveness is likely to be enhanced if chairs and chief executives consider their respective responsibilities for board development and make sure that this item remains on the board's agenda.

5. Many chairs and chief executives need to give a higher priority to the management of the governance function.
In all the cases there was a tendency for boards to drift towards detailed consideration of operational matters, which can result in too little time being given to considering strategic and policy issues of longer term importance. This tendency can be reduced if chairs and chief executives spend time before meetings thinking through what are the important items for the board to discuss and drawing up structured agendas that prioritise important items and provide clear direction to the board. They also need to keep under review the information needs of boards: whether the

information provided relates to the adopted role and priorities of the board; whether too little information is preventing board members from being properly informed; or whether too much is hampering their ability to identify the significant issues. The review should also consider whether other, less formal means of finding out about the organisation are required, such as site visits, informal meetings or links with other members of staff. These informal means of keeping in touch were highly valued in a number of the cases, and appeared to help board members make better informed decisions.

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This research was part-funded by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), whose support is gratefully acknowledged. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of other members of the project team: Charles Edwards, Aude Leonetti and Jill Mordaunt.

This article aims to provoke further thought about the nature of volunteering by comparing volunteers with members. Drawing upon two studies of local churches, it identifies six distinctions between members and volunteers. Theoretical ideas from the work of David Billis are used to explain those distinctions. Finally, the article argues that these theoretical distinctions have implications for practice. Unpaid work can be organised more effectively if the different relationships between worker and organisation are acknowledged.

Are members volunteers? An exploration of the concept of membership drawing upon studies of the local church

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Introduction

In my doctoral research on the social action of the local church, I examined congregations that were running welfare programmes of benefit to their local communities. The churches I studied ran activities such as playgroups, day centres for elderly people and after-school clubs. Much of the unpaid work force of these programmes was provided by church members, but there were also volunteers from the wider community who were not church members. Conceptually, I put the two groups together. During fieldwork I asked a church member why she volunteered for the programme. Taking offence at my question, she replied:

I am not a volunteer, I'm a member.

This exchange led me to ask: are members volunteers? Can the extensive literature on volunteers be applied to members? Are the two sorts of activists essentially the same, or are there differences that have a significant impact on the way these groups are deployed in voluntary organisations? The purpose of this paper is to explore the conceptual differences between members and volunteers. Some implications of these distinctions for organising unpaid work are suggested.

The field of voluntary sector management

is rich in literature on volunteers and there is much interest in the effective deployment of these unpaid workers (Cnaan, Handy *et al*, 1996; Gaskin and Davis Smith, 1995). More recently, there has been a growing interest in associations and their members (Klausen, 1995; Smith, 1997) and, in addition, in the local church as a special form of membership organisation (Harris, 1996; Wineburg, 1994). The debate on civil society recognises the importance of unpaid work in creating bonds of trust between members of society in a way that supports family life, democracy and business (Fukayama, 1995; Greeley, 1997).

Given this recognition of the importance of unpaid work to society, it seems worth exploring the concepts that underpin our understanding of unpaid work. This paper starts by identifying some themes from the literatures on volunteers and members. It then describes and draws data from two studies of the unpaid work of church members. Six differences between members and volunteers are identified from these studies. These differences are discussed using theoretical ideas from Billis (1993). Finally, the conclusions draw out some implications of the discussion for organisations working with members and volunteers and the way in which they manage unpaid work.

Themes from the literature

In the US literature, the term 'volunteer' is used in an all-embracing way to describe unpaid work. Thus membership organisations are described as volunteer-led organisations (Perkins and Poole, 1996; Smith and Shen, 1996), and in some articles members and volunteers are explicitly considered together (Smith, 1994). In the UK, there is an implication in the literature on volunteering that the volunteer is working for a formal organisation and for the benefit of a third party. The definition used in the survey research into UK volunteers is:

An activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone, other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.
(Lynn and Davis Smith, 1991).

This paper offers no initial definitions of the terms 'volunteer' and 'member', but hopes to develop distinctions between the two terms through the discussion of empirical data.

The literature on volunteering seems to take a psychological approach more often than a sociological one (Pearce, 1993). Issues such as the motivation of volunteers (Clary, Snyder *et al*, 1996; Smith, 1994) and their recruitment are central concerns (Broadbridge and Horne, 1990; Russell and Scott, 1996). There are also authors concerned about how organisations can best manage volunteers (Davis Smith, 1996; Hedley, 1992; Pressland, 1990; Russell and Scott, 1996). A broad characterisation of this literature might be to say that it is interested in the balance between empowerment and control in dealing with volunteers. Organisations want enthusiastic volunteers, but they want

their energies channelled to serve the organisation's purposes. This is a dilemma also dealt with by management writers looking at the deployment of paid staff (Huczynski and Buchanan, 1991; Johnson and Scholes, 1998).

Writing about members is closely integrated into the literature on associations in general, and it is probably misleading to talk of a literature on membership in the same way as there is a literature on volunteering. That said, there is a theme in the association literature that examines the benefits of membership, seeing the relationship between the member and association as one of exchange in which the members gain benefits in exchange for their contribution (Knoke, 1998; Lansley, 1996). Perrow (1970) has suggested that members make four types of contribution to associations: their names, which can be used in lobbying; their subscriptions, which are used to fund the association; their time, to undertake the work of the association; and their personality or presence, to influence the governance of the association. This last point is picked up by writers who emphasise that a characteristic of members is their role in the governance of associations, whether through participative democracy or by electing representatives to act on their behalf (Knoke, 1981; Lansley, 1996).

A further theme is the different levels of participation that members invest in associations (Dhooghe, 1968; Oropesa, 1995). These authors make it clear that being a member does not necessarily involve unpaid work, and that in most associations there are some members who do much more work than others.

From this brief summary of the literature, some differences between members and volunteers have started to emerge. For the purposes of this paper, the most significant is that engaging in unpaid work is seen as the essence of volunteering, whereas it is an optional element within membership.

Data drawn from two studies

I now want to present data from two studies of local churches in England (Cameron, 1998; Harris, 1996). Both were interested in the organisational features of the local church and both identified differences between members and volunteers. This part of the paper presents that data and the following section discusses how it might be interpreted.

Harris (1996) undertook case studies of three congregations:

> *The main research tool was semi-structured interviews. This data was supplemented with information obtained through attending religious services, committee meetings and social events and from the study of internal documents such as magazines and reports. The three congregations were chosen such that they differed with respect to a range of factors including: religion, geographical location, history, number of clergy, number of lay paid staff, number of members, ethnicity of members and financial position.* (pages 3-4)

In my own doctoral research, I undertook case studies of five congregations using semi-structured interviews, observations, informal interviews and documentary analysis. My case study congregations were located in an inner urban and an outer suburban area of a large English city. Four different Christian denominations were represented and the congregations varied in size and ethnic composition.

English local churches seem to have distinctive features as membership organisations. They rarely have any full-time paid staff beyond their clergy, and so they rely upon the unpaid work of members for their survival. Members vary in how much time they contribute to the work of the church, but those who have 'officer' roles such as secretary and treasurer often have to make open-ended and substantial commitments of their time. Those churches that have social action programmes usually involve volunteers from the locality to help with the programme. This means that in both studies it was possible to see members and volunteers working alongside each other, and so investigate the possible differences between them. By definition, the members described are active rather than passive, belonging to the group actively engaged in the work of the congregation (Dhooghe, 1968).

Harris (1996) concludes that:

It is appropriate to make a distinction between volunteering in the context of a service-delivering organisation and volunteering in the context of membership associations.
(page 23)

She identified three distinctions in her study. First, that members are more committed to organisational values than volunteers are, and that this can lead some members to over-commit themselves and suffer from burnout. There seems to be the feeling among some activist members that sustaining the organisation is their responsibility and that essential activities would falter without their involvement:

I don't think I can take on anything more . . . I would like to find a place for myself where I can do something without being sucked into the vortex of overload.
(lay leader, congregation Z; page 13)

The second distinction is that members expect the organisation to take their views into account more than volunteers do. Each denomination has its own polity, but members are usually involved in governance, either directly or through a representative.

It is important for the priest to consult key people in the congregation when decisions are being taken involving financial expenditure or worship or the organisation of the church. It's not a matter of the priest administering to the people . . . the church is the people.
(lay leader, congregation Y; page 17).

The third distinction Harris draws is that in congregations, members have religious expectations of the clergy that give those clergy added authority.

People think that because [Rabbi] says x, then x is right.
(lay leader, congregation Z; page 17)

Volunteers may accord clergy respect because of their leadership, but they do not feel subject to their authority out of religious conviction.

I would support the three distinctions drawn by Harris and add a further three from my own study. First, that members have a greater sense of reciprocity than do volunteers. That is, members see their relationship with the congregation as an exchange where their contribution builds up an organisation on which they themselves rely.

I don't mind giving people lifts. It's not always convenient, but I think to myself, 'I'll probably need someone to do this for me one of these days,' and so I keep helping.
(member, congregation C).

Second, that members have a better overview of the work of the organisation than volunteers and will try to make helpful connections, whether or not it is their 'job' to do so. Members seem to show a sense of responsibility for the organisation as a whole rather than purely for the work they undertake.

When the Drop-in Centre is planning an outing, I let the leader of the Ladies Fellowship know so she doesn't go and book a special speaker for that afternoon. I wouldn't want her to have a poor turnout if she'd planned something special.
(member, congregation D)

The third difference I found was that members distinguish less between their private and public roles than volunteers do. The work they do for the organisation is seen in the context of all those aspects of their life that are involved in church membership. This includes not only a public commitment to the values of the church but also family ties and long-standing friendships.

