



VOLUNTEERS IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

A European Handbook

Edited by:
Cristina Da Milano, Kirsten Gibbs and Margherita Sani

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Front cover:

The first thirty volunteers at the Deutsches Museum.

Photo: Deutsches Museum.

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CREDITS

VOCH PHOTO CREDITS

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Introduction

Cristina Da Milano - Kirsten Gibbs - Margherita Sani

This handbook is the final output of a two-year European project, Volunteers for Cultural Heritage (VoCH), funded by the European Commission as part of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme, which took place from November 2007 until October 2009.

The project began by acknowledging the increasing importance of volunteers and volunteering for preserving cultural heritage and running cultural institutions, including many museums.

Cultural heritage is a strategic area for European Community policy-makers, supporting the integration of different European components through the recognition of the differences and similarities which characterise local and national cultures and traditions. The conservation and valorisation of cultural assets require considerable resources – both financial and human. In some European countries these responsibilities are shared between the public and the private sector, often with the essential support of volunteers, to ensure that places, monuments, sites, and objects of cultural and historical value are passed on unharmed and, where possible, enhanced, to future generations, contributing to the understanding of a shared past and the strengthening of ties among European citizens.

The VoCH project explored this phenomenon at European level, identifying different types of voluntary work and the areas of activity in which cultural volunteers are engaged.

The project activities and outputs included

- Europe-wide research on volunteering in the cultural heritage sector;
- The identification of good practice case studies;
- The design, development and delivery of short training modules both for volunteers and coordinators which were carried out in Austria, Slovenia, Italy and the United Kingdom;
- International conferences and dissemination events.

All of these outcomes, fully documented in the project website www.amitie.it/voch, have contributed to the preparation of this Handbook.

LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

While recognising the different meanings attached to the word “volunteer” in EU countries, the VoCH project partners adopted the European Volunteer Centre’s definition of volunteering, as an activity undertaken:

- Out of a person’s free will, choice and motivation;
- Without concern for financial gain (non-remunerated);
- In an organised setting (within NGO’s, volunteer centres, or more or less organised groups);
- With the aim of benefiting someone other than the volunteer and contributing to values of general interest to society at large (although it is recognised that volunteering brings significant benefit equally to the volunteer).¹

Within this publication “museum professional” indicates a paid member of staff (or paid freelancer) in a museum or cultural heritage organisation. While acknowledging that volunteers may have a similar level of education, training or, in the case of retired volunteers, work experience to that of employees, the term “museum professional” is used to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers. “Volunteer coordinator” means someone within the museum whose role is to run the volunteer programme, recruit volunteers, offer orientation and training, or supervise their work. A volunteer coordinator may be a paid position or a voluntary one.

WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK AND WHO IS IT FOR

The purpose of this handbook is to present an overview of volunteering with regard to cultural heritage and museums in both Partner and other European countries in order to identify current trends, develop targeted training to address areas of need and provide a useful tool for those who work in this sector as or with volunteers. It is addressed mainly to volunteer coordinators and museum professionals already working with volunteers or those interested in finding

out more about this area.

The book includes contributions illustrating the European and the national contexts of the Partner countries and essays on how to recruit, train, motivate, manage and acknowledge volunteers. At the heart of the publication, however, are the many case studies offered to readers for comparison, ideas and inspiration.

Managing volunteers effectively, in the end, does not differ from good general management and we have therefore limited theory to a minimum (and where offered, it is theory distilled from practice), in order to make room for descriptive, concrete examples. These cover small and large museums, festivals, archaeological digs and campaigns for the preservation of cultural heritage.

We have not been able to cover all types of volunteering within the VoCH project. This publication does not consider that very special kind of museum – the ecomuseum – which relies almost exclusively on the active and voluntary involvement of communities and citizens to exist. Voluntary internships or apprenticeships have also not been considered, nor has voluntary governance.

VoCH followed from previous European projects focused on lifelong learning and active citizenship, in which some of the Partners were also involved. It has therefore taken the position of considering volunteers as learning adults in a working context, supporting and acknowledging their informal learning and valuing the contribution that volunteering makes to active citizenship in general. The project has also emphasised that institutions involving volunteers must offer adequate training, not only to provide skills necessary to carry out what may be very specialised tasks, but also to contribute to the volunteers’ growth as individuals, as members of a community, and as European citizens.

We hope this handbook will be used as a tool to these ends, while also contributing to sharing good practice with national and international colleagues, through continuous professional development and informal networking.

NOTE

1 - Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe 2006 (http://www.cev.be/Documents/CEVManifesto_EN_IT_NL.pdf).



EUROPEAN CONTEXTS FOR CULTURAL VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering for Cultural Heritage in Europe

Cristina Da Milano

Volunteering is a common activity which occurs in a variety of forms in Europe and worldwide, reflecting different approaches and traditions. It has some common characteristics and can be defined, according to the *Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe*,¹ as an activity undertaken:

- Out of a person's free will, choice and motivation;
- Without concern for financial gain (non-remunerated);
- In an organised setting (for example within NGOs, volunteer centres or more or less organised groups.);
- With the aim of benefiting someone other than the volunteer (while recognising that volunteering brings significant benefits to the volunteer);
- In order to contribute to the values or general interest to society as a whole.

As recent data illustrate, millions of citizens in Europe are actively involved in volunteering, mainly during their free time.² On average, more men engaged than women, but both devote between three and six percent of their free time to volunteering. Most volunteers are between 35 and 55 years old.

In recent years, the role of volunteering in Europe has become more socially and politically significant as a tool for addressing a wide range of issues. Volunteers are engaged in a diverse range of activities such as provision of education and social services, mutual aid, advocacy, campaigning, management and community or environmental action. Furthermore, the *Manifesto* regards volunteering as:

- Central to ideals of democracy, inclusion and active citizenship;
- A powerful tool for positive social and environmental change;
- A source of empowerment for the disenfranchised;
- A source of reconciliation and reconstruction in divided societies;
- A means of lifelong learning.

The *Manifesto* also affirms that in order to deliver these

services the recognition, facilitation and promotion of volunteering are essential. Support from all stakeholders – civil society and government at all levels – is needed. The EU is a key actor in this regard and can effectively contribute to the development of a stronger role for volunteering in Europe.

VOLUNTEERING AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Within the EU, some progress has been made in recognising the social, cultural and environmental value of volunteering, and of involving voluntary organisations in the political decision-making process. The *Resolution on Volunteering* adopted by the European Parliament in 1983 recognised the general interest in voluntary activity and that the development of an adequate infrastructure is central to effective policies on volunteering. It invited the European Commission to pay systematic attention to volunteering and called for a 'statute for voluntary work' covering the reimbursement of expenses and social insurance for volunteers. *Declaration 38* on voluntary service activities, attached to the final act of the Treaty of Amsterdam, recognises the important contribution made by voluntary service activities to developing social solidarity, and the European Commission's 1997 *Communication on Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe* highlights the role of volunteerism in job creation. More recently, the European Commission has acknowledged the importance of a culture of consultation and dialogue with civil society organisations in a series of papers.³

Much work still needs to be done in recognising the economic value of volunteering (as measured by hours of time freely given multiplied by national minimum wage levels), in order to ensure that EU funding, policies and programmes are volunteering – friendly

and that there is an adequate infrastructure in place throughout Europe to support voluntary action.

The European Volunteer Centre (CEV)⁴ is a European umbrella association of 43 National and Regional Volunteer Centres across Europe, that together work to support and promote voluntary activity. The members of CEV represent thousands of volunteer organisations, association and other voluntary and community groups at local, regional and national level. Together they work to influence policy, strengthen the infrastructure for volunteering in the countries of Europe, promote volunteering and make it more effective. In 2006 CEV published the Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe,⁵ which is addressed to EU institutions in order to promote and recognise this role.

European Voluntary Service Programme (EVS) is currently the largest single source of support for volunteering from the European Union. It is part of the Youth Programme 2007-2013⁶ and provides young Europeans "with the unique chance to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the EU. In this way, it seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to reinforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promoting young people's active citizenship."⁷

An EVS project has three phases:

- Planning and preparation
- Implementation of the activity
- Evaluation (including reflection on a possible follow-up)

Non-formal learning principles and practice are reflected throughout the project and the learning experience is formally recognised through a Youthpass.⁸ Activities normally last between six and nine months for long-term programmes⁹ and include a variety of projects in the field of environmental protection, art, culture, caring (for children, elderly people or people with disabilities), sport and leisure. The programme has a commitment to equality and diversity: volunteers are chosen regardless of ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation or political affilia-

tion. No previous qualifications, educational level, specific experience or more than basic foreign language knowledge is required. A more specific profile of the volunteer might be drawn up if justified by the nature of the tasks of the service or the project context, but even in this case selection on the basis of professional or education qualifications is excluded.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CULTURAL FIELD

Sustainable development within Europe can only be achieved through a harmonious relationship between communities and cultural heritage. In order to achieve economic and social development society needs the effective, active participation of citizens who should themselves be deeply aware of the role and meanings of cultural heritage.

Volunteering represents an important resource and a meaningful indicator of participation and awareness as well as of personal and social development; it is one of the bricks which compose the complex building that we call active citizenship.

Furthermore, cultural institutions – and particularly museums - have dramatically changed in the last few years. They provide public services and have a social function which is more enhanced today than in the past. They relate to new audiences and new ways of communicating; they promote social cohesion and inclusion; they offer cultural mediation for visitors who come from different backgrounds and cultures, who have diverse previous knowledge and use different interpretative strategies.

Museum professionals are also having to change rapidly, in order to cope with the institutional and social changes that their organisations are facing.¹⁰ This overall change of organisations and competences affects the work of volunteers within these organisations, since their roles and duties are becoming more complex. This is reflected in the different characteristics of volunteers, who cannot be considered as a homogenous group.

Volunteering assumes different features depending on the volunteer's age and status; furthermore, organisations within the cultural field are different from each other. Notwithstanding these differences, some international

organisations have settled general principles regarding rights and duties of volunteers and their relationship with the institutions they work for in documents which in most cases have the form of a Code of Ethics. As one of the early activities of the VoCH project the partners undertook Europe-wide research on volunteering within the cultural sector.¹¹ The aim of the research was to analyse – by using different tools such as questionnaires and interviews as well as documental sources – the role of volunteering in the cultural field. Among the most evident trends and issues which emerged from the research work are: diversification of volunteer workforce, volunteering as a route to employment and on-line volunteering.

NOTE

1 - Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe 2006 (http://www.cev.be/Documents/CEVManifesto_EN_IT_NL.pdf).

2 - European Commission 2004, How Europeans spend their time. Every day life of women and men, http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-58-04-998/EN/toc.pdf.

3 - The Commission and Non-governmental Organisations: Building a Stronger Partnership, Discussion Paper (2000); White Paper on European Governance (2001); Towards a Reinforced Culture of Consultation and Dialogue – Proposal for general principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission, Consultation Document (2002).

4 - <http://www.cev.be/home.htm>.

5 - http://www.cev.be/Documents/CEVManifesto_EN_IT_NL.pdf.

6 - This is the new EU Programme in the field of youth and is the successor of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006). The Youth in Action Programme makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences and is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension. It encourages the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and addresses young people aged between 13 and 30 (http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc82_en.htm).

7 - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/program/sos/index_en.html.

8 - From 2005, an additional aim of the SALTO Training and Cooperation RC has been the development and implementation of a special European level validation instrument for YOUTH/Youth in Action. Its aim is the development and implementation of a special European level validation instrument for YOUTH/Youth in Action as a package of different instruments for the Actions 1.1 (1), 2, 1.2 (3), and 4.3 (5) (Youthpass) and with this fostering of the recognition of non-formal learning within the YOUTH/Youth in Action Programme in order to support the employability of young people and youth workers; the reflection upon the personal non-

formal learning process; the social recognition of youth work.

9 - There are also short-terms programmes (minimum 3 weeks – maximum 6 months) addressed to young disabled people or young people belonging to ethnic minorities or living in difficult social/economic conditions.

10 - A. Garlandini (ed.), Professioni museali in Italia e in Europa, proceedings of the II national conference of museums, Rome 2 October 2006, ICOM-Regione Lazio 2007.

11 - <http://www.amitie.it/voch/index4.htm>

AUSTRIA

POPULATION 2008¹: 8.36 million

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2008: 4.2%

IMMIGRATION RATE 2007: 12.9%

PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL OR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AGE 25-64 (%) 2007: 41%

VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRIA

Austria, situated in the heart of Europe, is divided into nine federal regions. 43.8% of Austrians over the age of 15 (6.9 million people) do some kind of voluntary work (47.1% of men and 40.7% of women). 27.9% do formal voluntary work (in organisations or clubs) and 27.1% do informal voluntary work (“neighbourly help”). People between 40 and 59 are especially active, with nearly 50% doing some kind of voluntary work. 43% of young people between 15 and 19 are voluntarily active, as well as 43% of people between 60 and 69.

The focus of volunteerism is in the areas of health care, welfare, popular clubs and societies as well as music (for example, being part of a band.). Because of traditional approaches and a lack of formal structures concerning volunteer matters in the cultural heritage, this sector plays a less prominent role in the society.

VOLUNTEERING IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The responsibility for museum affairs of the national museums is predominantly in federal hands. Each federal state government has its own support structures according to different laws, activities, comprehension and acceptance in museum and regional heritage matters. Twelve national museums were given their own legal capacity in administrative matters during the last decade.

Around 60 provincial museums are directly or indirectly subordinated to the regional governments in financial and collections matters.

About 1800 more institutions - museums or related institutions such as public collections or galleries - in all nine regions are private, in the ownership of associations (c. 35%), or part of local governing bodies (c. 45%). Both volunteer leadership and general museum volunteering are common and indispensable for keeping most of the museums alive.

Counting volunteers is problematic. There are no comprehensive state-wide statistics for museums. The *Österreichische Kulturstatistik* (Austrian Statistics for Culture) only considers around 470 locations. Therefore, only 3,158 people were counted as volunteers in the year 2006. The various institutions which are responsible for culture in the Federal States or which take care of museums have different statistics and / or only estimated data. According to those, an estimated number of about 10,000 to 12,000 volunteers were not recorded on official data.

About 80% of the named institutions have volunteer leadership as well as exclusively volunteer staff. About half among the ones with employed staff work with the support of volunteers. A few have a clear structure for volunteers, however most do not have volunteer coordinators.

Therefore most of the people working in museums and similar institutions count among the so called “Informal voluntary work,” without the explicit framework of an institution and out of personal initiative. They are potentially unavailable for statistics and barely recognised by public perception, covered by regulations or offered support or training.

Since 2001 (the national year of honorary work), the Federal Ministry of social and consumer protection has taken steps to clarify and improve the unstructured basis for voluntary work in Austria.

The information below relates to the federal region of Steiermark (Styria), where the new designed training course for volunteer generalists took place (see p.60).

- Styria has 1,183,000 inhabitants;
 - It has 270 museums or similar institutions as well as accessible private collections;
 - 168 of these are regional, city, or museums of local history;
 - 96 fall into the category of private collections or institutions similar to museums;
 - Facing the lack of a national registration or accreditation system, the two national organisations have invented a quality certificate, which has been awarded to 28 museums since 2001. About the same number has a comparable quality standard;
 - The guidelines for getting this certificate are not bound to having employees;
 - 59 museums and collections in Styria as well as 21 institutions similar to museums –29% – have at least one employee;
 - Only 11 institutions have more than 5 employees;
 - 211 institutions have a volunteer leadership;
 - 25 institutions work according to the principle of volunteering with employees;
 - Altogether, according to our data, 2700 people work in museums and collections;
 - About 1800 people are volunteers or work on an honorary basis – this does not include friendship clubs / associations of friends, because their support is mainly financial and not so much physical.
- The number of hours which are covered by volunteers and honorary members can only be estimated since there are no reports on this. The careful estimation might be about 550,000 hours per year.



ITALY

POPULATION 2008: 60 million

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2008: 6.9%

IMMIGRATION RATE 2007: 9.4%

**PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL OR
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AGE 25-64 (%) 2007:** 22%

VOLUNTEERING IN ITALY

Until the 1970s volunteering was a marginal phenomenon in Italy, characterised by a charitable valence and separate from the welfare system. The mid-1970s represented a turning point, following the modernisation and decentralisation of the Italian welfare system, as well as the development of the third sector. This reflected the development of a richer and more differentiated society, characterised by the growth of citizens' participation in diverse aspects of social and civil life, which gave birth to private, non-profit organisations, with the scope of social utility and solidarity.

Voluntary organisations in Italy are a component of the third sector: *Framework Law n. 266/91* recognises the social value and function of volunteering as an expression of participation, solidarity and pluralism, defines volunteering as a personal, spontaneous and non-lucrative activity and sets out the difference between a volunteering activity and a working one (as an employed or freelance worker). A National Observatory for Volunteering has been established in Italy, with the aim of registering and monitoring volunteering organisations, while at the same time supporting their development in the country.

The National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) carried out a two-year study (2004-2005) regarding voluntary organisations listed in regional and provincial registers

on 31 December 2003. The number of organisations, 21,000, had increased dramatically in comparison with 2001 (+14.9%) and 1995 (+152%). In 2003, volunteering organisations inscribed in regional registers had circa 12,000 employees and 826,000 volunteers. In comparison with 1995, the former figure shows an increase of 77%, the latter of 71.4%.

VOLUNTEERING IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

In Italy there are 4,200 museums and 2,000 archaeological sites. According to recent studies (Rapporto Federculture 2008), cultural consumption has increased dramatically in the last ten years. The number of people who visited museums increased in 10 years by 4.4% (from 25 million people in 1997 to 34 million people in 2007 only in public museums); between 2005 and 2006 the number of visitors to archaeological areas increased by 11% and to exhibitions 42.2% (Rapporto Federculture 2006).

Although volunteering had already been mentioned in the first legislation regarding the cultural field, this phenomenon has become more relevant in recent decades not only from a quantitative point of view but also because of the quality of the realised activities. The need for a better mutual understanding between volunteer organisations and institutions governing museums and heritage is becoming crucial nowadays in Italy: recognising the active role of volunteers inside museums and heritage sites means, above all, operating towards a new model, participatory and sustainable, of the museums and heritage governance and towards a shared and subsidiary model of management.¹

There are different kinds of volunteering institutions and activities: volunteering organisations as defined by Law 266/91 and included in the regional registers; other kinds of organisations which operate in the cultural field working also with volunteers, civil service and single volunteers, who are not taken into account in the

national legislation. Volunteering organisations which operate in the cultural field are approximately 2,500; in 2003 volunteers operating within these organisations were 259,963 (57.3% men, 46.4% women). In 2003 more than 52.7% of these organisations provided training courses for volunteers. The most common services that these organisations provide are: guided tours, room warden, conservation and realisation of music, theatre and cinema performances.



SLOVENIA

POPULATION 2008: 2 million

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2008: 5.5%

IMMIGRATION RATE 2007: 15%

**PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL OR
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AGE 25-64 (%) 2007:** 40.6%¹

VOLUNTEERING IN SLOVENIA

Slovenia is a small country in comparison with other partners in the VoCH project, with only 64 officially recognised museums. Volunteering is not a new phenomenon in Slovenia: in the 19th century there were the beginnings of development of volunteering practice, particularly in the field of culture, education and economy.

Shortly after Slovenian independence the Slovene Philanthropy, a non-governmental, non-profit, and non-political organisation was established (1992), with the aim of developing and promoting different forms of humanitarian activities in Slovenia. The objective of the organisation is to encourage and spread volunteering and other charity work in the social field by developing programmes of voluntary work, especially the voluntary work of youth and of the elderly, by promoting volunteering through training and educating volunteers, organisers and mentors of voluntary work, raising the public awareness of the importance of volunteers and developing a network of volunteer organisations throughout Slovenia.² Cultural heritage and museums have been less common areas for voluntary work, both within Slovene Philanthropy and other umbrella organisations focusing on voluntary work.³

Encouraging and promoting voluntary work is the most important activity of the Slovene Philanthropy,

which is carried out through the following activities:

- Developing programmes of voluntary work of youth and the elderly;
- Training and educating of volunteers, organisers and mentors of voluntary work;
- Developing the network of volunteer organisations;
- Issuing publications about voluntary work and charity;
- Spreading ideas and values of philanthropy and solidarity through media;
- Establishing a data base about volunteer activities and voluntary organisations;
- Organising humanitarian events and performances aimed at spreading and developing volunteering;
- Co-operation with international voluntary and humanitarian organisations.

Around 3000 people attended various events and activities within the framework of the Slovene Philanthropy in the year 2000.

The Slovene Philanthropy represents Slovenia in the IAVE (International Association for Voluntary Effort) and in the European Volunteer Centre (CEV). They are cooperating with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in Slovenia and abroad in a field of civil society and particular humanitarian activities.⁴ They provide training for volunteers and for volunteer coordinators.

Their Code of Ethics for Volunteers was confirmed in January 2006.

A big step in promoting voluntary work in Slovenia was establishing the web site www.prostovoljstvo.org, where one can get all information regarding the topic.

VOLUNTEERING IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Although voluntary work is well-organised and quite successful in Slovenia, museums are not well-represented among organisations hosting or attracting volunteers. The Slovene Philanthropy admits that

there has not been much interest in voluntary work in museums from both potential volunteers and museums themselves in the past. Their only member since 2007 is the Slovene National Museum, which joined when the project 'Cultural Mediators' started.⁵

Slovenian museum professionals are quite aware of the potential of voluntary work in museums in some other European countries, especially the ones with a long tradition like The Netherlands, Germany or the United Kingdom, but there were only few attempts to introduce this before 2006. Some of the museums stopped after the first attempt; others were quite successful in the context of international projects. One of these was Maritime Museum 'Sergej Mašera' in Piran which organised an international voluntary work-camp of salt-making in the Sečovlje landscape park. These international voluntary work-camps contributed to the Museum of Salt-making receiving the Europa Nostra Medal in the category of Cultural Landscapes in 2003, the first time that any institution from Slovenia received this prestigious award. Their vision for the future is more work camps during the whole summer season where volunteers will actually maintain the open-air museum.⁶

The Slovene Museum Association was from 1996 to 2003 a partner in the Matra Project, which aimed to develop Slovene museum management. Part of the training was an excursion to The Netherlands, where 13 Slovene museum professionals and the representatives from the Ministry of Culture had the opportunity to get information and to meet some volunteers.

UNITED KINGDOM

POPULATION 2008: 61.6 million

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2008: 6.9%

IMMIGRATION RATE 2006: 8.7%

PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL OR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AGE 25-64 (%) 2007: 49%

VOLUNTEERING IN THE UK

Volunteering has a long tradition in the UK. It is widely believed to underpin civil society and to be vital for strong, active citizenship. Approximately 22 million adults take part in some kind of voluntary activity each year.¹

The UK volunteering infrastructure includes four national agencies, reflecting the four nations of the United Kingdom, funded through a combination of government and corporate sources. The UK Government recognises the importance of volunteering in helping to create stronger, more active communities.² At local level, volunteer centres operate in many towns, offering drop-in information, promoting a wide variety of opportunities and running recruitment events. There are also county co-ordinating bodies and increasingly, since the Government funded ChangeUp (a programme of capacity-building for the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector), regional bodies which provide a higher level voice for the third sector.³ Volunteering in the UK has a significant monetary value. It is estimated that 1.1 million full-time workers would be needed to replace volunteers – at a cost of £25.4 billion. In addition, 53% of volunteers add money to their host organisations, by raising funds or taking part in sponsored events.⁴

VOLUNTEERING IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Volunteers are found in every area and level of museum and cultural heritage work. Some organisations involve volunteers in small numbers; some have extensive and well-established volunteer programmes which complement the work of paid staff; others may be staffed entirely by volunteers. Boards of trustees (which carry legal responsibility for institutional governance) are usually made up of volunteers.