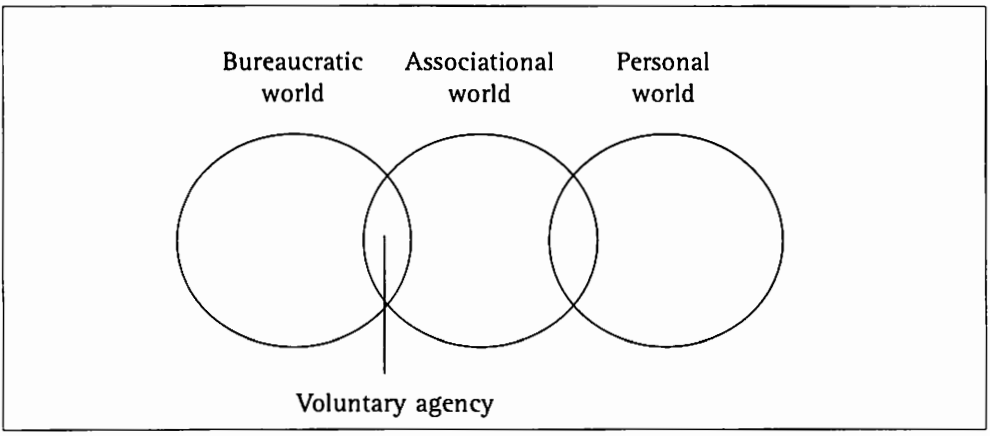
Members come as whole people.
(lay leader, congregation D)

This part of the paper has attempted to present differences between members and volunteers by presenting data from two research studies of the local church. The next section of the paper seeks to relate the distinctions described above to theory on voluntary organisations.

Discussion

At first sight, none of the distinctions reported seems entirely clear-cut. They seem more a matter of degree than of members and volunteers exhibiting entirely different characteristics. In fact, a valuable discussion of the Guide Association in the first issue of this journal (Nichols and King, 1998) discusses the issues facing active members (guiders) who work alongside non-member volunteers (unit helpers). The empirical work reported seeks the views of paid staff and members but not the non-member volunteers. The paper uses the term volunteer to refer to both members and volunteers. If these distinctions are so fine, do they have theoretical and practical value? This section of the paper attempts to show how these distinctions can be explained and the final section discusses their implications.

Figure 1: The worlds of the voluntary sector



Davis Smith (1996, page 196) suggests that the management of volunteers is made complex because they work in voluntary agencies that inhabit an ambiguous territory between the worlds of the association and the bureaucracy. In making this suggestion, he refers to the theory of voluntary organisations proposed by Billis (1993, chapter 11).

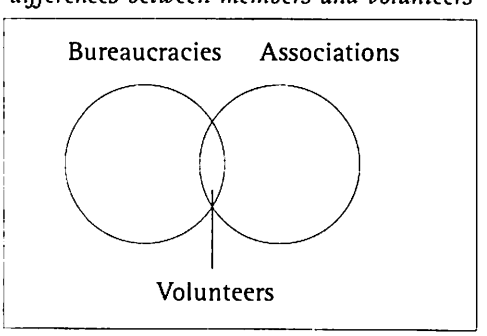
Billis argues that bureaucracies are the characteristic organisational form in the private and public sectors and that associations are characteristic of the voluntary sector. He suggests that the organisational worlds of the bureaucracy and the association are reasonably well defined and follow their own rules. Bureaucracies and associations have their own social hierarchies but they organise work in very different ways. Bureaucracies co-ordinate work according to formal rules. Their goals are set from the top and their work is undertaken by paid staff. Associations co-ordinate work in order to meet goals set by their members. The work is undertaken by unpaid active members who gain a variety of non-monetary rewards from their participation. Some organisations in the voluntary sector experience ambiguity and lack of clarity about which set of rules they should adopt because they have both bureaucratic and associational characteristics. Billis calls these organisations 'voluntary agencies'. A diagrammatic representation of Billis's theory is reproduced as Figure 1.

I want to extend his model by suggesting that paid workers are characteristic of the bureaucratic world and members are characteristic of the world of associations. Weber (1991) argued that the impersonal and impartial nature of bureaucracy was guaranteed by paying workers a wage and seeing their working life as separate from their personal life. Associations, by contrast, are much more personal organisations that exist to satisfy the needs of their members as

private individuals as well as public actors. Members decide their own level of participation in the organisation; the contribution they make is not regulated by a contract. Paid workers and members are similar in that they both constitute the workforces of their organisations. Without some level of involvement from members, associations die.

If this analogy with Billis's model is pursued, volunteers can be seen as occupying an ambiguous zone which contains some of the assumptions of both the world of paid work and the world of membership. Volunteers are like members in that they participate for no pay. Volunteers are like paid workers in that they have to agree to participate in a way that enables the organisation to achieve its objectives. If a charity shop has a number of volunteers, it can only operate effectively if those volunteers work the hours they have agreed to and undertake the tasks they have been given. They may be given more discretion over the hours they work and the tasks they do than a paid member of staff would be allowed, but they must nonetheless conform to certain requirements if they are to be of use. Figure 2 tries to represent this model.

Figure 2: Model for understanding the differences between members and volunteers



If this way of explaining the concepts of member and volunteer is accepted, then it seems probable that the differences between members and volunteers will be a matter of degree rather than clear-cut distinctions. Billis's theory suggests that organisations which closely fit the definitions of bureaucracy or association inhabit worlds where there are reasonably clear 'rules of the game'. Organisations in the ambiguous zone will adopt a variety of arrangements, with some approximating more closely to bureaucracies and others more closely to associations. This variety adds to the confusion and to the difficulty of predicting how any particular agency will operate. Similarly, if my analogy is accepted, some volunteers will be treated very like paid staff, with job descriptions, formal training and set hours. Other volunteers might be expected to behave more like members, defining the work they will undertake and seeing how it fits into the overall task of the organisation. The paper by Rochester (1999) printed elsewhere in this issue helpfully discusses the range of settings in which volunteers may operate and the different experiences they may have, depending on their setting. The local church setting explored in this paper is predominantly associational, and so it seems likely that the volunteers in these settings are being treated more like members than paid staff. Nevertheless, distinctions between members and volunteers are apparent.

Returning to the distinctions set out in the previous section of the paper, it now seems possible to offer some tentative explanations for them.

The greater commitment of members to organisational values could be seen as signifying the fact that membership involves joining an organisation and so giving assent to its values. To make a donation of time to an organisation does not necessarily imply a wholehearted endorsement of its values, although some willingness to identify with the organisation is likely.

The greater expectations of members that their views will be taken into account could be seen as a reflection of the role of members in the governance of their organisation. Volunteers may be consulted, but their role does not assume that they will be involved in decision making by virtue of their donation of unpaid work. A volunteer might reasonably be consulted about an issue that affected his or her work. A member would expect to be consulted or directly involved in any significant organisational decision.

Harris's observation of members' expectations of clergy, and of the added authority accorded to clergy, fits with the earlier observation that members are signing up to the values of the organisations they join. If the positions of authority in those organisations are reinforced by religious values, then it is likely that members will accord them respect. Volunteers who do not share those religious values are unlikely to view clergy in the same way.

Looking again at my own findings, I would interpret the greater sense of reciprocity felt by members as a signal that their primary commitment is to the organisation. Volunteers are more likely to have the beneficiaries of their work in mind rather than the purposes of the organisation for which they work. A membership organisation may have no obvious beneficiaries other than the members themselves.

My finding that members have a better overview of the work of the organisation than volunteers may stem from the fact that members are more likely to be involved in the governance of their organisation and so be able to see how their contribution fits into the total mission of the organisation. Their commitment to the success of the organisation means that they will act without any external prompting to make helpful connections between different activities.

The final distinction offered was that members are less likely than volunteers to distinguish between their public and private roles. Looking again at Billis's model of the worlds of voluntary organisations, one can see that the associational world lies between the public world of the bureaucracy and the private world of family life. Becoming a member of a voluntary association is the act of a private individual, albeit involving a step into the public domain. By contrast, paid work in a bureaucratic organisation involves making a clear distinction between one's public and private lives and not appropriating the resources of one's public position for private gain. It is a feature of associations that they reflect the private interests of their members and enable

them to gain personal benefit from participation.

In a bureaucracy, the division of labour between workers is decided in a hierarchical way and dictated by the overall purpose of the organisation. The work done by each individual is fixed in a contract and job description, and there are usually some clear expectations about the number of hours to be worked and the work to be undertaken. In an association, the members usually have some say in how the work will be divided up - the division is not dictated by the officers of the association. Furthermore, members have the freedom to decide whether or not they will respond to the expectations of the association that they will engage in unpaid work. The literature reviewed earlier suggested that it is common for there to be substantial variations in the amount of unpaid work contributed by different members. Members are also free to interpret how the work should be done so as to meet the purposes of the association. As the data suggested, this lack of clear expectations about the time to be given can lead to some members being overloaded as well as to some participating in a nominal way. Volunteers seem to be subject to some of the conventions of paid work and some of the expectations of members.

In this part of the paper I have attempted to reflect on the data using Billis's model of the worlds of voluntary organisations. I have tried to extend his model by analogy, suggesting that paid work is characteristic of bureaucracies and that membership is characteristic of associations. Volunteering is an essentially ambiguous form of work that observes some of the conventions of both paid work and membership.

Conclusion

In the discussion, I have tried to suggest that the differences between members and volunteers can be explained by looking at the relationship these two types of unpaid worker have to the organisations they work for. This final part of the paper seeks to explore some of the implications of this suggestion.