Research commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in 2005 found that 95% of museums work with volunteers in some capacity.⁵ Recent research commissioned by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) found that of the up to 1,500 independent museums in the UK (roughly half the sector, with the other half made up of national, regional or local authority museums), most have volunteers, contributing up to one-quarter of museums' resources and equating to 8,000 full-time posts.⁶ It is estimated that 10% of museums and heritage organisations have no paid staff at all, however this figure may not include those which pay just a few people perhaps in a "front of house" role, but in all other respects are volunteer-run. These museums are often found in rural areas or smaller towns where the commitment and expertise of their volunteers offer access to and participation in culture and heritage which would not otherwise be possible.⁷ The MLA survey found that, for museums, the most common reasons for working with volunteers were to extend areas of work or to engage more effectively with the public. Just over half worked with between 1 and 20 volunteers; 6% worked with 100 or more. The main reason why museums did not work with volunteers was that they were unable to employ a volunteer coordinator. The MLA report highlights the importance of this being a securely-funded post. "...Where funding for (volunteer) manager's posts was uncertain, this made

planning and programme development difficult."⁸ While museums increasingly seek to ensure that visitors, paid staff and volunteers reflect and represent British society, "diversity is still an issue and organisations need to look carefully at how volunteers are recruited."⁹ Whereas for recent graduates volunteering can be an essential first step to a career, building valuable experience to complement an academic qualification, this may be a disincentive to people from lower socio-economic or minority ethnic backgrounds, although this will vary depending on the type of museum and geographic region. Research by Creative and Cultural Skills (CCS) found that diversifying the museum workforce is being held back by a dependence on volunteering to gain a foot in the door. "This unstructured, unpaid, or low paid work leads to a sector that does not accurately reflect the diversity of society in the UK."¹⁰ Many counties, especially in the south of England have a museum network or forum, which brings together mainly the smaller volunteer-run museums for seminars and joint projects. Frequently these groups are led by a (county) museum development officer. MDOs are currently forming a more formalised structure for their group (Museum Advisers National Network) following informal sponsorship by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM).



AUSTRIA

NOTE

1 - Unless otherwise credited, all statistics in the national profile sections come from Eurostat <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

ITALY

NOTE

1 - ICOM Italia, Conclusions of the Verona Conference, 4 December 2007, www.icom-italia.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=85&Itemid=161

SLOVENIA

NOTE

1 - Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, http://www.stat.si/eng/novica_prikazi.aspx?ID=2286

2 - Jaka Kovač Slovene Philanthropy

3 - There are several non-governmental, not-for-profit organisations focusing on voluntary work in Slovenia, including the Third Age University, the Anton Trstenjak Institute, and the Social Gerontology Association of Slovenia.

4 - Jaka Kovač Slovene Philanthropy

5 - Jaka Kovač and Nina Lukashevich, interviewed 8 September 2008

6 - Pipan, Primož, International Voluntary Work-camps – an Important Factor of Successful Development of Museum of Salt Making in the Sečovelje Landscape Park, no published yet, e address: primoz.pipan@zrc-sazu.si

UNITED KINGDOM

NOTE

1 - Sources: 1997 National Survey of Volunteering in the UK www.ivr.org.uk/; CEV datafile United Kingdom 2004 www.cev.be/

data/file/UNITED_KINGDOM_updated.pdf.

2 - Volunteering England www.volunteeringengland.org.uk; Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk; Wales Council for Voluntary Action <http://www.wcva.org.uk/www.wcva.org.uk>; Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland www.volunteering-ni.org

3 - <http://www.changeup.org.uk/overview/introduction.asp>

4 - 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS) quoted by Graduate Prospects, the commercial subsidiary of the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU). HECSU is a registered charity that supports the work of higher education careers services in the UK and Republic of Ireland and funds major research projects that benefit the higher education careers sector. <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>

5 - Howlett, S., Machin, J., and Malmersjo, G. (2005) Volunteering in Museums, Libraries and Archives, Institute for Volunteering Research. Available to download as a pdf from <http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=314>

6 - 2009 research (not yet published) by Adrian Babbidge, quoted by Diana Zeuner of AIM in conversation with author.

7 - Conversation with Bridget Yates, June 2009.

8 - Howlett, et al, op cit.

9 - ibid.

10 - http://www.ccskills.org.uk/insight/Entry_to_the_sector.html



Volunteers for Cultural Heritage: Framing the project in a European context

Massimo Negri

There is a certain continuity between Volunteers for Cultural Heritage (VoCH) and another European Union programme with which some of the partners, including the European Museum Forum (EMF), were involved. The other project was Lifelong Museum Learning (LLML), a programme which produced a publication intended to be the first European Handbook dealing with that subject.¹ LLML was recently mentioned by the Socrates Agency as an example of best practice within the Socrates context. There are three elements of continuity worth mentioning. One has to do with the mix of partners which is also present in VoCH and which represents an indicator of the interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter. There are organisations focused on research and academic-like programmes, organisations which are the extension of local authority active in the cultural field, a European organisation dealing with museums in general, and others. This mix guarantees not only a variety of points of view in national terms, but also a comprehensive approach where sociology, cultural heritage studies, museology, heritage management and cultural studies are carefully balanced in order to investigate a multifaceted field, where the great variety offered by the European cultural heritage combines with the many traditions and experiences of involving citizens in the preservation and enhancement of cultural assets.

The second aspect of continuity is represented by the special role reserved for museums in this project, not only for the special experience that some of the partners have in this sector, but also due to the growing importance of museums in Europe as heritage hubs and as cultural meeting places, playing

an increasing role in the more general set of relationships between citizen and cultural heritage and going beyond the limited scope of the nature and size of their individual collections.

The third element is offered by the tangible final result, which in both cases is a handbook, that is to say that special form of book which is conceived specifically to stimulate an effective transfer of know-how, something which includes the dissemination of project results, but tries to go more into depth: offering a set of tools to support the advancement of learning as well as of doing. One of the main challenges within European programmes is that they tend to be ephemeral: covering a given span of time, and then running the risk of being lost due to the end of the network which has been involved. The effort of VoCH, on the other hand, has been very much oriented to a continuity of methods, of partnership and of certain segments of the area of activity, with this handbook providing a lasting legacy.

A EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Within the project theme – the contribution which volunteers make to the multi-faceted work of European museums, including the sharing and promoting of cultural heritage – the human factor is a crucial aspect. It is very difficult to say at present if a common European culture exists. The small amount of space given to cultural matters in the now almost forgotten draft of a possible European Constitution (rejected by the French and Dutch voters and then archived) was a signal of how sensitive European

States are when dealing with cultural affairs, a matter where negotiation seems to be more difficult than in the industrial or financial world, where there seems to be greater room for compromise. On the contrary, culture implies radical problems of identity, of *Weltanschauung*, of psychology of the individuals and of the masses, which makes it complicated to speak in terms of a shared European culture. In 2002, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation (no. 1574) about 'The Spirit of Europe in Museums' which reflected many aspects of the Conclusions of one of the European Museum Forum Workshops organised in Italy under the same title.² The Rapporteur, Gerrit Valk, accompanied the text of that deliberation with some stimulating considerations on the debate about European cultural identity:

Since the creation of the Council of Europe there has been debate over the notion of a common cultural identity as a unifying factor. It has not been convincing. The very first discussions in the Parliamentary Assembly in 1949 failed to identify sufficient common ground and concluded that the notion was rather political than cultural. Subsequent attempts have yielded either the paradoxical assertion that the cultural identity of Europe lies in its diversity or appeals for an assemblage of core cultural characters (from Epicurus to Tolstoy and Freud - French Senate December 2001). There are two issues in these discussions. Is there a cultural identity to Europe? Can culture reinforce the notion of European identity? Clearly both cases are political, both in the definition of Europe and in the aim of the exercise.

Quite apart from being cohesive, or rather because of that, insistence on cultural identity can be divisive. It is evident in religious contexts, in professional artistic circles and in-groups. But it is also an incipient danger in protective approaches to minority cultures. However the distinction is made, and despite attempts to blur the result, there is clearly a negative factor in the division of Europe by the European Union. For this reason it has been urged that the European Union keep clear of culture. But economic and political interests have tended to prevail. Outside this political debate however most would

*accept the notion of multiple (concentric) identities and be hard pressed to give a meaningful "European" label to matters "cultural."*³

And Valk concludes:

*The role that museums can play in the European context is to develop thinking about Europe (in its most undefined sense). The spirit of Europe in museums is a dynamic concept of the museum in society rather than for static objects on display"*⁴

So it definitely seems that to define the concept of European culture is not that easy and that it is not even clear if the existence of such a notion is justified.

But certainly a European cultural heritage exists, it is tangible, visible and every day all of us deal with it to a different extent. In some sense it is the background against which Europeans (whatever that means nowadays) perform their drama every single day. But if we move from the notion of European cultural heritage to the more practical and political area of what the so-called civil society does to preserve and support it, we see that side by side with the mentioned tangible heritage there is a growing European "intangible heritage" which goes beyond the recent definitions of such a form of heritage (whose importance has been strongly stressed on several occasions by UNESCO) and identified – to put it in a simple way - with *savoir faire*, local traditions, rituals, personal and collective memory. It is a form of intangible heritage which is created by those volunteers who devote a part of their life to a deep involvement with our European cultural assets including monuments, museums, libraries, archaeological sites, and other places.

In museological terms there is a sort of growing European "collection of experiences" based on this interaction between people and heritage which does not limit itself to a vague perception of aesthetic and / or historic values represented by objects and documents. This gives rise to a process of integration between the objective factors represented by the mass of cultural goods scattered throughout our continent and the subjective factors represented by the mass of volunteers working for free in order to make this patrimony accessible and understandable. Perhaps this will give an impetus to the evolution of the idea of a common European culture as well.

CULTURAL VOLUNTEERING AS LIFELONG LEARNING

An aspect which has played a relevant role in the development of VoCH has been training. Training is an educational process and certainly this is a further element of continuity with Socrates-Grundtvig programmes, such as LLML, mentioned previously. While education is still a strategic element of the museum's mission, this has witnessed a variety of enlargement of scope during the last decades. In this respect the intensive work on re-definition of a museum carried on by ICOM during the last 50 years is very meaningful of the rapid evolution of the idea of what a museum is and of how the expectations of society have grown in respect to museums all over the world.

When dealing with the issue of this special category of volunteers active in museums (VoCH has defined and examined cultural heritage in the broadest sense of the word), it has to be stressed that volunteers are potentially part of a complex process where their educational development is connected with the deployment of the educational offer addressed to visitors. In other words, volunteers are users of the museum in educational terms similar to visitors, but with a special declination due to their intermediate position between public and staff. If education with adults means a variety of ways to stimulate personal growth while not necessarily following the path of formal education programmes and methods, volunteering for cultural heritage shows its great potential for a more effective action in the area of lifelong learning. Volunteering for cultural heritage in museums, which by definition are educational places as well, could offer even more chances. This point comes out very strongly at the end of the VoCH experience, and perhaps it is its final message. Yes, there is a great need for good quality volunteers and volunteer management if we want to preserve and communicate adequately the rich European cultural heritage to future generations. And, yes, there are strong political implications to be taken into due account, as well as the essential economical outcome of the volunteers' efforts. (How many museums would close down all over Europe if volunteers stop working for them?) But the almost invisible, almost immeasurable, frequently neglected contribution to the personal, intimate growth

of a new breed of European citizens is probably the most precious legacy which will be left by the present generation of volunteers to future Europeans.

NOTE

1 - ISBN 978-88-95062-00-6 downloadable from: http://www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pdf/llml/llml_en.pdf (English version) and http://www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pdf/llml/llml_ita.pdf (Italian version).

2 - For the full text of these conclusions visit www.europeanmuseumforum.eu.

3 - Doc. 9503, 15 July 2002, The spirit of Europe in museums. Report for debate in the Standing Committee, Committee on Culture, Science and Education, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Rapporteur Mr Gerrit Valk, Netherlands.

4 - Ibid.



Promoting Active Citizenship: Conclusions of the 2007 EMF workshop¹

The European Museum Forum held a workshop for museum professionals 17-21 October 2007 at the University Residential Centre in Bertinoro, Italy.² The subject, volunteers in cultural heritage and museums, helped to shape and inform the work of the VoCH project.

The workshop viewed volunteering from two perspectives: recognising both the important contribution volunteers can make to the running of cultural organisations, heritage attractions and museums, and also the significant impact that such voluntary activity can have on the people involved in terms of personal and professional growth.

The objective was to share experiences and exchange ideas on how to recruit, motivate and manage volunteers in the cultural heritage sector and how to conceive training and development programmes which are beneficial for the individuals involved and contribute to their personal and professional growth. The conclusions of the participants represent the results of three intensive days of keynote presentations, debate and discussion. It is the hope of the participants that the conclusions will have relevance to cultural professionals and policy-makers throughout Europe. The large amount of material resulting from discussions and case studies has been summarised in the ten recommendations below which are intended to offer a platform for coherent action in the field of volunteering for cultural heritage in Europe with a special accent on the museum field, where this involvement is felt to be of strategic value for the growth, if not even for the survival of many institutions.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Volunteers can be an important, inspiring labour and advocacy force for museums, deeply embedded in the European tradition. Volunteers can provide knowledge, experience and inspiration, bring new perspectives on museum collections, and help to develop new audiences. Volunteers can strengthen the museum's relationship with its local or regional environment as ambassadors of the institution.
2. In discussions on the European level about the role of volunteers we must bear in mind the huge differences between regions and countries in the areas of culture, legislation, formal education and social security; these can confuse the exchange of experiences between countries and may even include different meanings of the word volunteer.
3. The position of volunteer work in museums and cultural organisations may be considered within with the whole spectrum of staff requirements and opportunities, including core staff roles, internships, reintegration programmes, education programmes and special projects.
4. In order to optimise the value and position of volunteer work in museums, it should be an explicit and integrated part of policy and human resource management. In order to devise a relevant and workable volunteer programme, the museum must consider its mission as well as operational needs and wishes. It must also achieve the commitment and support of the existing staff.
5. A successful volunteer programme requires the institution to recognise and consider the motivations and needs of the individual volunteer. These will vary from

individual to individual, but factors to consider include age, stage of life and social background. Volunteers can gain knowledge, learn new skills, increase their value on the labour market, enhance their social well-being or status, and receive formal or informal recognition as a benefit of volunteering.

6. In considering the cost of setting up and running a volunteer programme, the museum needs to bear in mind the necessary investment of financial and personnel resources required for recruitment, marketing, communication, training, reimbursements and incentives. There are costs associated with running a volunteer programme and volunteers should not be seen as a form of cheap labour.

7. Recruitment, training, integration and retention of volunteers, as for permanent or paid staff, require regular care and attention. The appointment of a volunteer coordinator is recommended to develop and manage the volunteer programme and to mediate between all stakeholders within the museum organisation.

8. The quality of a museum's volunteer programme can be an indication of the museum's quality as a whole. Attractive museums, with a strong focus on their public, will be more successful in attracting good quality, skilled volunteers.

9. The relationship between the volunteer and the organisation should be based on the principle of shared values, be reciprocal and be formalised in a contract or other document defining the volunteer's role and setting out mutual obligations, rights, expectations and limitations.

10. Within a well-developed programme, volunteers should be viewed as full members or stakeholders of the organisation, with the ability to state their views and influence decision-making. They should not be seen as a threat to professionalism, the position of regular staff or the continuity of the organisation, rather they should be seen to enhance these areas.

IN CONCLUSION

For the benefit of cultural exchange and improvement of cultural awareness on the European level, it is recommended that the work of volunteers in the cultural sector be stimulated and opportunities created to exchange experiences of museums and other

cultural institutions.

The participants in the 2007 EMF Workshop expressed the wish to continue such exchange at a distance, possibly relying on the research outcomes and on the tools which will be developed by European projects, such as Volunteers for Cultural Heritage, as well as on the network it will establish over the two years of its duration.

NOTE

1 - This text has been abridged slightly for this publication. The full text and a list of workshop participants can be downloaded from <http://www.amitie.it/voch/conclusioni.pdf> and http://assembly.coe.int/Museum/ForumEuroMusee/Workshop/workshop_Index.asp

2 - In co-operation with: The Istituto Beni Culturali Regione Emilia-Romagna, Bologna, and the Cultural Department of the Regione Toscana, Florence and under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Participation was supported by Grundtvig mobility grants (EU Lifelong Learning Programme)



WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS IN MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Trends in European Museum and Heritage Volunteering

As one of the early activities of the VoCH project the partners undertook Europe-wide research on volunteering within the cultural sector.¹ The aim of the research was to analyse – by using different tools such as questionnaires and interviews as well as documental sources – the role of volunteering in the cultural field within the four partner countries of the project (Austria, Italy, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) and in other European countries. Here are the most evident trends and issues which emerged from the research work:

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURES

These are crucial to support volunteering nationally, regionally or locally and are particularly relevant in countries which are beginning to open up to this phenomenon. An infrastructure (especially volunteer centres at national or local level) which promotes the recognition of volunteers and their legal status, provides training opportunities and facilitates the encounter of offer and demand, is essential to support the growth and greater understanding of volunteering.

THE NEED FOR PLANNING AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

A good volunteer programme doesn't just happen. It requires a number of good practice measures, including a named volunteer coordinator, volunteer policy, and formal procedures for recruitment, induction, training, ongoing support and supervision, grievance, recognition and reward of volunteers.

INTERNAL ADVOCACY

This ensures that museum and heritage professionals and trustees understand the benefits of involving volunteers in their work. The value of working with volunteers goes beyond the simple achievement of a task. When the organisation includes volunteers they engage key supporters in their vision and mission. Volunteers, in turn, are invaluable advocates for a museum or heritage site, bringing passion and commitment to the way in which they communicate with audiences and potential audiences. Staff and trustees need to have an understanding of this. The research found that most often it is the curators or conservators who can feel threatened by the presence of volunteers or see them as simply there to "do a job."

DIVERSIFICATION OF VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE

In some countries museums and cultural heritage organisations, often supported by agencies or umbrella organisations, are actively looking for ways to promote greater diversity within their volunteer workforce, to include groups traditionally less active in the sector. The definition of diversity differs depending on the profile of the current volunteer workforce. It can mean younger people, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds or people from diverse ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds (in some cases from minority groups of longstanding within the community; in others from relatively recent immigrant groups). It is hoped that greater diversity within the volunteering sector at all levels will promote intercultural dialogue and diminish cultural barriers.

VOLUNTEERING AS A ROUTE TO EMPLOYMENT

This is especially relevant for young people, particularly graduates, who wish to volunteer as preparation for their future career. At the same time, as some case studies have shown, volunteering can be a route into work and participation for individuals who find themselves on the margins of society and use volunteering as a first step back to social inclusion.

DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS AND PATTERNS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Some surveys suggest that increasingly people tend to volunteer for specific, short-term projects that interest them, in order to have a good time, do something worthwhile, but not necessarily to make a long-term commitment. Many organisations are, therefore, developing a more active policy towards their volunteers, using management skills and project work to ensure mutual benefit from the experience.

ON-LINE VOLUNTEERING

This refers not only to the encounter of offer and demand via websites and databases, but also to the increasing tendency of volunteers to offer on-line services and perform their tasks using the Internet (documentation, data entry, and other tasks that can be done at a distance).

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

In some countries large companies are lending employees and piloting involvement schemes to support organisations in their activities. This support, however, very seldom seems to result in longer term structural partnerships with volunteer centres or the voluntary sector.

NOTE

1 - <http://www.amitie.it/voch/index4.htm>.

Is your organisation ready for a volunteer programme?

Adele Finley

An effective volunteer programme gives an organisation access to all the skills, knowledge and experience in the local community.¹

In order to be effective, however, a volunteer programme has to be planned well. It should be supported by a clear vision and forward plan, meet the needs of the organisation and fit with the organisational mission, involve staff at all levels and at all stages, be adequately resourced, aware of the context externally and work in partnership with external agencies. This might make it sound like an effective volunteer programme has to be big – it doesn't. In fact developing and operating a volunteer programme is such a delicate and complicated task that it is better to start small and grow with success.

Starting small might be the development of a small team of volunteers to support visitor services, learning or public programmes, it might be the development of a small project to train local people with mental health issues to be volunteers or it might be the development of a small Friends group to undertake advocacy and fundraising for a particular programme. Whatever the project or task the development of a cohesive and co-ordinated volunteer programme depends on the planning and positive steps an organisation takes in order to ensure success and effectiveness.

STEP ONE: ORGANISATIONAL VISION

The development of any volunteer programme requires a clear vision, which involves staff at all levels and at all stages. Is the volunteer programme going to make the organisation accessible to all, diversify the workforce, make the organisation relevant to local people and local stakeholders or develop an advocacy, campaigning and fundraising aim? Whatever

the vision is it should clearly communicate the values of the volunteer programme and demonstrate how it supports the organisation's overall mission. The link here is important for both volunteers and for staff because it ensures volunteer involvement is recognised as a core organisational goal and integral to the organisation's success. Moreover it gives a sense of the future the organisation is trying to create and the part the volunteers will play in creating it.²

STEP TWO: STAFF SUPPORT

At the next level, staff need to understand and be clear about why volunteering is an organisational goal, what the volunteers will get out of it, what staff will gain and how the organisation benefits. Senior managers are important in this area because they are the ones that can create a positive top-down volunteering culture within the organisation and answer all queries. It is important that senior managers 'buy-in' to the development of a volunteer programme, that they can clearly identify how such a programme contributes to achieving the organisation's mission and that they regularly speak about the programme in positive terms to all staff. With senior management support it is possible to create a strong organisational climate of acceptance and appreciation where volunteer involvement is planned into new projects and programmes, volunteers are engaged in significant roles from the outset, senior management regularly encourage staff to involve volunteers and staff³ are rewarded for the effective use of volunteer resources.

STEP THREE: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

There is little doubt that the volunteer programme should meet the needs of the organisation, but it is equally important that the programme is relevant and

meaningful for the volunteers. It is very important that the organisation understands the needs of the community it is seeking to work with – whether this is communities of people, of place or of interest. One way to reach a level of understanding that will ensure the programme is relevant to all is to conduct a period of consultation with senior managers, staff, prospective volunteers and external agencies. This consultation should seek answers to key questions: what should the programme look like, does the programme meet a local need, what benefit would a programme give to volunteers and the organisation, and what support structures are needed are some of the questions that should be asked. This consultation phase should make sure that the volunteer offer is attractive and relevant to everyone. Additionally it should support the development of networks and partnerships that could later act as a steering group, recruitment partners and volunteers.

STEP FOUR: RESOURCING THE PROGRAMME

Once a volunteer programme has been agreed within the organisation it becomes very important that adequate resources are assigned to the programme - both human and financial. Resources will ensure that volunteers can be recruited, trained and managed appropriately. A good first step in this area is the appointment of a dedicated member of staff within the organisation (often called a volunteer coordinator). Without significant human resources it is extremely hard to engage with people and maintain their engagement over a period of time.⁴ Additionally a dedicated member of staff can compile all the necessary volunteer management documentation, support individual volunteers, work with staff that support volunteers day to day, develop and implement an evaluation strategy and engage with senior management in the future deployment of volunteers on projects and programmes.

STEP FIVE: DEVELOPING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A final step that will insure the longevity of the programme and its development from a small pro-

gramme to one that reaches across the organisation is the identification of strategic partners internally and externally. These partnerships will bring opportunities, challenges and local, regional and national initiatives into the organisation, in which the volunteer programme might be able to play a role. Making links with partners across sectors locally, regionally and nationally effectively raises the profile of the programme, the organisation and the offer for strategic stakeholders.