As the title of the paper suggests, I would argue that there are worthwhile distinctions to be made between the role of member and volunteer and that it is misleading to term all unpaid work as volunteering. An association looks for its work to be performed 'to the appreciation of its members' (Klauden, 1995, page 281). An organisation that involves volunteers has a service to deliver and needs its unpaid workers to conform to work disciplines that are closer to those of the paid worker. Thus volunteers may welcome a job description as a means of fitting their contribution into the work of colleagues around them. A member may feel insulted by a job description, regarding it as an attempt by another member to dictate how their unpaid work is to be carried out. Common organisational tactics, such as the use of job descriptions, cannot be applied to unpaid workers without thinking about the nature of the relationship between those workers and the organisation.

If such commonplace tools of organisational life as job descriptions can be viewed in different ways, how can the work of active members be managed? Harris (1998, pages 115-117) questions whether the term 'management' is appropriate for membership organisations. Members may be reluctant to be told what to do and may want substantial discretion over how they undertake their work. They are always able to move to being less active members without threatening their status as members, a factor highlighted in the literature review at the beginning of this paper. Furthermore, Harris points out that there can be real problems when a member performs incompetently work that is crucial to the smooth running of the organisation. Finally, there is the sensitive issue of rewarding members for their work. Some members are upset if they are not thanked, others become embarrassed if they are thanked, feeling that the work they do carries its own rewards. Those organising the work of members need to recognise each member's involvement in a way acceptable to that member.

My study of local churches (Cameron, 1998) showed that the way in which work was organised depended upon the way in which power was distributed in the organisation. In some congregations, the clergy could ask members to undertake work, in others a vote of the whole membership was required before work could be initiated. It was the constitution (written or more often unwritten) that determined the distribution of power, which in turn governed the way in which work was organised. Attempts to become 'more businesslike' were usually resisted as alien to the ethos of the church. Organising the work of members seemed to require a thorough knowledge of the constitution and an ability to interpret it sensitively.

These points contrast with the world of paid work, where management is accepted as the means of organising work. A paid worker would expect a certain amount of direction from managers. They would be recruited because of their competence for the work and be held to account if they performed incompetently. Whilst non-monetary recognition is part of managing paid staff effectively, paid workers have their wages as compensation for their efforts.

Managing the work of volunteers again seems to be a blend of both these sets of expectation. I would endorse Rochester's argument (1999) that the work of volunteers can be organised in a number of ways, some akin to membership and some to paid work. Nevertheless, I would argue that the need for volunteers to conform in some respect to the requirements of the work as determined by the organisation will set them apart in some ways from members.

If my argument is accepted, it follows that there are likely to be difficulties - or at least the potential for confusion - when paid staff, volunteers and members work alongside each other. In voluntary agencies, conflicts between paid workers and volunteers are common (Volunteer

Centre UK, 1990). Local churches that engage in programmes for the benefit of their local communities will often have all three types of worker engaged in the same programme. There may be one paid person co-ordinating the programme and overseeing the work of a group of volunteers, some of whom are also church members. If the different roles are not clearly defined, conflicts may arise as a result of the expectations each type of worker has of the others. Church members may expect paid staff to become exemplary church members. Paid staff may expect members to behave as volunteers and conform to the needs of the programme rather than regulate their own participation. Volunteers may resent the way in which church members express their views about the appropriateness of the programme and how it fits into the broader mission of the church.

In practice, it may not be possible to reconcile these overlapping expectations, but it may help those involved to see that unpaid work is not all of one kind and that different relationships with an organisation may result in different behaviour. It may not be possible to resolve the tensions that occur when paid staff, volunteers and members work alongside each other, but the tensions can be handled more creatively when the differences are acknowledged as legitimate.

The value of unpaid work to society is being increasingly recognised and valued. If that unpaid contribution is to be sustained, it is helpful to have theoretical distinctions between different types of unpaid worker so that the organisations they work for can develop relationships that draw an appropriate balance between the bureaucratic and associational models.

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This paper looks at the emergence of the Third Way as the guiding principle of the New Labour government of Tony Blair, and at what implications it has for volunteering in the UK. It is argued that because the Third Way emphasises the development of civil society, this implies a central role for voluntary action. But the government's current policies - apart, of course, from volunteer-specific initiatives - need examining to assess their impact on the development of volunteering, as some are clearly hindering it.

Volunteering for Blair: The Third Way

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Introduction

Volunteering and voluntary action are assuming key roles in the policy agenda of the Labour government. When the prime minister, Tony Blair, gave the keynote speech to 'Third Sector, Third Way', the annual conference of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), in London in January 1999, he asked a 'fundamental question' about:

[What] kind of people we believe we are and what kind of people do we want to become?

He focused attention on:

Each day, in communities across the country, people act out their vision of Britain - rejecting selfishness and embracing community . . . [On] what is happening up and down this great country - ordinary people making an extraordinary difference.

He talked of voluntary organisations, social entrepreneurs, community action and millions of people getting involved in the community. It was a speech that sought intellectual substance, outlining some of the history and philosophy of voluntary action and relating this to government initiatives to support the rebuilding of communities. He asserted that 'government and community need each other':

That is why the Third Sector is such an important part of the Third Way.

This Third Way figures largely in the prime minister's thinking. But what is the Third Way? And how does it relate to voluntary action?

In this article we shall explore the debate about the Third Way and try to analyse its implications for voluntary action and the promotion of volunteering in the UK.

The hole in the middle

According to the commentators who have assumed responsibility for outlining the intellectual foundations of Blairism, the Third Way is of great significance. Charles Leadbeater (1998) believes it is the term around which the character of Blairism will be debated - although at the same time he acknowledges that the vagueness of the idea makes it easy to mock. The Third Way has generated a vast amount of discussion, but so far it is unclear how the concept will contribute to policy development.

The Third Way is neither old-fashioned state socialism nor statist social democracy, nor is it free market neo-liberalism (Giddens 1998a). But for authors such as Kay (1998), the temptation to define the concept by what it is not threatens to make a caricature of it.

Some of the debate is shaping up along party political lines - which is disappointing, given that the Third Way is based on the axiom that the old left-right divisions are irrelevant in the modern world. Those sympathetic to Blair admit that 'with a refreshing openness it is acknowledged that the precise details are still open' (Mikosz 1998:13). Those opposed to Labour prefer to claim, as Michael Howard does (1998), that it is so all-encompassing that nobody is likely to argue with it (he simultaneously argues that the Third Way is an acknowledgement of the fact that Labour cannot intervene economically and is hence an insidious attempt to intervene socially). Others dismiss it as 'so much waffle' (*The Economist* 1998:13).

Standing for values

The key to understanding the Third Way is to see how the Labour Party has been transformed under Blair's leadership. John Sopel, in his biography *Blair the Moderniser* (1995), describes how the Labour defeat in the 1992 general election represented a critical point in Tony Blair's vision of what the Labour Party could do for Britain. The defeat vindicated Blair's view that the party had not changed enough to become attractive to the electorate. The work of the Shadow Communications Agency and its focus groups had persuaded Labour to ditch a vast swathe of policies; but the electorate still rejected the chance to vote in a Labour government (Anderson and Mann 1997). Blair was convinced that something new was needed, that a new era needed a new government, and if that was to be a Labour government it needed to be led by a new sort of Labour Party.

Commentators have noted how Blair's style of governing is influenced by his Christian background and by the ethical socialist political philosopher John Macmurray, who, Blair claimed, was a pioneer of communitarian anti-liberalism (Anderson and Mann 1997). The ideas of communitarianism, with its concern about the breakdown of civilised modes of behaviour and the decline of personal responsibility, together with the call for values and an 'active society' (Gauly 1998), have been absorbed into the language of New Labour.

In Blair's view, this emphasis on responsible individuals did not sit

comfortably with a party whose ideology appeared to the electorate to favour more state intervention. The restructuring of Clause Four was, for Blair, an opportunity to make the party appear more electable and to distance it from the constraints of ideology. Blair's Labour Party shifted its emphasis to talking about mutual responsibility and common purpose, about strong communities being the basis of individual freedom.

Restructuring Clause Four was largely a symbolic act, but to some it suggested that Labour had lost sight of its fundamental beliefs. It was not a question of defending Labour's ideology, but a perception that:

Without such principles New Labour risks being no more than a group of well-intentioned men and women making it up as they go along (Hutton 1998a).

Blair, however, had said that he and his party were guided by the 'underlying system of values 'which 'was one of the Labour Party's greatest strengths'. Moreover:

My value system is based on a belief about individuals and the society in which they live. It is only in a strong and active community that the individual thrives (Blair 1996a).

The question for Blair now was how to get his ideas about governance over to the public. For a while, it looked as though Labour was going to adopt stakeholding as its Big Idea; after all, Blair had said as much:

There is a big idea left in politics. It goes under a variety of names - stakeholding, one nation, inclusion, community - but it is quite simple. It is that no society can ever prosper economically or socially unless all its people prosper, unless we use the talents and energies of all people rather than just the few, unless we live up to the ambition to create a society where the community works for the good of every individual, and every individual works for the good of the community (Blair 1996b: x-xi).

Stakeholding at the heart

Around this time Will Hutton (1996) published *The State We're In*, his view of the problems facing Britain's economy and society. The fact that the book became a best-seller seemed to show how willing people were to join in the search for new ideas. In his critique of British capitalism, Hutton argued for a stakeholder economy that would involve the reform of the present system, which is typified by the short-term approach of the City. Although the book gained many supporters, there were also many who believed that Hutton's stakeholding was too much of a complement to the interventionist German and Japanese economies. Worse, for many it was too close to the views of Old Labour.