NOTE

1 - McCurley, S. & Lynch, R. (2004) *Essential Volunteer Management*, Directory of Social Change, London

2 - Ibid.

3 - Dyer, F. Jost, U. (2002) *recruiting volunteers: attracting the people you need*, Directory of Social Change, London

4 - McCurley & Lynch op cit.



Working with Volunteers: An introduction to good practice

Bridget Yates

People become volunteers for many different reasons including a wish to make new friends, to have fun, to “give something back,” to get out of the house, to add to their cv or as a stepping stone to employment, or to keep their lifetime’s skills and knowledge well-honed. All of these are equally valid, and worth remembering when you try to recruit. Also worth remembering is that six out of ten volunteers say that volunteering gives them opportunities to learn new skills and here museums have a lot to offer. Museums which involve volunteers, whether they employ paid staff or are entirely volunteer-run, are in a “competitive” situation with other organisations – a volunteer will offer themselves where they will enjoy themselves most, where they can see that their contribution is highly valued and makes a difference, and where their volunteering is well-organised. Very few people will give up their time to a ramshackle organisation that is obviously going nowhere. This paper aims to help you and your museum think through how you organise and manage your volunteers and how to adopt “best practice.” It will also help you to demonstrate to your stakeholders and to potential funding bodies that you are serious in your commitment to the volunteers who give freely of their time, knowledge and energy.

Some practical basics RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Before you start to recruit, think through what you will be recruiting for. Drawing up role or task descriptions is good practice and will help a potential volunteer understand whether it is for them or not (see box). It is a good idea to try to recruit more broadly than by

word of mouth alone, and to use an open and transparent process, for example leaflets, posters, editorial and advertisements in the local press or community newsletters, and working through the local Volunteer Centre or Bureau, if this structure exists within your country. If you have an Equal Opportunities or Diversity Policy that guides your recruitment of paid staff, it should also apply to volunteers. If you use an application form keep it simple and straight-forward. If you ask for references you should ask for them for everyone who wants to volunteer with you. References, and any personal details about volunteers, should always be kept confidential. You should seek advice if your museum is not already registered under Data Protection legislation.

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWS

Will you interview? Although this will be much less formal than a job interview, you will still want to be well organised. They will be interviewing you and the museum too.

Things to tell a potential volunteer:

- About the museum – what it does, how many people are involved, when it's open, visitor information
- About the role of volunteers – what they do, how many, how they are organised
- Specific tasks for volunteers
- The training, introduction & support you give
- What you expect of volunteers and the volunteer agreement
- Time commitment
- Payment of expenses

Things for the volunteer to tell you:

- What attracted them to volunteer with the museum

- What they understand about what museums do
- What they hope to gain from it
- Relevant skills, interests or experience
- Time availability
- Any resources they might need

TASK DESCRIPTIONS

Task descriptions help to define the museum's needs, the level of support or training that can be given and in recruiting volunteers equitably. If the description of a task or role is clear, people will be able to see exactly what is involved and whether it is for them. People are more likely to volunteer with you if they know what they are letting themselves in for.

Simple Task Description

Volunteer role:
Responsible to:
Hours and time frame (if appropriate):
Location/work space:
Purpose:
Tasks:
Skills required:
Support/training:
Other information:
Expenses, Health & Safety, Insurance: as per Volunteering Policy & Handbook

*Adapted from a sample Voluntary Work Outline,
National Centre for Volunteering
Good Practice Guide 1998*

INDUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Will you have an induction process for all volunteers? Everyone will want to be made welcome by your museum, and you will want to make sure that they have all the information that they need to feel one of the team. There will be some essential information, such as Fire Safety, First Aid, and Health & Safety that you will want to give them as soon as possible. They will also want to be introduced to other people they will come into contact with, where they will work, what the facilities are and so on. If you have a Volunteers' Handbook, show them where it is kept. Some muse-

ums have developed a “welcome leaflet,” which gives their volunteers all the essential information and contact details, and refers them to the more detailed information in the Handbook.

What training will you give to the volunteer to enable them to undertake their role?

Remember that training includes working alongside someone or mentoring; it's rarely just about sending people on courses.

In terms of support, you may have volunteers who work in teams with a team leader, for example the shop team or the collections team, the gardeners or the engineers. Even if you don't have teams, who is going to support or supervise the volunteer and help them to develop? Will the volunteer and their supporter or supervisor have regular meetings?

Trial periods can be a good idea. It makes it easier for the volunteer to back out if it is not for them, and easier for you to end the experience or switch the volunteer to another task.

INSURANCE

Requirements will vary from country to country. In general, you should check whether Employer's Liability Insurance will cover voluntary and paid staff, that the actions of volunteers are covered explicitly in your Public Liability Insurance (both on and off the premises), and that your insurance indemnifies volunteers against being sued for damage caused to a third party. It may also be relevant to check whether Personal Accident insurance is appropriate and that volunteers are qualified and insured to drive a museum vehicle or their own on museum business, if this will be required within the role. If your museum is involved in advisory work, you might need to look into Professional Indemnity Insurance.

EXPENSES

It is good and inclusive practice to pay volunteers' expenses, and you may be excluding good volunteers if you don't offer at least travel expenses. Whatever you decide, it should apply to everyone equally. Out of pocket expenses might include travel to and from the museum, meals, care of dependents, postage, telephone, travel in the course of volunteering or the purchase of protective clothing.

Liability for tax will vary from country to country and you will need to investigate how to pay expenses in a way which is consistent with the policy of your museum and does not jeopardise the volunteer's tax status or any state benefits they may be receiving. As with paid employees, it is good practice to pay expenses against receipts only and to keep a record of your payments, and the receipts.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

You may be required by law to draw up a Health and Safety policy and it is certainly good practice to do so. Volunteers should be included on this and made aware of its guidance, especially regarding issues such as risk assessment. Even if you are a volunteer-run museum, the museum and you as individuals still have an overarching general legal duty of care to avoid carelessly causing injury to persons. The notion of duty of care needs to be considered in all aspects of the museum's work and activities, even when loaning equipment to other people, or holding events away from the museum.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

However hard we try, things can go wrong between the museum and the volunteer. Volunteers can feel ignored, frustrated, exploited, bored, underused, concerned or badly treated. The museum can feel that the volunteer is over reacting, disloyal, should just get on with it, doesn't understand, should do more, wants to have it all on a plate or is incompetent.

Obviously, most problems can and should be sorted out quickly between the volunteer and their supervisor or team leader, especially if they already hold regular "How are you getting on?" sessions. Solutions could include:

- Moving the volunteer to a different team or time slot
- Trying a different task
- Giving them extra support or training
- Making sure that the volunteer really has understood what is expected

However, some issues cannot be resolved informally, so it's a good idea to have problem solving procedures in place. In a work situation, these are usually called Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. A Grievance Procedure is used when a member of staff

or volunteer has a problem with the museum or with other people working in it. A Disciplinary Procedure is used when the museum has a problem concerning the member of staff or volunteer.

You may prefer to combine these into a single procedure and to use the term "Problem Solving," which is more informal. You should also think about and write down how you will deal with serious breaches of museum policies and practices, for example wilful disregard of health and safety procedures, racial abuse or disregard of child protection guidelines. Remember, these are areas where the museum could be challenged in the courts.

The procedures should give clear steps, for example to respond in seven days, and should include provision for a disinterested party to listen to both sides.

A VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

It is extremely useful to have a single source of information about the museum readily available to volunteers. You may want to give a copy to all your volunteers, although if you have a lot of people it may be more practical to have just one or two copies kept in a common space such as the kitchen or club room, coupled with a Welcome leaflet. The Handbook could be a ring binder or a box file – it doesn't need to be a book.

The contents could include:

About the museum:

- Mission Statement, Key Aims & Objectives
- Organisational & Staff Charts
- The Forward Plan
- Guidebook and events leaflets

Policies and guidelines that directly concern the volunteer:

- Equal Opportunities Policy (including Disability Discrimination)
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child and vulnerable adult protection policy and good practice guidelines
- Volunteer Policy
- Statement on expenses
- Statement on insurance
- Statement on confidentiality
- Volunteer Agreement & volunteer task description
- Statement on problem solving

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

Volunteer agreements or compacts are widely used within the voluntary and community sector and are generally considered to be good practice.

The advantages of having an Agreement are that it:

- Makes clear what the volunteer can expect of the organisation and the support they will receive
- Makes clear what the museum expects of the volunteer
- It is a declaration of good intent

The museum's commitments might include:

- To provide full induction
- To provide appropriate training and support for the tasks/role
- To provide a named supervisor or team leader
- To recruit and treat volunteers in line with the museum's Equal Opportunities policy
- To implement good Health & Safety practice
- To provide insurance cover for volunteers
- To reimburse out of pocket expenses

The volunteer's commitments might include:

- To follow the letter and spirit of the museum's policies and procedures including equal opportunities, child protection and Health & Safety
- To respect confidentiality
- To meet mutually agreed time commitments or give notice if this is not possible
- (mutually agreed time commitments could include rostering)

The Agreement does not have to be signed, but a copy should be in the Volunteer Handbook and a copy given to the volunteer. In some countries you will need to be careful not to create a Contract of Employment and you may wish to seek further advice about this before drawing up a final Agreement.

A VOLUNTEER POLICY

If you have considered all of the issues and suggestions above, then you are only a small step away from writing a Volunteer Policy which will:

- Help to show your commitment to your paid staff
- Help to show your commitment to volunteers and how they will be treated
- Clarify why you want to invite people to volunteer
- Discourage you from making instant decisions that

may be divisive and have unfortunate long term repercussions

- Encourage you to treat everyone equally and fairly
- Enable you to demonstrate your commitment to equal opportunities and diversity
- Enable you to demonstrate your commitment to your community whether that is a geographical area or a community of interest

There is no standard length or format for a policy; it should be appropriate to your needs and the size of the museum, and written in such a way that it becomes a user-friendly and useable document, not something that's put on the shelf until the crisis comes. Volunteering England (www.volunteering.org.uk) provides some excellent and helpful guidance through their publications, including much that can be downloaded.

One way to shape a policy is to divide it into three sections: an introduction; a statement of principles; and how you will do things in practice.

Many museums have a standard way of introducing their policies. If not, you could include:

- The museum's statement of purpose and key aims (mission statement)
 - Something about the museum, for example "The museum is managed entirely by volunteers, who care for our collections and provide our services for visitors and users"
 - Something about why you involve volunteers, for example "The museum involves volunteers to increase our contacts with our community and to enable us to broaden the services we offer"
 - Something that demonstrates that you are an "open" organisation and not a members only club, for example "We aim to involve volunteers with a wide range of skills and knowledge and different life experiences" or "We welcome volunteers of all ages and from all communities in Our Town and beyond"
- Your policy will be guided by some broad principles, for example:
- The museum will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
 - All volunteers will be encouraged to contribute to the organisation and development of the museum through the Volunteers' Forum
 - Volunteers will be consulted on all matters that affect them

- All volunteers will be encouraged to develop their own areas of interest and expertise

PRACTICALITIES can refer to all the points discussed above – insurance, expenses, task descriptions, the volunteer agreement and so on. If you have already written a statement on expenses, for example, you do not need to repeat it in the policy, simply refer to it. So, for small museums a policy could be a single side of A4 paper, but it would still enable you to think through how you will look after your volunteers and demonstrate that you have done so thoroughly. Finally, although all of this has been about organising, thinking things through and writing things down, never forget that working with volunteers is all about people and we all want and need to be recognised and rewarded. A simple “thank you,” a Christmas party, an end of season chocolate cake, free entry for their family, winter talks, a trip to another museum, a summer picnic on the river, recognition in publicity or newsletters – there is no end to the possibilities but whatever you choose, it will be worth every penny and every moment of your time.