Blair distanced himself from Hutton's Keynesian and corporatist approach, and consequently any idea Blair may have had about a stakeholder economy became modified into a plea for a stakeholder society. Once this distinction was made, the remit of stakeholding became imprecise, and critics found it

easy to demolish notions of how a stakeholding society might come about (Plender 1997). Eventually stakeholding was quietly filed in the drawer labelled 'non-starters', to make way for the Third Way - even though Hutton argues that many of the values and ideas cited as belonging to the Third Way are part of the stakeholder agenda (Hutton 1998).

Enter the Third Way

Stakeholding seemed above all the embodiment of Blair's values. Roy Hattersley, who is often critical of Blair, concedes that he is most definitely a man of principle; the problem is that these principles are so all-encompassing that 'they can easily be mistaken for an elegant version of pub talk' (Hattersley 1997). And there may be the rub: stakeholding was said to exemplify Blair's values, yet it crumpled too easily under criticism, and the Third Way is, as yet, even more amorphous. This time, however, Blair clearly wishes to produce a coherent idea that can withstand scrutiny - and furthermore, something that is workable and practical. In an editorial, the *New Statesman* noted:

Given the amount of capital Blair has invested in the concept of the Third Way, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that . . . Blair is deadly serious about the need to construct a distinctive ideological platform for the centre left. The Third Way may be an ugly term with a chequered history, but it is not one of those New Labour phrases tested in a single speech and then discarded (such as 'the giving society') or, like 'stakeholding', seized upon without proper understanding of its contemporary meaning. Blair has invested sufficiently heavily in the Third Way game that he had better continue to spend, or look foolish (New Statesman 1998:4)

Straddling the paradoxes

In order to grasp what the Third Way means, we need to break out of comfortable ways of thinking. Its argument is that, at the end of the twentieth century, the old left-right divisions cannot accommodate the issues that need to be addressed: today's solutions are not on the same continuum as yesterday's. The Third Way is an attempt to come to grips with some apparent paradoxes. Marquand (1998a) describes these as: how to square notions of individuality with maintaining that there is still a role for collectivity; and how to govern in the post-Thatcher era of political centralisation while being committed to devolution at all levels.

The Third Way owes much to the working relationship Blair developed with Clinton's Democrats whilst still in opposition. New Labour and the Democrats have a history of shared aims, and Labour received extensive briefings on how Clinton won his elections. Blair and Clinton both believe that government must go beyond the old arguments of left and right. Clinton claimed:

We have moved beyond the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say government is the answer. My fellow Americans, we have found a third way (quoted in Thompson and Aikens 1998:22).

The talks between Blair and Clinton have as their basis US research into how government can be made more efficient, how democratic accountability can be increased and how the nature of the social contract between citizen and government is changing. The enduring problem is to find a philosophical base from which to tackle the task. Both Clinton and Blair recognise the new problems that globalisation brings, and both are sure that the old political divisions cannot produce the answer (Lloyd and Bilefsky 1998).

There is then a conviction that the Third Way is neither left nor right, nor even between the two, but is something new and beyond, which nonetheless has roots. Blair has claimed that he knows what the Third Way is:

My view of this idea is very very clear. It is that it offers a way between not merely the politics of the new right - laissez-faire, leave everything to the markets, social indifference - and the politics of the new left - state control, run everything through the centre - but that it also offers a way forward between the two types of left politics traditionally, one of which was principled ... [one of which] was 'pragmatic', but which basically involved saying we just want to get the same things more gradually. It's an attempt to say there's a principled position which is also entirely sensible, and it is about taking the values of the left - social justice, solidarity, community, democracy, liberty - and recasting them and reshaping them for the new world (Blair quoted in Kettle 1998).

Is this a clear enough vision of what the Third Way is about, and can it inform the electorate about how Labour is to govern? Barry Knight (1998) has noted that the search for a Third Way to bring together public, private and voluntary initiatives and create new blends of civil society and governance is 'causing a strange mix of confusion and excitement'. But what effect will the Third Way have on volunteering?

Third Sector, Third Way

In *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Anthony Giddens (1998b) highlights the role that voluntary work can play in fostering civil society. Volunteering, he argues, can contribute to a process of deepening and widening democracy, which is a basic part of the politics of the Third Way. Giddens suggests that equality as we know it has been defined in terms of the old left and right, but in the Third Way it can be defined differently. Thus, equality becomes defined as inclusion and inequality as exclusion.

Such definitions can be seen to correspond to the structures that the government is establishing for tackling problems. Thus, the Social Exclusion Unit has a brief to identify and link issues which can inform action to prevent exclusion. Similarly, the Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) is being reorganised as the Active Community Unit (ACU), a new name which suggests that the focus is being placed on involving people within communities. The current director of the VCU acknowledges that the transformation from VCU to ACU,

announced in Blair's speech to the NCVO, will include work that stresses the value of involvement in community action of all types (Webber 1999).

Similarly, the Prime Minister's message in the Compact between government and the voluntary sector emphasises the role of volunteering and voluntary action:

The work of voluntary and community organisations is central to the Government's mission to make this the Giving Age. They enable individuals to contribute to the development of their communities. By so doing, they promote citizenship, help to re-establish a sense of community and make a crucial contribution to our shared aim of a just and inclusive society (Home Office 1998:2).

Thus, voluntary and community organisations provide a vehicle for transforming society and for individuals voluntary action contributes to that transformation.

The Compact goes on to say:

The underlying philosophy of the Compact is that voluntary and community activity is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society. Voluntary and community groups, as independent, not-for-profit organisations, bring distinctive value to society and fulfil a role that is distinct from both the state and the market (Home Office 1998, paragraph 5).

The question that must be asked is: How is this different from the way in which governments have previously encouraged volunteering? It could perhaps be argued that, from a Third Way perspective, volunteering is an end in itself. Services delivered by voluntary organisations and volunteers are as important as they ever were, but the actual process of volunteering and being involved in communities is just as important. One could say that the government is rebranding volunteering as a Third Way activity.

New Labour has started to put into practice policies designed to expand volunteering. These reflect the ethos that former Home Office minister Alun Michael outlined at the 1998 National Centre for Volunteering's Geraldine Aves Memorial Lecture when he said:

Voluntary activity is the essential act of citizenship (Michael, 1998).

Initiatives aimed at encouraging volunteering include the Millennium Volunteers scheme for young people, which sets out to build partnerships that emphasise inclusion. Once again, the thinking behind the scheme appears to link voluntary action with citizenship; David Blunkett said of the scheme:

It will help to create a society in which young people are offered the opportunity to get involved in their communities through voluntary activity. Millennium Volunteers will provide a springboard for them to do this. It will help to create a society in which young people are offered

the opportunity both to do something in their community and benefit themselves from new awards (DfEE, 1999).

Significantly, this initiative sets out to encourage involvement by all types of young people, whether they are employed, unemployed or in education. The focus is therefore on involvement as a way of increasing the participation of young people in civil society, rather than on volunteering as a means of gaining employment. This is consistent with the Third Way, which has the overarching aim of promoting an inclusiveness that is more than just economic.

Thus, Millennium Volunteers exemplifies the logic of the Third Way. However, we should ask how far the philosophy of the Third Way will help to shape strategic thinking beyond isolated initiatives. Justin Davis Smith (1998) in the launch issue of this journal showed that the attempts of the last Conservative prime minister, John Major, to promote volunteering through the Make a Difference programme foundered because of a lack of strategic thinking. It is salutary to remember that Major spoke strongly for volunteering as part of his vision of Englishness, and that his volunteering policy might have emerged as an important ingredient of his moral claims on behalf of Conservatism.

If the government does want to promote volunteering, it must recognise that volunteering-specific policies are only part of the answer. It must heed its own rhetoric about 'joined up' policy. It is of little use aiming to promote voluntary activity if other policies contradict that aim. The following are examples of where policies may impede voluntary activity.

Currently, one of the chief ways in which money is made available to projects designed to encourage volunteering and community action is through the Single Regeneration Budget. The published guidance on applying for regeneration money repeats all the usual arguments about combating exclusion, getting people involved locally and so forth. Regeneration is clearly something that the Social Exclusion Unit takes an interest in - and so, quite obviously, will the new Active Community Unit. And yet the Government Offices for the Regions, which currently co-ordinate the SRB spend find it almost impossible to supply meaningful data on how many people became involved in volunteering in their communities as a result of the input of substantial amounts of government money.

Another major inconsistency is evident in the government's attitude towards asylum seekers: it encourages active citizenship by applicants for UK residency but prevents them from volunteering. This anomaly is thrown into yet sharper focus when the government is trying to encourage everybody else to volunteer. Why set asylum seekers even further apart from the rest of society?

There is also confusion about how volunteering by jobseekers is viewed. Almost by definition, unemployed people

are more liable than most other people to suffer from social exclusion; and hence, one might assume, they would benefit more from government policies aimed at encouraging involvement. However, this is not borne out by the experience of jobseekers, who find themselves at risk of losing benefits if they take up voluntary work.

Current proposals to make volunteers pay for their criminal records to be checked also seem to work against involving more people in volunteering. Although the need to screen people who volunteer to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is not disputed, the current proposals place the burden on volunteers or voluntary organisations, and thus potentially deter volunteers from the less well-off sections of society. Again, these are likely to be people from the 'socially excluded' groups; and again, this is not a good example of joined up policy in action.

Conclusions

In this paper we have looked at the emergence of the Third Way and its implications for volunteering. We have noted that Third Way politics place emphasis on the development of civil society and that this implies a central role for volunteering. However, aside from volunteer-specific initiatives, we have noted that all government policies need examining to assess their impact on the development of volunteering.

It is hard to see how the Third Way, as it has been articulated so far, can answer many of the questions that volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations want answered. It may not need to proceed much beyond broad moral exhortation, a signpost for the journey: the Third Way is perhaps a moving spirit, not a policy statement or programme.

David Marquand (1998b) in his ESRC lecture 'Must Labour Win?' worried about the fact that the Blair government had not resolved the tension in Labour thinking between concentration and diffusion of power. Although the logic of Blairism tended towards diffusion and pluralism, the uneasy suspicion is that it may in fact reinforce concentration and centralisation.

Blair's NCVO speech reveals a similar tension - perhaps another paradox of the Third Way. He talked of 'millions of people making millions of decisions', of voluntary and community organisations in the plural, and occasionally of 'communities', but he emphasised common purpose and 'the community' in the singular. He espoused plurality but sounded unitary. There is room to develop both diversity and common purpose in what Marquand (1998b), echoing Karl Popper, referred to as the Open Society, but that demands a proclamation and a strategy of pluralism. It could be that the way in which government support for voluntary action and volunteering works to resolve that paradox will prove to be the most rigorous scrutiny of the substance and workability of the Third Way.

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Research Update

Abstracts of research on volunteering since 1997

UNITED KINGDOM

Older people, the environment and voluntary activity

Engage Scotland, Age Concern Scotland
Report of a focus group study conducted in Scotland during spring 1998 to examine the scope for involving older people in voluntary activity related to the environment.
Contact: Engage Scotland, Age Concern Scotland, Unit 1-C-1, Templeton Business Centre, Templeton Street, Glasgow G40 1DA.

Supporting community participation: the role and impact of befriending

Dean, Jo; Goodlad, Robina
Research, based on a survey of befriending organisations in England, Wales and Scotland, that explores how befriending is organised and delivered and the different perspectives of the people involved.
Contact: Jo Dean, Centre for Housing Research Studies, University of Glasgow, 25-28 Bute Gardens, Glasgow G12 8RS.

Altruism and blood donation: qualitative research report

Research Division, Central Office of Information
Investigation into public perceptions and understanding of altruism, in an attempt to determine the position of giving blood along the spectrum of altruistic behaviour and its relevance to increasing the motivation to give blood. Carried out on behalf of the Department of Health National Blood Service.
Contact: Research Division, Central Office of Information, Hercules Road, London SE1 7DU (Quote COI Ref: 4119)

Valuing the voluntary sector in Devon and Cornwall

PROSPER
Mapping exercise on the state of the voluntary sector and volunteering in south-west England.
Contact: PROSPER, PROSPER House, Budshead Road, Crownhill, Plymouth PL6 5XR.
E-mail: help@prosper-group.co.uk

Lending a hand: volunteering in support of carers

Carers National Association in Wales
An assessment, focusing on the views of carers in Wales, of the feasibility of involving volunteers to support carers in their caring role. The findings form the basis of good practice guidelines to assist volunteer organisations currently running, or wishing to set up, services.
Contact: Carers National Association in Wales, Pant-glas Industrial Estate, Bedwas, Newport NP1 8DR.

The UK voluntary (third) sector in comparative perspective: exceptional growth and transformation

Kendall, Jeremy; Almond, Stephen
Analysis of the UK voluntary sector, making comparisons with the non-profit sector in other countries; part of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project.
Contact: Personal Social Services Research Unit, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NF.

Mutuality and voluntarism: a 'third way' of welfare reform?

Green, David

Tony Blair laid down three guiding principles for welfare reform: people in genuine need should be helped; people capable of working should work; and people should provide for themselves when they can. Self-help dates back to the founding of voluntary friendly societies for men and women, which have survived. Public/private partnerships have been proposed, but there are dangers in these. In *Social Policy Review* 10.

Contact: Social Policy Association, London Guildhall University, London E1 1NT.

Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund action research project

Wotherspoon, Lynn

Initial data-gathering stage of this project, based on work done between February and July 1998. Based on semi-structured interviews and group sessions using an approach known as Participatory Appraisal, where opinions and suggestions of project workers, staff, volunteers and management committee members were gathered.

Contact: Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund, Comely Park House, 80 New Row, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 7EJ.

Youth and social action: a longitudinal study of young people's involvement in social action

Trust for the Study of Adolescence

Part of a Youth, Citizenship and Social Change research programme commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). This project, based on a study of young people engaged in voluntary activity, will focus on the contribution made by young people to society, with the aim of challenging the negative image of youth today; due for completion in 2001.

Contact: Trust for the Study of Adolescence, 23 New Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1WZ.

Research, policy and practice forum on young people: creating a dialogue and improving links - the report of the launch of the forum

National Youth Agency

A collection of papers delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Research and Practice Forum on Young People. The aim of the forum is to promote links between research, policy and practice in key areas of young people's lives.

Contact: National Youth Agency, 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD, UK.

Developing local compacts: relationships between local public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sectors

Craig, Gary; Taylor, Marilyn; Szanto, Clare; Wilkinson, Mick

A six-month feasibility study of the potential for local level compacts between the voluntary and community sectors and local government.

Contact: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP. A summary of this report can be found at their Web site at www.jrf.org.

INTERNATIONAL

Nonprofit organisations in the 21st century: will sector matter?

Kramer, Ralph M.

Explores the policy research implications of the development of the nonprofit sector over the past 25 years, looking at different perspectives on nonprofits and their relationship with government and the commercial sector.

Contact: Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, The Aspen Institute, 1333 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Suite 1070, Washington DC 20036, USA.
E mail: nsrf@aspeninst.org
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Combining professionalism with voluntarism

Berlin, Anders; Alberto, Jose; Grimoldi, Rocha

An examination of the work of volunteers alongside professionals in the Red Cross. It gives examples of combining voluntarism and professionalism, and suggests ways of improving the image, competence and management of both volunteers and professionals.

Contact: Institut Henri Dunant, 114 rue de Lausanne, 1202 Genève, Switzerland.

An empirical study of corporate volunteer motivations for baby boomers and Generation X: critical issues in nonprofit management and leadership

Safrit, R. Dale; Merrill, Mary

Compares and contrasts motivations and barriers to volunteering among Generation X and baby boomer employees in a US-based company. Looks at the implications for managers of corporate volunteer programmes.

Contact: R Dale Safrit, Department of Human and Community Resource Development, The Ohio State University, Room 216, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1067, USA.
E-mail: safrit@osu.edu

Management implications of contemporary trends in volunteerism

Safrit, R. Dale; Merrill, Mary

An examination of recent trends in volunteering in the USA, based on societal trends, published literature and extensive personal knowledge of volunteer management. The article identifies ten key trends in volunteering.

Contact: R Dale Safrit, Department of Human and Community Resource Development, The Ohio State University, Room 216, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1067, USA.
E-mail: safrit@osu.edu

Personality development in current, former and new older volunteers

Morros, Melinda; Pushkar, Dolores; and Reis, Myrna

Examines the potential of volunteering for promoting personality development for older adults. Based on longitudinal research on retired people who volunteered and those who did not.

Contact: Melinda Morros, Centre for Research in Human Development, Concordia University, Department of Psychology, 7141 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec H4B 1R6, Canada.

Government policy and volunteerism: exploring the missing link(s) cross-nationally

Brudney, Jeffrey L.; Williamson, Arthur
An examination of how government policies and rhetoric have helped to raise the profile of volunteerism in the USA and Northern Ireland, but have not necessarily led to productive volunteer programmes. Looks at the relationship between the existence of a strong volunteering infrastructure and the success of government-funded volunteering initiatives.
Contact: Arthur Williamson, Centre for Voluntary Action Studies, University of Ulster, Coleraine, N. Ireland, UK.

An integrated conceptual model of volunteer motivation: going beyond psychological needs

Johnson, Diane J.
An attempt to define and explore volunteer motivation and come up with a model that shows the range of diverse factors affecting people's willingness to volunteer.
Contact: Diane J. Johnson, Interdisciplinary Studies, Tufts University, Boston, MA 02155, USA. E-mail: djohnson@tufts.edu

Motivation, personality and psychological outcomes of volunteering for older citizens

Pushkar, Dolores; Reis, Myrna
Research to determine whether participating in volunteering increased the well-being and subjective health of older participants; the study found no significant difference between participants before and after their voluntary work.
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McBeath, Bowen; Shook, Jeffrey J.; Spencer, Michael S.
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A study of whether non-profit, public and for-profit hospitals and health care organisations have similar policies on volunteer involvement; based on a survey in San Diego County.
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An attempt to apply the Job Characteristics Model (J. Richard Hackman and Greg R. Oldham in *Work Redesign*, Addison-Wesley Publishing 1980) to measure volunteer satisfaction. The model includes: skill variety, task

identity, task significance, autonomy and job feedback.
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E-mail: klmalec@manchester.edu

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Research Supplement

A practical guide to electronic resources about volunteering

This guide examines the array of electronic resources about volunteering currently available via the Internet and e-mail. It begins with a brief discussion of how this guide should be approached and gives details of the rating system used. Part two of the guide is subtitled 'Getting to grips with electronic resources' and should be the starting point for people with only a limited knowledge of these types of resources. Those with more experience and knowledge should be able to go straight to part three, which lists the specific volunteering resources.

Disclaimer: All ratings in this guide are based solely upon the opinion of the author. Resources were checked at 9 April 1999 and were still active at this date. Electronic resources can change very quickly, however, and no responsibility can be taken for changes that occur after going to press.