Abridged from **Focus 18 Working with volunteers: an introduction to good practice**

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Active in Museums: Citizens as Volunteers

Hannelore Kunz-Ott

Many people give back their expertise, ability and knowledge to civil society by volunteering during, and particularly after, their professional life. The museum is an area often chosen as field of activity by dedicated citizens. Although volunteering has a long tradition within German museums – about half of the approximately 6.000 museums in Germany are managed by voluntary museum directors – the cooperation of full-time museum staff and people that give their knowledge freely as volunteers is comparatively new.

THE PROJECT

In a biennial pilot project at the museums in Nuremberg a new style of voluntary commitment was developed and its viability proved in the daily routine of a museum. The project “Pool of Volunteers for Museums” was initialised together by *Zentrum Aktive Bürger in Nürnberg* (Centre for Active Citizens), Museen der Stadt Nürnberg and the office for non-governmental museums in Bavaria. The target of the measure was the development of a new structure for volunteers in museums: a group of volunteers who could be put in charge of different, additional tasks in the museums of Nuremberg after a certain introduction and qualification time. The pilot project had the following objectives:

Advancement of opportunities

- Committed citizens would get the possibility to learn to know and appreciate the institution “Museum” as a place of voluntary work.

Supporting the workload of paid museum staff

- Facing threatened as well as already effective cuts in the budgets of museums, the activity of volunteers would contribute to the relief of full-time staff, for example at cash desks or surveillance, as well as avoiding a necessary cutback of opening hours.

Additionality and added value

- Volunteers would bring their knowledge, expertise and personal experiences into a museum.

Development of new target groups

- By involving the knowledge, expertise and contacts of volunteers, diversity of target groups would be achieved, enlarging the traditional public of museums. Besides family and friends, volunteers would bring in current or former colleagues.

Identification

- Voluntary commitment would bring identification with cultural proposals leading to a stronger public and political anchoring.

PROCESS

After a planning stage and obtaining funding, the field of activities of the volunteers was defined as supervi-

sion of visitors at the entrance area and theatre performances, garden guidance, general visitor service, child care at the outskirt area of a toy museum and event support.

An article published in daily newspapers as well as in the museum newsletter brought 34 interested people (25 women and 9 men at the age of 25 to 70 years), including 8 people working full-time. 25 people eventually took part in the pilot. After first interviews and an introducing event formal training included: guided tours through different museums, a trainings stage of four weeks and afterwards reflection and decision for the place or field of activity in which the volunteers wanted to participate. The Centre for Active Citizens trained volunteers as full-time museums employees and upgraded their skills.

CONCLUSION

The project of cooperation “Pool of Volunteers for Museums” started very successfully. The response of dedicated people to media appeals was unexpectedly big. The introductory stage was well prepared and most of the volunteers started their activity in one or several museums after an orientation and trial stage.

It was difficult to keep up the interest of volunteers, if their start needed to be postponed for organisational reasons (for example, construction delay). There were some problems in the cooperation of full-time staff and volunteers at cash desks or surveillance. The reservations coming from the museums staff were reduced and sometimes cleared by shared events such as skill enhancements, celebrations and excursions.

It was important to care personally for the volunteers until they reached a certain daily routine. Also crucial for the successful activity of volunteers was the recognition culture by the museum. That means that volunteers needed to get signs of esteem from paid colleagues within the museum, instead of being seen as “annoying trouble makers.” Appreciation was shown by the museums by offering free admittance to all municipal museums or inviting volunteers to special celebrations or excursions.

The idea of creating a “Pool of Volunteers” to serve a network of museums was also proved. Volunteers, taking over new service tasks in different museums, were at the same time able to give broad information about several places to the visitors. On the other hand the “Pool” offered a great number of volunteers and therefore allowed for reliable planning.

The museum as a place of civil society enjoys the high esteem of volunteers. The status and benefits which the museums offers to volunteers are well documented, especially the possibility of taking part in public, social and cultural life. The opportunity and resources of voluntary activity in the work of museums are still far away from being completely realised but are still developing. Therefore it is necessary to develop new fields of activity, projects and ideas for the work of volunteers – fields of activity that do not touch the core areas of the museum’s work. To advance that kind of development voluntary work needs to be taken into consideration within all development plans in museums.

Building new alliances Izabella Csordás

Volunteer programmes in museums and cultural heritage organisations have already proved to be a very important support for the institution. Social outreach, museum education or bringing together loyal visitors can be manifest in volunteer activities.

Whether started by an individual working at grassroots level or as a strategic management initiative, a volunteer programme should never be regarded as source of free labour. Establishing a group of committed and knowledgeable individuals requires strong personal devotion and effort from the coordinator as well as a welcoming, prepared institution, all of which will set the scene for the success (or lack of success) of the programme.

This article gives an introduction to a uniquely developed volunteer programme in one of the most well known Central European museums: the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest (MFAB).

IMAGINE A WORLD

Imagine a world where volunteerism is the synonym for compulsory work expected by the government and non-attendance at any “voluntary” community activity – for example, road-building – can result in one becoming persona non grata.

Although at the time of establishing our Volunteer Program at MFAB, there was a ten year old tradition of diplomats’ wives and other expats becoming docents (volunteer gallery guides), local citizens still found the idea of volunteer activity something very curious and peculiar. Younger generations did not have an example; elder generations did not have the trust. Something had to be changed.

In 2006, as a trained docent (and one of the Hungarian “odd ones out” in the international nest), I raised the idea of establishing a Volunteer Program for local people which could well fill in the lack of an Information Desk with Hungarian-speaking staff. With some online research and a drafted scenario of responsibilities, work fields, benefits, budget, the General Director of the museum gave the green light. Our first advertisement reached free online channels in August 2006.

THE DEAL

Convincing people requires one to be convinced. Although colleagues kept stopping me in the corridors asking if I had gone crazy to want to find people who would work for free, I was sure that there were many people out there who would love to help: only they did not know how to reach us. I also had to prepare a list answering the question why it was beneficial for anyone to join us.

And here comes into the picture the model of volunteer motivations which make distinction between the younger and elder generations. The chart below shows well what was proven in practice in our Volunteer Program.

Type of volunteerism	Traditional	New
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-socialisation • Belonging to a community • It feels good to help • Tradition in the family • Altruistic attitude of giving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining new or necessary experiences • Professional development • Self-knowledge • Useful leisure time • Awareness of the benefits of volunteer work
Characteristics	Rather older people	Rather younger people

THE PACKAGE

Once one is aware of the above motivational system, it becomes easier to address the audience and prepare the list of the benefits in the organisation. The MFAB offers volunteers the following:

- Authentic museum environment;
- Status of unpaid colleagues;
- Certification of volunteer work (or reference for scholarships);
- A training programme lasting approximately two months for information volunteers;
- Walkabout (tour of the permanent collection);
- Tours of the temporary exhibitions;
- Free tickets for the exhibitions;
- Complimentary copies of catalogues;
- Participation at the Christmas reception offered by the general Director to the staff members.

This above package helped a lot to break down the social isolation and rejective attitude of the elder generation who had bad associations of volunteerism originating from Communism.

In return, we expect our volunteers to donate a minimum of eight hours a month to the museum (for at least a half a year, since the induction takes quite some time and we would like to have some return on our energies put into the newcomers’ training). Taking into consideration that most seniors still prefer to have a paid job due to the general financial difficulties, eight hours seems to be a reasonable amount of required time, although there are some people who are more committed and help whenever they can.

The highest level of interest comes from young adults aged 20 to 35. However the percentage of those admitted from the elder applicants is higher than from the younger. Many of the younger people would ideally like to join a traineeship lasting not longer than two months. Because they cannot sign up to the minimum six month commitment they cannot be accepted onto the programme. While we are sorry to reject someone who is interested, communicating our own limits helps to maintain a more stable programme.

CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE NEW PROGRAMME

In the very first months of the programme’s existence we did not have a Volunteer Manual or a contract,

although their importance is crucial in the perception of the responsibility taken by the volunteers. When the volunteers became informed about the preparation of such a manual, some of them saw the initiative as an offensive tool and rejected working with us. Fortunately, most of them understood that having such rules in a rigid organisation (of 180 employees) would be beneficial for both them and us. The manual now serves as the general contractual conditions of the contract which they sign.

The issue of any rule (or a set of rules) always reveals how much easier it is to make something acceptable for the newcomers than for those who are already a part of the organisation. For this same reason MFAB is lucky by the coincidence that at the very beginning of establishing this programme we advertised volunteer positions only via the Internet. This resulted in online applications and our practice of accepting only applications via e-mail continues to the present day. In the modern era of technology and low museum budgets it would be a shame not to take advantage of the opportunities given when communicating with our 90 volunteers.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Our second biggest challenge was and somewhat still is breaking down the rejective attitude of colleagues generated by prejudices on the value of volunteer work. Today we have arrived at a point where colleagues turn to our office asking for volunteer help when stuffing envelopes or to support exhibition openings.

At the very beginning I surveyed the departments to find out what help they would need. Our traditional volunteer fields evolved as follows:

- Information services: there was no information desk and this is still 100% a volunteer area. This is the biggest group of volunteers and many who help in other fields first start here;
- Registering Friends' memberships;
- Assisting in the library;
- Assisting at kids' activities;
- Administration help (including database and registration);
- Help at openings;
- Informatics (developing the volunteers' website);
- Volunteer Newsletter (quarterly);
- "Walkabouts" – of the permanent collection and the history of the museum for colleagues, newcomers and at crowded events for visitors.

ORGANISATION OF THE WORK

Scheduling volunteer hours and supplying volunteers with all necessary information was a real challenge which we solved with the help of an information technology volunteer who developed a website for us: www.volunteer.mfab.hu, which has a public area and a volunteers' area with calendars and an online bulletin board. Developing a scheme of information volunteers' induction (illustrated on the chart below) took quite some years, but the system seems to be satisfying for the existing volunteers (since newcomers realise the importance and responsibility in their work), the museum (since fluctuation has decreased) and the newcomers (since they face both the practical and theoretical side of their future work and get enough support).

			3. Mentor session osserva- tion (2h)	4. Mentor session osserva- tion (2h)	5. Contracting		8. Mentor session training on the job	9. Mentor session training on the job	10. Mentor session training on the job
0. Applica- tion form, CV	1. Interview	2. Orienta- tion game				6. Conflict handing quiz	7. Begin- ners' quiz	11. Walkabout general museum information	

PRESENT DAY

The Volunteer Program of MFAB celebrated its third anniversary in 2009. In the course of its operation over the past 2.5 years (August 2006 - February 2009) volunteers have donated 16,712 volunteer hours (close to 2,100 working days) to the Museum.

Shape your future: An innovative volunteering programme

Adele Finley

In 2002 Imperial War Museum North set up a pioneering Volunteer Programme that offered valuable work experience and training to people in disadvantaged local communities. The programme used heritage and the groundbreaking building by architect Daniel Libeskind to support lifelong learning, develop new skills and provide work experience through volunteering. It was an ambitious project that needed to be professional, structured and adequately resourced if it was to be successful.

THE CONCEPT

In January 2001, the London-based Imperial War Museum North (IWMN) project team enlisted a consultant to help develop a volunteering vision and strategy. Together they explored the types of voluntary roles that would be both useful to IWMN and rewarding to those volunteering. The project team wanted the Volunteer Programme to be accessible to people from all walks of life, and place itself at the heart of the local community. Because IWMN was being built in a regeneration area bordered by some of the UK's most deprived wards, the project team anticipated working closely with people from communities where there was a high level of social disadvantage and disaffection. This resulted in the decision to apply to the European Social Fund (ESF) for funds to adequately resource and support the Programme.

Throughout 2001 the project team carried out research with cultural and voluntary organisations across Greater Manchester and the North West in order to ensure there was a need for this type of scheme. Partnerships were established with Volunteering organisations such as Volunteer Bureaux in Salford and Trafford, the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations, and the Commonwealth Games Festival of Friendship Pre-Volunteer Programme. These organisations said that there was a good volunteer culture in Manchester, and that further volunteering opportunities would be welcome - particularly in a cultural venue. Throughout the development phase the project team, senior management and staff worked together and this had a very positive impact – creating a strong top down volunteering culture. Financial investment meant that dedicated and experienced staff could be recruited to work with volunteers. External funding also removed any issue of competition for internal resources. IWMN communicated to its staff a very clear vision of why volunteers were involved, their roles, and the fact that the volunteer programme and volunteers were on board before most staff were recruited meant there was no fear among staff that volunteers might threaten their jobs: staff were delighted to have additional committed and enthusiastic members of the workforce to lend a hand, and in return were supportive of volunteers' needs.