A practical guide to electronic resources about volunteering

Mark Gannon, Institute for Volunteering Research

Part 1: Introduction

When in the early 1990s the Internet began to be taken seriously as a means of world-wide communication and information exchange, there would have been few sites specifically catering for people interested in volunteering. Now, a keyword search for 'volunteer' or 'volunteering' on one of the best search engines will return up to 3,000 matches, ranging from individual volunteer-involving organisations to archived resources on volunteer management. The purpose of this guide is to make sense of the growing amount of resources available. Because of the range of these resources, the guide is split into various sections.

This guide can be approached in two ways. Users can either read it in its entirety and examine all the resources that are reviewed, or they can pick out only those resources that are useful to them. The approach taken will depend on the extent of the user's knowledge of electronic resources and the area(s) they are interested in. Whichever approach is taken, readers will find this guide user-friendly and it should meet the needs of anyone wanting a comprehensive but accessible introduction to the resources

available via electronic means. It should be noted that the term 'resources' is used as a catch-all to cover Web sites, discussion lists and other electronic resources, although the majority of the resources reviewed will be Web sites.

Part two of the guide contains general information on electronic resources and a discussion of the terms users need to understand. This can be a good starting point for people who have little experience of the Internet or its related tools. The resources discussed include Web sites, search engines, electronic discussion lists and e-mail; all these are reviewed and rated. In this guide, resources are placed into specific categories; although some could go into more than one category, they are placed in the one that seems to represent the major focus of the information.

Part three is the main body of the guide and contains an evaluation of the resources specific to volunteering. It is divided into several subject areas, ranging from volunteer matching to resources for researchers of volunteering. A huge amount of resources are available on volunteering, and this guide obviously cannot include reviews of all of them. Instead, the resources that are listed and reviewed should be seen as a starting point to equip users with the tools necessary to access other resources currently available.

Web sites in the guide are given a rating of up to five stars. It is not feasible to rate e-mail mailing lists, as the quality of a listserv or discussion group will depend on the topics for discussion and the quality of the list participants, both of which can change dramatically over a short period of time. The ratings are based on several criteria. Firstly, the resource is evaluated on its speed and reliability; secondly, on its appearance, design and overall user-friendliness; and thirdly, and most importantly, on its content. Figure 1 shows the ratings used in this guide. Resources are rated on how useful they are to people interested in volunteering. A resource may be excellent in itself (eg five stars), but have only limited appeal (eg three stars) for those interested in volunteering. These ratings should guide the user in choosing which resources to access. An ideal electronic resource should be quick and easy to use, well designed, look attractive and provide the user with an informative service. It is particularly important as we move towards an even more inclusive electronic age that resources should stand out from the crowd.

Figure 1: Ratings used in this guide

*****	Indispensable: a top class resource in every way.
****	Excellent: highly recommended resource with minor reservations.
***	Good: well worth further investigation.
**	Average: may be of some interest.
*	Poor: only use if there is nothing better available.
●	No rating: a badly put-together resource of little or no value.

Users are reminded that all ratings in this guide are based on the resource itself and not the organisation or individual providing it. So it may be that a small organisation with little money has put together a Web site that gets a poor rating. Unfortunately, however, the ratings cannot take into account factors such as the money available. Having said this, it is not always the case that the biggest organisations provide the best resources.

Part 2: Getting to grips with electronic resources

This section is intended as a brief introduction for people with only a limited knowledge of tools such as e-mail and the Internet. Users who are unclear about the meaning of any terms should consult Appendix 1, which lists the main terms that users will come across in their online activities.

Introductory resources

Novice users of the Internet should use as their starting point one of the introductory guides that can be found online. There is a comprehensive listing of these at Yahoo (http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/Information_and_ Documentation/Beginner_s_Guides/ ****). For total novices, useful starting points are Matt's 5 Minute Guide to the Internet (http://members.iquest.net/~mjdecap/ beginrs.htm ***), The HelpWeb (http://www.imaginarylandscape.com/helpweb/www/www.html ****) and the excellent and comprehensive Beginners' Central (http://northernwebs.com/bc/ *****). Other good introductory sites include the University of Newcastle's Netskills (http://www.netskills.ac.uk/ ****) and the Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet (http://www.eff.org/pub/Net_info/Big_Dummy/ ****).

Search engines

Once you have a grasp of what electronic resources are, you will probably want to look for some. Search engines are a good place to start, as they are usually fast and provide extensive listings of resources. The best search engines in terms of content and user-friendliness are Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com *****) and Altavista (http://www.altavista.com/ *****). Altavista also provides a language translation facility (http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate ****). Other popular search engines include Lycos (http://www.lycos.co.uk/ ****), Excite (http://www.excite.com/ ****) and Infoseek(http://infoseek.go.com/Home/Home.html *****). Many search engines also have country-specific sections: for example, Yahoo UK and Ireland. Search engines often provide other services, such as free personalised e-mail and free Web space. A listing of most of the other major search engines can be found at Beaucoup Search Engines (http://www.beaucoup.com/engines.html ***). Another very useful resource is Ask Jeeves (http:// www.askjeeves.com/ *****). This is termed a Meta Search Engine, as it functions like several search engines searching at the same. It can save you having to use several different search engines separately to get the information you need.

Listservs and e-mail discussion lists
If you want to know what listservs are currently in operation, there are several resources available. Start by checking out the official list of lists at L-Soft International (http://www.lsoft.com/catalist.html *****), which allows you to search for lists by keyword or by country. A quick search for 'volunteer' threw up twenty-three matches, ranging from a list for volunteer management professionals to a list for returned Peace Corps volunteers. Alternatively, you can try Vivian Neou's Web Site (http://catalog.com/vivian/interest-group-search.html ****). This is a 'list of lists' which allows you to search for listservs on any topic you define. Another excellent resource is the extensive searchable directory of listservs provided by Topica (http://www.topica.com/ *****). You can subscribe to the listed discussion lists directly from this site, and you can even set up your own e-mail discussion list, which makes this site very worthwhile. You can also try Liszt (http://www.liszt.com ****) or Reference.com (http://www.reference.com/ ****). Munn Heydorn's extensive Internet and Related Online Resources (http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/ellens/Non/online.html ***) is both a very extensive listing of electronic resources available on housing, health and human service for voluntary organisations and a decent guide to the types of general online resources available. Although it has not been updated for quite a while, it is nonetheless well worth a look.

Part 3: A review of electronic resources on volunteering

This section of the guide follows the same layout and style as section one and uses the same rating system. Here you will find resources available online that are specifically related to volunteering. The resources are subdivided into several sections to make it easier for users to choose what is appropriate for them.

Volunteer management
Many online resources will be useful to volunteer managers. If you want to learn about volunteer management and improve your computer skills at the same time, you should go to Washington State University's online volunteer management certificate programme (http://vmcp.wsu.edu/welcome.html ****). The site also has a useful self-test that volunteer managers can use to see how well they are involving their volunteers (http://vmcp.wsu.edu/selftest/ ****). Philip Walker has produced a useful set of links to resources on volunteerism and activism at the Nonprofit Resources Catalogue Web site (http://www.clark.net/pub/pwalker/General_Nonprofit_ Resources/Volunteerism_and_Activism/ ***). The site includes links to other lists and links to specific organisations, and although some of the resources are more broadly voluntary sector-related, this site should still prove useful to volunteer managers and researchers. The excellent CyberVPM.com (http://www.cybervpm.com/ *****) is more focused on volunteering and contains many resources for volunteer managers *and* volunteers. It includes an online

bookshop with 'volunteerism' books by Susan J. Ellis and Steve McCurley, a self-paced tutorial for volunteer programme staff, in-depth articles on volunteer management and details of the CyberVPM Discussion Group. To join this list, you should send an e-mail to listserv@CharityChannel.com and in the body of the message type SUBSCRIBE CYBERVPM Firstname Lastname (e.g. SUBSCRIBE CYBERVPM Mark Gannon).

Another outstanding resource is provided by Energize, the international training, consulting and publishing firm led by the renowned Susan J. Ellis. Its excellent Web site (http://www.energizeinc.com/ *****) will interest volunteer managers and includes an archive of hot topics since 1997, some interesting volunteering articles, an online bookshop, a volunteering library and some useful links to other volunteering-related resources. There is also a 'job bank' where volunteer managers can search for a new post. Volunteer managers may also wish to check out Volunteer Today, which is 'an electronic gazette for volunteerism' (http://www. volunteertoday.com ****). This monthly journal provides information and advice on volunteer management: for example, the February 1999 issue contains news on the United Nations Year of the Volunteer 2001 and Volunteers Week, advice on volunteer recruitment and criminal record checks, information about training, resources for National Volunteers Week and an 'agony aunt' section for volunteer managers where you can ask questions about volunteer management. You can also search the archives.

If online resources get too much for you, the Web site of the Internet Nonprofit Centre (http://www.nonprofits.org/lib /bib3.html ***) will provide you with a useful bibliography that lists various paper publications relating to volunteering. The majority of the books are on volunteer management, although there are other topics, including the history of volunteering in the US. Volunteer managers in public organisations will be interested in the Web site of GOV-VPM (http://www. cybervpm.com/gov-vpm/ ***), which provides resources for government-based volunteer programmes. It includes links to other related resources, some news and views, and information on how you can join the GOV-VPM discussion group, which is aimed at volunteer managers working in government. To subscribe to this list, go to the Web page of the discussion group (http://www.cybervpm.com/gov-vpm/ howjoin.htm) and follow the instructions.

Volunteer managers specifically interested in health-related resources should go to the Web site of the Lyell McEwin Health Service Volunteer Association Inc. (http://george.mdt. net.au/~fryar/links.htm ***). This is simply a list of links to other Web sites, mainly health-related volunteering sites. It gives many useful links but is not particularly user-friendly, which brings its rating down somewhat. The Nonprofit Resource Centre's Web site has a section on nonprofit staffing and volunteer management (http://www.not-for-profit. org/hr.htm *) which has a few volunteering resources, but otherwise the site has limited appeal.

Researchers
Many electronic resources will be useful to researchers of volunteering, especially the various sites online providing statistics and research reports on volunteering. For example, the Points of Light Foundation (http://www.pointsoflight.org/involved/VolunteerFactsStatsSheet001.htm ****) produces an easily digestible fact sheet containing statistics on volunteering in the USA. The Web site of Independent Sector (http://www.indepsec.org/programs/research/factsfigs.htm ****) contains interesting and useful data on volunteering trends in the USA; you can also download two free publications called *America's Teenage Volunteers* and *America's Senior Volunteers*. At the Web site of Statistics Canada, you can access an article on 'The 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating' (http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980824/d980824.htm ****) which contains a useful discussion of volunteering in Canada and gives some interesting statistics. Internationally, the United Nations (http://www.unv.org/volstats/index.htm ***) produces statistics on its volunteers, which are broken down monthly over the last three years. There are also limited statistics for 1995-96.

Another source of statistics and research is the Web site of the Institute for Volunteering Research. This is an initiative of the National Centre for Volunteering and the University of East London, and at its Web site (http://www.volunteering.org.uk/institute.htm ****) you will find summaries of recent research projects. These include *The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering, What Young People Want From Volunteering* and *Potential of a Lifetime: A Study of Older Volunteers in 25 Organisations*. There is also information on the Institute's new journal, *Voluntary Action*.

Other sites provide articles and reports that will be useful for researchers. Volunteer Vancouver has an online facility that enables you to search its library database by keyword. It seems to be quite comprehensive and they lend as well as photocopy materials (http://www.vancouver.volunteer.ca/resources/resource_library.asp ****). US Society and Values is another interesting site, one of a series of electronic journals published online by the United States Information Agency (http://www.usia.gov/journals/itsv/0998/ijse/toc.htm ****). It contains informative articles on a wide range of volunteering issues by authors ranging from Susan J. Ellis to Bill Clinton. A searchable bibliographical database of UK community and voluntary sector written research resources can be found online at VOLNET UK's Web site (http://www.unl.ac.uk:9999/volnet/volnet.html ***). This site contains only one third of the full VOLNET UK database, which is available by subscription, but is still a useful resource nonetheless. Details of the full database, which is available on CD-ROM, are provided at the site. The NonProfit Times Online (http://www.nptimes.com/ ***) is a broader voluntary sector resource, although it

has back issues to May 1995 that include some volunteering articles. This may also be useful for volunteer managers.

There are several associations concerned with voluntary sector and volunteering research that have online resources, including Web sites and discussion lists, which volunteering researchers will find useful. One of the most popular is the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action. Although it is not specifically volunteering-focused, the Association's Web site (http://www.arnova.org/ ***) is worth looking at. It has links to the ARNOVA journal *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, an archive of articles, papers and ARNOVA abstracts that will contain some volunteering-specific resources. More useful will be ARNOVA's listserv ARNOVA-L, which is an excellent forum for discussion on anything related to voluntarism, although it does have a US bias. To subscribe to ARNOVA-L, you should send an e-mail to LISTSERV@WVU.EDU and in the body of the message type SUBSCRIBE ARNOVA-L, Lastname, Firstname (e.g. SUBSCRIBE ARNOVA-L, Gannon, Mark). Once you subscribe, you will be able to search the listserv archive by keyword. Also popular is the International Society for Third Sector Research (http://www.jhu.edu/~istr/ ***); this is an international membership organisation and its Web site contains information about the organisation, its work and publications such as *Voluntas*. ISTR also has a listserv. To subscribe, you should send an e-mail to LISTSERV@YORKU.CA with the following in the body of the message: Subscribe ISTR-L Firstname Lastname. This is also an excellent forum for discussing volunteering issues with an international audience.

The UK's Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector has a Web site (http://www.sbu.ac.uk/arvac/ ***) that contains information about the organisation, research news and reviews, and links to other resources. The site also gives information on ARVAC's e-mail discussion list volsec-research-arvac. To join this, send an e-mail to mailbaseadmin@mailbase.ac.uk and in the body of the message type: Join volsec-research-arvac Firstname Lastname. You can also subscribe to ARVAC's newly launched e-mail list, which provides an updating service for information about conferences, training programmes, jobs and funding opportunities for people interested or involved in research in the voluntary and community sector. If you would like to subscribe to the list, send an e-mail to information@arvac.freeserve.co.uk, giving your name, e-mail address, organisation (if applicable) and your research and/or voluntary and community sector interests.

Representative and intermediary organisations

Many of the national volunteer centres around the world have online resources. The Volunteer Centre of Western Australia's Web site (http://www.volunteer.org.au/index.htm ***) provides some information on training and best practice for volunteer

management. It also has links to resources on Volunteers Week and the International Year of Volunteers 2001. You can sign up to receive regular e-mail updates from the site (http://www.volunteer.org.au/news.htm **). Volunteer Development Scotland's Web site (http://www.vds.org.uk/ **) has an interesting facility that enables volunteers to air their views about their experiences of volunteering by filling in the online form. In England, the National Centre for Volunteering's Web site (http://www.volunteering.org.uk ****) is well designed and contains useful information for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. Potential volunteers can find links to volunteer-involving organisations, and there are links to other volunteering resources. The site also contains information about National Volunteers Week, and there is a page on volunteering research.

Volunteer Canada's Web site (http://www.volunteer.ca/dev/ ****) contains much information of use to volunteers and those working with volunteers. The Web site of the Points of Light Foundation in the USA (http://www.pointsoflight.org/default.html ***) lists volunteer centres across the country and the various volunteering initiatives the organisation promotes. There are also many volunteering associations with online resources. The Web site of the Association for Volunteer Administration (http://www.avaintl.org/ **) contains information about the Association, but is unlikely to be of much use to anyone looking for volunteering resources; there is, however, a small list of trainers and links to other resources. The National Association of Volunteer Bureaux (http://wavespace.waverider.co.uk/~navbteam/ *) is the representative organisation for the UK's volunteer bureaux. Its Web site contains contact information and a few links to other sites. Volunteer managers working in local government in the USA may want to look at the Web site of the National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government (http://www.naco.org/affils/navplg/ **), which gives some information on the Association and some links to other resources.

At the pan-European level, there are two associations concerned with volunteering. The Association of Voluntary Service Organisations is 'an international non-governmental organisation, forming a European platform of national and international non-profit organisations active in the field of longer-term voluntary service'. Its Web site (http://village.agoranet.be/~avso/ ***) contains information about the Association and its member organisations, as well as links and background on the European Union's European Voluntary Service programme, which offers young people aged between 18 and 25 the opportunity to volunteer abroad. CEV is 'the association for Europe's national and regional volunteer centres who are working together to promote volunteering, influence policy, support new volunteer centres, share ideas and experience and make volunteering more effective'. Its Web site

(http://sme.belgium.eu.net/cev/ **) contains information about the Association and its member organisations and useful information on volunteering in a European context.

Volunteer matching and opportunities
Those looking to volunteer and those looking for volunteers will find many electronic resources available to them. An excellent starting point is VolunteerMatch (http://www.impactonline.org/ *****) produced by ImpactOnline. Here people can search for volunteering opportunities in the USA by postal code and organisations can post opportunities. There is also a page dedicated to the Virtual Volunteering Project and a link to its site (http://www.serviceleader.org/vv/ *****); this is an excellent initiative that allows individuals to contribute their skills to an organisation or cause via the Internet without leaving their home or office. At the Virtual Volunteering site, you will find examples of 'virtual volunteering' and resources designed to make this a realistic option for your organisation. There is also information about Virtual Verve, the monthly e-mail update on the Virtual Volunteering Project. To receive Virtual Verve, send an email to listproc@mcfeeley.cc.utexas.edu with the following message: subscribe vverve Firstname Lastname.

Another US site is the Corporation for National Service (http://www.cns.gov/ ****), which gives details on three volunteer programmes: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and Senior Corps. You can access information about volunteering (which the site calls 'service opportunities'), some research material on national service, and job, fellowship and intern opportunities. The Web site for Volunteers of America (http://www.voa.org ****) gives listings of volunteering opportunities in various programmes. The site includes a clickable map of the USA that enables users to search for the Volunteers of America affiliate office closest to them; there is also an interesting history of US volunteering in general and of Volunteers of America in particular. Towson University in the USA also provides useful links to the Web sites of organisations or programmes offering volunteering opportunities (http://saber.towson.edu/~hawk/intleduc/stdy_abroad/work.html ***): for example, Habitat for Humanity and the Volunteers Exchange International.

The Web site for Idealist (http://www.idealist.org ****) is a collection of resources for nonprofit organisations, some of which are volunteering related; it has a section on volunteering opportunities. A potentially exciting new listserv is VOLUNTEER, which matches volunteers with volunteering opportunities. To subscribe to VOLUNTEER, send an e-mail to Listserv@CharityChannel.com and in the body of the email type SUBSCRIBE VOLUNTEER Firstname Lastname. Volunteer Now is an online volunteer matching facility provided by SERVEnet (http://www.volunteernow.com/body.php3 ***) which allows potential volunteers to search for opportunities and register

their services, and organisations to post their opportunities and search for volunteers. Volunteer Philadelphia's Web site (http://vp.libertynet.org/links/index.html ***) contains a database that enables users to look for volunteering opportunities by availability, organisational type, location and skills; there is also a volunteer calendar, a resource library and a list of links to other resources. Although the site is specific to Philadelphia, it contains enough to interest people from elsewhere.