Following an extensive period of research, development and fundraising, the Volunteer Programme was finalised exactly 12 months prior to IWMN opening.

STAFFING THE PROJECT

The volunteer programme was and is based within the Museum's Learning and Access team, which is responsible for encouraging lifelong learning and reaching out to the local community. Two full-time staff – the Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Assistant – manage the Programme on a day-to-day basis. However, all members of staff continue to be involved to varying degrees at different times of the project. For example, the Head of Learning and Access was heavily involved during the initial marketing phase, while the Head of Operations helped with rotas at the end of the project when the volunteers were working with front of house staff. Throughout the development of the project there was external consultancy support on volunteer management best practice and funding management. In addition, the Director of IWMN continually reviewed progress to make sure the Programme was implemented as seamlessly as possible, in line with the Museum's own development.

EVALUATING THE PROGRAMME

As part of the programme's development an evaluation strategy was created that would:

- Ensure the continuous development and improvement of the programme;
- Establish a steering group of staff and volunteers to gather feedback, raise concerns and report successes;
- Recognise the value to IWMN of the volunteers' contribution;
- Allow for successive funding applications to be made based on the successes of the programme;
- Support the production of a comprehensive report to disseminate the learning and good practice developed through the programme.

The ongoing evaluation ensured that it was possible to track the success of the project for all involved and special celebratory events were held for volunteers and their families at which the Director of IWMN thanked everyone for being involved, highlighted the importance to the Museum of their involvement, and encouraged everyone to celebrate their success. The evaluation strategy also ensured that the programme could develop year on year and it continues to be a core component of the Museum's work. To date over 230 local people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester have taken part in the programme. For further information about the evaluation please see IWMN (2002) Shape your Future: evaluating an innovative volunteering programme, Imperial War Museum North, Manchester.

Harvesting priceless experiences: Volunteers in the Deutsches Museum, Munich

Thomas Brandlmeier

The Deutsches Museum (Museum of Science and Technology) has 70,000 square metres of exhibition space (including two branch museums in the Munich area). 360 employees (full-time equivalent) cooperate with 140 volunteers. Because of cuts in both budget and staff during recent decades many of the museum's services are only available because of the engagement of volunteers. These include visitor services, guided tours, information, small repairs, library work, education services and more. The benefit of working with volunteers is quite clear: the museum gets a considerable amount of skills and expertise at virtually no cost – without this support the museum would have to close two days per week.

The project began 1996 with 30 volunteers, today there are around 140. Most are retired people with a scientific or technical background. The average-age is 64 years with 80% males and 20% females. On the average volunteers work 43 days per year, for eight years. Volunteers usually stop working at the museum out of their own choice, however in rare cases there are problems with questions of competence, reliability or quality of the work, so the museum has to end the agreement.

The management of volunteers is organised centrally by the chief exhibition manager; it equates to around one-third of his work and that of five other colleagues – in total the equivalent of two full-time posts. Improvements are always needed, but after 12 years the museum has learned basically how to recruit, treat and manage volunteers.

Many fields of management are involved requiring soft skills: how to recruit, choose and keep volunteers, as well as how to handle the relationship between volunteers and members of the staff. Every year the museum loses five percent of its volunteers by fluctuation. Thus the recruitment of new volunteers is a perennial task. The museum communicates its need for volunteers via its own internet pages and those of partner organisations. Media reports about the programme and information points about voluntary jobs are another key to success. And of course volunteers enlist each other by word of mouth.

After the first contact, usually by phone or e-mail, the museum asks for some basic information via a questionnaire. If the skills and interests fit requirements, there is an interview and trial day. This interview is very important, because the interested party must be given all necessary information, including the less pleasant aspects of the task. The interview is managed by the chief exhibition manager assisted by a long time volunteer and a representative of the field of work in question. If everyone is satisfied after the trial day an agreement about the voluntary job is drawn up. A character reference is also required.

While the programme is largely successful, there can be problems too – sometimes it seems like every day there are new experiences in the complicated balance between the museum's requirements and the expecta-

tions of volunteers, who need to receive personal satisfaction from donating their time. The management spends a lot of time and personal engagement supporting volunteers; paid members of staff have to undertake “unpopular” tasks which the volunteers will not do; sometimes there are tensions between volunteers and staff.

Volunteers need a system of reward. They take part in the museum's life with the same privileges as the staff. Every year an excursion of cultural and technological interest takes place. And the museum expresses its gratitude on many occasions.

Volunteers have special skills, but need some further development. Although it may take a few weeks or months until they are fully trained as volunteers, once this is completed the museum is the true beneficiary. Very often volunteers were highly paid specialists with skills the museum never would be able to afford. Volunteers lead top quality guided tours in many languages. They help the workshops to repair older instruments, which they used for many years in their professional lives and, in some cases, developed themselves in the first place. They know older computer languages required for old instruments. They have personal connections to obtain discontinued spare parts. They are parents and grandparents, who help in the children's department. They have experiences as teachers, lecturers or publishers. They are old hands at public relations and advertising. They know how to manage projects and how to control costs and quality. They are architects who know the jungle of administration, construction plants and structural materials. With the volunteer project Deutsches Museum is harvesting many lifetimes of priceless experiences.



Recruiting volunteers – good practice points

Claudia Peschel-Wacha

- Regional and local museums in Austria frequently have supporting societies, which provide a good basis for volunteer recruitment. Are there similar structures in your country?
- Let people know that you're looking for volunteers. Distribute the message through newsletters, at local events or posters in the museum;
- Be motivated and self-confident in the search for new volunteers, and make sure volunteers are treated equally;
- People who aren't already members of the supporting society may also be interested in voluntary work;
- Retired people can be an excellent addition to the museums team, as they have time and experience to dedicate to the museum and can make a longer commitment to the programme;
- Include voluntary opportunities for younger generations too;
- Convey a positive image of voluntary work in the museum and inform volunteers of the benefits of participating in the programme;
- An interview will help to determine the volunteers' interests, skills, and their preferred style of working (e.g. alone or within a group); interviews also give the volunteer an opportunity to ask questions about the museum;
- Give volunteers an overview of the whole range of museum activities; find out the skills and strengths of the volunteer and make use of them;
- Training of volunteers is essential, not an "extra;"
- Make sure volunteers are clear in their roles and duties; double-check that instructions have been understood to avoid misunderstandings;
- Through praise and appreciation, the volunteers get the feeling that not only is their work essential, but also that each volunteer has an important role to play within the museum. Consequently, people will not only dedicate their time and efforts but involve their whole social network, making them important resources for the museum.

“Our Collections for Our Community” Developing volunteer involvement

Beverley Hoff

Cambridge & County Folk Museum has been open to the public since 1936. It is the only local social history museum in Cambridge and is the most comprehensive collection representing life in the South Cambridgeshire villages. In 70 years, it has acquired a rich and varied collection of 20,000 objects, pictures and documents. The museum staff is helped by a large team of volunteers who undertake many essential tasks, from bookkeeping and gardening to documentation projects and reception duties.

“Our Collections for Our Community” was a two year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to encourage the local community to volunteer at the museum and to create and develop a range of events and exhibitions using the museum’s collections.

As a result of an appeal to the community in October 2007, a group of volunteers was recruited to help make decorations for a month-long display around the galleries on a Victorian theme for the education department. Once this was completed the group decided themselves that they wanted to continue to meet and numbers grew to form the museum’s craft group. They first embarked on designing and making a large rag rug for the children to sit on during educational visits to the museum. This has been an immense task as it measures over two metres by one metre but will be completed by the summer 2009.

The volunteers are from all age groups, some have been Friends of the museum, but had not previously been involved at a practical level; others have been newly recruited from the local area.

The community exhibitions and events officer, who is also the volunteer coordinator, encouraged the group to use their knowledge of needlecrafts such as crocheting, quilting and lace making to look at the museum’s reserve collection and design a temporary exhibition called “Needles and Pins.” With object handling and exhibition training they worked on one panel each based on a subject they were familiar with, also adding their personal stories and photographs to give an individual touch. The exhibition was a great success not only to the visiting public but especially to members of the craft group who developed new skills and the confidence to contribute further to the exhibition with demonstrations of craft to visitors in the galleries.

This has been an exciting project for the museum since recruiting and retaining volunteers is sometimes a difficult but vital task. However, it cannot be emphasised enough how important the volunteers’ role is to museums and also to the individuals themselves who gain so much from their experiences.

A new post for a new building: the Volunteer Coordinator in the Chester Beatty Library

Justyna Chmielewska

The Chester Beatty Library seeks to involve volunteers in its mission to ensure that the goals of the Library are met, to provide assistance in bringing the services of the Library to the general public and to enhance our contact with the local community we serve. (*from the Library’s Volunteer Policy*).

The Chester Beatty Library is an art museum and library which houses the great collection of manuscripts, miniature paintings, prints, drawings, rare books and decorative arts assembled by Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875-1968). The Library’s exhibitions open a window on the artistic treasures of the great cultures and religions of the world, and offer visitors a visual feast.

The Library engages volunteers in many aspects of its everyday life. Volunteers act as tour guides, visitor service representatives and assistants in the curatorial, education, membership, conservation and retail areas. The volunteer programme welcomes everyone regardless of gender, nationality, religious beliefs or social background. Its philosophy is inclusive and the Library has recruited both Irish and international volunteers, students, full-time workers, senior citizens and people with mental health illness.

The post of Volunteer Co-ordinator (VC) was established in 2001, a year after the Library moved to its new location in the grounds of Dublin Castle. The original volunteer programme was run by the Friends of the Library and at the time of the move the decision was made that it should be formalised: a volunteer policy and volunteer positions were established. The Library created new volunteer roles therefore it was important to assign the VC as a main point of contact for volunteers. The VC also acts as an intermediary between staff and volunteers.

The post of the VC is a paid, part-time position. The decision was made that volunteers should not be hired, managed and trained by one of the fellow volunteers as this might cause inequality and distress. By working closely with the volunteers, who are representatives of the local community, and the library staff, the VC creates opportunities to build relationships and collaborations between the Library and local audiences.

The VC manages continuous volunteer recruitment, coordinates training in specific areas of assignment and induction for new volunteers (including Library policies, procedures, culture and an introduction to co-workers paid and voluntary), and sets up regular educational training sessions. These cover various aspects of the museum life and include task training, general museum training, continuous development of skills and knowledge, social gatherings and outings. The VC is responsible for supervising tour guides and visitor services volunteers, maintaining schedules, managing volunteer evaluations and ensuring the application of the volunteer policy.

Guidelines for Volunteer Coordinators

Linda Brooklyn

RECRUITMENT

When considering a volunteer initiative, it is essential to ensure the museums and the people within them are positive about such placements and everyone is clear about agreed tasks and procedures. Without such pre-checks, the whole process could prove to be a costly exercise in terms of time, precious people and financial resources, possibly resulting in no volunteers and a lower morale throughout as a result.

Standards that are required whilst in the museum – customer care, health and safety, working with children and vulnerable adults, fire and evacuation – must be thoroughly explained and also set out in a volunteer handbook or the documents supplied with a written agreement. References should be obtained and a project plan agreed. However, words to be avoided include job description, application form and appraisal, because volunteering is not the world of work. It is sensible to be aware of when employment legislation can muddy waters within an otherwise voluntary situation and local voluntary agencies are very willing to provide guidance on such circumstances.

Talking is important. Circumstances arise when it is clear the volunteer is having difficulties or there are problems with their set projects. It is important to build up a relationship of trust as well as support in readiness for such instances. Volunteer co-ordinators become quickly aware that by taking on a volunteer they are also taking on a unique individual with all attendant requirements.

Saying “thank you” is so very critical. There are many ways of saying this, from a simple “face to face” to more tangible recognition. This depends on the museum itself but could include an offer of funding to attend a museum conference, expenses to visit another museum, a social event such as a meal following a particularly successful project or event. Such incentives form part of the recruitment package and do become known in the wider community.

Volunteering is a crowded market and opportunities are widely available. Each museum should address its own unique selling point to attract the best volunteers.

Finally there is the question of time. Time for preparation, time for initial meetings, time to induct and time given during their period of volunteering. Tasked with the development of the workforce, particularly front of house staff, a volunteer coordinator has to be creative in bringing together mutual needs. Wherever possible, and particularly when statutory requirements need to be addressed, sharing training across the museum community will provide a consistency of approach and deeper working and voluntary relationships.

Training museum professionals to work with volunteers

Janja Rebolj

TRAINING

In the 1990s when Slovene museum staff encountered volunteer work in museums around Europe, on the one hand we had doubts about the social and economic conditions that would enable Slovenes to spend their free time in such a way, and on the other hand we were faced with the complexity of work involved in individual museum professions. Even now there is no organised undergraduate study of museology in Slovenia, so that museum experts as well as custodians and other profiles acquire their knowledge and experience on the job. Additional study is thus essential for every professional worker who comes to the museum.

When we considered what would be the priority for the Museum Association of Slovenia and for Slovene museums within the project “Volunteers for Cultural Heritage,” we came to the conclusion that training of Slovene museum professionals for work with volunteers would be most useful.

We had in mind primarily the following points:

- The variety and demanding nature of individual areas of museum work, which could be moderated by dividing specific phases of the work into simpler tasks. (In restoration, for example, it is not necessary for volunteers to be expert in the whole range of restoration procedures, but they can be trained for one or two procedures which suit their prior knowledge and capabilities);
- Our professionals are experts in their own fields, but need knowledge about the effective transfer of knowledge and communication with volunteers;
- Slovene museum staff would have their work with volunteers considerably eased if they were given administrative management models of obtaining and guiding volunteers;
- An additional advantage would be training that would provide knowledge and skills which museum staff could use with advantage in other areas of their work (and ideally also for their own personal development).

We realised that within the museums we did not have all the necessary knowledge for planning and carrying out such training. During the period 2005-2007 the City Museum Ljubljana had cooperated in the project INTI Centre for Lifelong Learning, in which various institutions of adult education were primarily engaged. (This project had been co-financed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia and the European Social Fund.) This cooperation made possible considerable additional training for all the partners from the field of leadership, soft skills and the effective transfer of knowledge, and at the same time the experience of different educational institutions and methods of education.

All this provided a rich source of experience when we designed the training for Slovene professional staff for work with volunteers. On the basis of this experience and various offers we selected as partner the educational firm Glotta Nova d.o.o., which excelled in rich programmes for training mentors, tutors, moderators and adult educators. The firm also had references from other European projects, while an additional advantage was their ability to ensure teaching materials in Slovene as well as English. As we did not want to reinvent

the wheel, we turned to Slovene Philanthropy, the umbrella organisation of volunteer work in Slovenia, for the administrative coordinating part. In this way we formed a team of experts (a Glotta Nova trainer, a museum professional and a Slovene Philanthropy trainer) and prepared a four-day training programme for museum staff. The programme topics were evaluated initially by museum representatives who expressed a desire to cooperate in the project.

The training was carried out in March 2009 in two sessions, each lasting two working days, using an active workshop method, since we wanted participants to gain as much new knowledge as possible through experience, with the help of modern methods of accelerated learning. The aims of the programme were to:

- Appreciate the importance and role of volunteerism in the museum and to create a positive atmosphere regarding the introduction of volunteer work in Slovene museums;
- Get to know the legal bases of volunteerism;
- Discover the learning patterns of adults and ways of effectively gaining and imparting knowledge;
- Know how to communicate effectively and manage conflicts;
- Understand how to motivate oneself and others in the learning process;
- Give effective feedback;
- Obtain basic examples of administrative forms for work with volunteers.



TRAINING TOPICS FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS DEVELOPED BY THE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SLOVENIA FOR THE VOCH PROJECT

1. VOLUNTEERISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

- Why volunteerism in a museum
- Slovene volunteerism
- The legal bases of work with volunteers

2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION – MORE SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

- The communication model and basic principles of communication
- Sensory channels – perceptual systems
- Creating rapport
- Motivational values

3. ADULTS IN THE MENTORING PROCESS

- Adults learn differently
- The roles of a mentor in the museum
- The brain and communication
- Learning styles in the museum
- Effective transfer of information based on the 4MAT system
- Active listening
- The skill of asking questions

4. MOTIVATION

- How to motivate oneself and others
- The message reciprocated – the “sandwich” as a motivational and (self)evaluation tool

5. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- The conflict sequence and conflict styles
- Controlling oneself in the conflict phase
- Reactions to conflicts and inter-personal communication in the conflict phase

EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The first workshop was attended by 17 professional workers from 14 Slovene museums, of whom 15 gave written feedback concerning the workshop. Overall, they were highly satisfied with the programme, content, trainers and material. Timing was a big challenge, since it was difficult for the participants to organise four free days, but this is linked with the greatly increased scope of the work in all the Slovene museums (and with an ongoing policy of not employing new workers when older ones retire). The participants' response to the question, "What do you consider the main advantages of this training?" emphasised the following points:

- Gaining necessary information, knowledge and self-confidence for work with individuals or a group of volunteers;
- Creating a positive attitude to volunteer work in the museum environment;
- The theory presented of the fundamentals of working with the public (including volunteers);
- Transferring information and experience into practice;
- New knowledge, ideas, approaches, acquaintances and contacts for further cooperation, where to go for help if necessary;
- Networking, exchange of opinions and experiences, the confirmation that our work is correctly oriented;
- Much new content, knowledge, practical experiences;
- Concrete ideas, how to address potential volunteers;
- The material given, colleagues' experiences, ideas produced during the workshop.

The answers to the question "What would you like to improve (about the training programme)?" included:

- Building on the lectures about the fundamentals of communication and more examples from practice;
- A more suitable time framework, especially shorter workshops;
- More such training in the sense of refreshing knowledge already obtained;
- Nothing at the moment, perhaps something will show up in further work.

Participants also suggested areas for further activities and training including:

- Additional training or building on previous lectures;
- A repeat of the workshop with further content after two years, when the projects would be running in the museums;
- Occasional meetings as a means of evaluation;
- Meeting of individual mentors from different museums and exchange of experiences;
- New findings and trends in the field of volunteerism in museums;
- Additional support to resolve the most common situations and challenges connected with volunteer work.

As organisers, we were especially pleased because the participants seem now to have adopted the idea of introducing volunteers into Slovene museums. We must admit that at the beginning of the process many doubted that this could be possible in their situation.



Training for volunteers

Evelyn Kaindl-Ranzinger

In order to manage and work at a successful museum, one needs many talents, great enthusiasm and well-founded knowledge. The basis for high-quality work is a well educated team, especially when this team consists mainly of volunteers.

The majority of the Austrian museums and collections which are open to the public are based on private initiatives. Whoever is engaged in these has ideas, plans and goals. This not only costs time but also a considerable amount of money.

This paper summarises the training course for museum volunteers designed and delivered by MUSIS, the Austrian partner in Volunteers for Cultural Heritage (VoCH), as one of its contributions to the project. The goal of the seminar was training of museum “all-rounders” with consequent increase of quality in the participating institutions.

CONTENT AND CURRICULUM OF THE COURSE

The course consisted of four main sections and one post-learning phase:

14 modular lecture units in all combined in two-day residential units which took place over nine months. This created a theoretical basis accompanied by practical exercises and examples. The comprehensive written material supported volunteers in their further work. The contents of the lectures covered a broad spectrum of what it means to work at a museum.

The residential element meant that there could be an evening program after each first session. This gave participants insight to exemplary museums and the opportunity to discuss them on site. The time between modules was used to pass on and implement the newly acquired knowledge in volunteers’ own museums. Personal foci of the participants were explored in the final thesis, which referred to their own working environment and described a single project or structural planning. The practice-based thesis meant that the institution as well as the trainees would benefit from the seminar.

At the end of the year, participants meet for a debriefing and longer-term evaluation of the course.

The following topics were conveyed in the course:

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF MUSEUMS. Backgrounds, goals, purpose of museums and strategies for quality management today and in the future. Job descriptions, workplace, mission statements.

GENERAL MUSEUM MANAGEMENT. Operating management and how it applies to museums, organisation of personnel, budget planning and facility management, leadership and change management.

FINANCES. Accounting, controlling, benchmarking. Professional financial planning and administration, useful codes.

LEGAL QUESTIONS. Introduction to the basics of copyright, event law and building law.

BASICS OF COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND SCIENTIFIC WORK AT THE MUSEUM. Administration of collection methods, purchase methods, registration, inventory and digitisation, lending network.

PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION. Room temperature, lighting, security, ageing mechanisms in connection with the climate, examples of light and lacking safety measures.

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT ORGANISATION. Practical organisational processes, techniques and solutions.

VISITORS. Basics of personal presentation, communication techniques, body language, voice and breathing techniques.

PERCEPTION AND LEARNING STYLES. Understanding psychological basics of perception by means of self-testing, and the meaning of the outcomes for the work at the museum

EXHIBITION DESIGN. Didactic, production, design, light, texts, media, story telling; getting to know means and possibilities for easy use.

PR AND COMMUNICATION. Writing successful press releases and getting to know other elements of effective PR, including use of new technologies.

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS. Recruitment, motivation and forms of organisation of teams of volunteers.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT. Communication techniques and problem solving strategies for analysing and managing conflict.

FACTORS FOR SUCCESS. The success of the course depended on various factors. Motivation, background and current circumstances of the volunteers needed to be considered when planning the seminars. The following strategic considerations are the result of comprehensive conversations between course participants, trainers and planners, as well as evaluations of the pilot project.

TIME. Many volunteers invest their free time in various kinds of voluntary work. They are usually busy and flexible times are, therefore, very important. The planning team chose modules that extended over a nine months period. Two-day units with the same theme were offered at various locations. Single modules could also be booked in order to make it attractive for volunteers with special interest or little time.

LOCATION. Since the participants came from all over Austria, various locations were chosen and an evening programme planned to include museum visits, sightseeing, and practical work.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS. In most cases, the cultural organisation or museum which sends the volunteers covered the costs. Self-funding delegates were offered a price reduction so that fees would not be a barrier to participation. Fees for room and board were kept as low as possible.

QUALITY OF CONTENT. The professional demands of volunteers must not be underestimated. Meeting these demands can be difficult because the trainees will have different levels of previous knowledge. Course content needs to address these differences while at the same time having a strong practical orientation.

CHOICE OF TRAINERS. When choosing trainers, three factors are key: professional expertise, people skills and high didactic competence. All training materials must be checked for accuracy, comprehensiveness and usefulness.

COURSE ORGANISATION. Simple organisational factors will contribute significantly to the success of the course. These include:

- Before the course: a simple registration process, easy to understand mailings, clear cost structure, friendly communication, comprehensible directions to the course venue;
- At the venue: a friendly welcome, comfortable accommodation, good food, spacious lecture rooms, consideration of special needs (including access, communication and dietary requirements);
- During the course: recognising needs, letting people ask questions and allowing discussion and critique, finding a balance between working hours and breaks, making for communication, sensitive mentoring with efficient conflict management;
- After the course: joint evaluation, personal after-care and monitoring of work processes by organisers.



Festivaletteratura of Mantua ¹ Maria Guida

The *Festivaletteratura* (Literature Festival) of Mantua is dedicated to all those who love reading. It is now in its twelfth year and in that time has hosted almost 1,000 meetings with authors, theatre and music performances, and workshops for children and adults in different locations in Mantua. Every year