In the UK, The Site (http://www.thesite.org.uk/ ****) is an informative Web site containing a searchable database of UK resources on topics ranging from drugs to housing; the resources include lists of books and articles, research, and news and views. This site includes a facility that allows users to search for voluntary organisations by type of work and area of operation. The listing for each organisation gives contact details, location, background and numbers of paid staff and volunteers. The Prince's Trust Volunteers (http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/ **) Web site also has a section that enables you to find out about volunteering opportunities in various initiatives.

In Japan, the Web site of the Osaka International Foundation (http://www.ih-osaka.or.jp/ **) has an English version, unlike many other Japanese sites, which require special hardware or software. The Foundation operates an international volunteer exchange programme, details of which are given on its site. A useful set of links to Japanese and other Asian resources on volunteering, voluntary action and miscellaneous subjects can be found at (http://www.ih-osaka.or.jp/iv/ivt/english_link.html ***). Another English-language Japanese site is that of Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteers (http://www.jica.go.jp/E-jocv/E-jocv-info/Index.html ***), a programme that sends volunteers to developing countries to share technical skills; the site gives information on the programme and how to apply to join it. Another online organisation in Asia is the Agency for Volunteer Service, established with the support of the Hong Kong government in the 1970s. Its Web site (http://www.avs.org.hk/emain.html **) gives information on the organisation and allows users to sign up as a volunteer; it is, however, more a list of the agency's services than a useful resource on volunteering.

Globally, the Web site of United Nations Volunteers (http://www.unv.org/index.html ****) is a useful resource, with a volunteer vacancy page that lists all UN volunteering opportunities available in the world. You can also view a list of 'professions in demand' to see if your skills are needed. The procedure for becoming a UN volunteer is fully explained. The Web site of Voluntary Service Overseas (http://www.oneworld.org/vso/ ****) is another interesting and well-designed page that lists the international volunteering opportunities currently available and explains in detail how to become a VSO volunteer.

At the Web site for Oneworld (http://www.oneworld.org/action/volunteers/front.html ****) you will find information on volunteering opportunities with global justice organisations ranging from Christian Aid to the Index on Censorship. There are also links to each of the organisations offering the opportunities. Those interested in volunteering in a kibbutz should check out the Web site of the United Kibbutz Movement (http://kibbutz.org.il/ ***). You can also find a useful list of kibbutzim at Yahoo's site (http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/Israel/Kibbutzim/ ****). Other international volunteering opportunities can be found at the Web sites of the Council on International Educational Exchange (http://www.ciee.org/vol/index.htm ***), the German Volunteer Service Exchange (http://www.dsk.de/engl/eab.htm ***) and Volunteers in Asia (http://www.volasia.org/index.html ****).

General volunteering resources and individual organisations

Many of the available volunteering resources may be of general interest, but do not fit neatly into any of the previous categories. Some are just sites containing miscellaneous lists. A good example is the set of 'hot links'maintained by Steve McCurley on the web page of the Educational Consortium for Volunteerism (http://www.unt.edu/untvols/links.htm ***). The author claims that there are currently about 100,000 Internet sites connected with volunteering. This site lists the major ones and is quite comprehensive. The Voluntary Organisation Internet Server is a nonprofit organisation that offers web-hosting services to other nonprofit organisations. At its Web site (http://www.vois.org.uk/ ***) you will find an A to Z listing of the organisations it hosts, as well as a volunteers notice board.

In addition, some individual organisations may be of interest. Civicus (http://www.civicus.org/ ***) is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. Although not specifically about volunteering, its site will be useful to those interested in the wider debate on civil society and participation. You can sign up at this site to receive a weekly e-mail bulletin of trends and emerging issues in civil society. Volunteers in Technical Assistance is an organisation devoted to empowering people in developing countries to take charge of their own development. Its Web site (http://www.vita.org/ ***) contains a great deal of information, much of it very technical in nature, and will only be useful to those interested in or involved in disaster relief. There is also information on VITA's listserv DEVEL-L. To subscribe, send a message to listserv@american.edu. In the subject line of the email, type DEVEL-L and in the body of the message, type sub devel-l Firstname Lastname.

Those interested in the relationship between government and the voluntary sector may want to visit the Web site of the Voluntary and Community Unit of

the UK Home Office (http://www. homeoffice.gov.uk/vcu/ vcu.htm ***). Here you can download a copy of the recent Compact between the government and the voluntary sector. You can also find information on grant applications, including downloadable application forms. The government's strategy for the voluntary sector is described and you can download copies of the newsletter *VCU News*.

Finally, when it comes to celebrating volunteering and volunteers, the United Nations provides information about the International Year of Volunteers scheduled for 2001 (http://www.unv.org/ projects/iyv2001/index.html ***) and about International Volunteers Day, celebrated annually on 5 December (http://www. unv.org/projects/iyv2001/ ivd/index.html ***). Detailed information on the International Year of Volunteers - 2001 is given at its own Web site (http://www.iyv2001.org/ ****). Here you will see a list of the organisations and governments that have pledged to support this celebration. There are also individual volunteers' stories, background information on the event and a calendar of local and national events.

Appendix 1: A Guide to online jargon

ASCII. American Standard Code for Information Interchange: plain text without special attached codes or formatting

Bookmark. Most browsers enable you to 'bookmark' Web sites so that they can be quickly accessed the next time you log on.

Browser. The application program that enables you to 'surf' the Internet; well-known examples include Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

Chat room. A place where you can speak to other people across the world via your computer.

Cross-posting. Where people post information to more than one discussion list. It can be useful for getting the same message across to a number of recipients, but it should be used thoughtfully, as many people subscribe to multiple discussion groups.

Cyberspace. Another general term for the Internet.

Domain name. All Internet addresses contain groups of letters that tell you more about the type of site. So '.gov' indicates a government site, and .gov.uk' is a government site in the United Kingdom.

Download. To transfer information from someone else's computer to your own - the opposite of uploading, where you send the information.

E-mail. Electronic mail: a means of packaging information into chunks and sending it to other people via a phone line.

FAQ. This acronym, often seen on Web pages, stands for 'frequently asked questions' and indicates a help file on a specific topic.

Frames. Used to break up a Web page into different sections so that each section can work independently.

FTP (or *anonymous FTP*). File Transfer Protocol: the convention by which files are transferred across the Internet.

Host. The computer in which a Web site is physically located.

HTML. Hypertext Mark-up Language: the language used to format Web pages.

HTTP. Hypertext Transfer Protocol: this tells computers how to communicate with each other, which is why you will see 'http://' at the start of most Web site addresses.

Hypertext. A type of text on a Web page that, when clicked, takes the user to another Web location. Hypertext is usually a different colour from the main text and is often underlined.

Internet (also known as *cyberspace*). The global network of computers that enables the sharing of data across telephone lines.

IRC. Internet Relay Chat: world-wide, real-time Internet conferencing, as used in chat rooms.

ISP. Internet Service Provider: this enables you to access the Internet in order to send e-mails and browse the Web. Well-known examples are AOL and CompuServe.

Listserv. E-mail mailing lists similar to newsgroups. Subscribers to a listserv can send messages to, and receive messages from, all the other subscribers to the list.

Newsgroups (also called *usenets*). Online discussion groups on various subjects.

Online. What you are if you can send e-mails or have access to the Internet.

Search engine. A piece of software that enables the user to search for resources that match a keyword enquiry.

Surfing. A colloquial term for looking around the Internet.

URL. Uniform Resource Locator: the address of a Web site. For instance, the URL for Yahoo is http://www.yahoo.com

WWW. World Wide Web: often called 'the Web' for short.

Information for contributors

Voluntary Action invites articles on volunteering or directly-related subjects. Contributions by practitioners are particularly welcome.

Articles should be in English, 4-6,000 words long, and written in a style accessible to volunteer practitioners as well as to academics.

Contributions based upon research should explicitly draw out the implications of that research for the policy and practice of volunteering.

All articles should be submitted as an ASCII file – either on a floppy disk or via E-mail – and also in hard copy (A4, double-spaced, 2.5 cm margins all round, printed on one side of the paper only).

Each article should begin with an abstract of 100-150 words.

Articles should only mention race, sex, age, disability and sexuality when they are relevant, and should avoid using terms that exclude women.

Contributors are personally responsible for obtaining permission to use any copyright material quoted in their article.

References should be kept to a minimum and should follow the Harvard style, i.e. references in the text consist of the author's surname followed by the year of publication – for example, Davis Smith (1998) – and the full bibliographical reference is given at the end of the article as follows: Davis Smith, J. (1998), *The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering*, Institute for Volunteering Research.

Footnotes should not be used.

Each of the longer articles should have a separate title page giving the name(s), institutional affiliations and contact details of the author(s).

Papers will be reviewed by two referees, one an academic and the other a practitioner.

Voluntary Action is published three times a year. Subscriptions cost £30, £45 non-UK for three issues (inclusive of postage and packing).

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Voluntary Action:
The Journal of the Institute for Volunteering Research
Volume 1 Number 2 Spring 1999

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An initiative of the national centre for volunteering

In association with UEL University of East London

Supported by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales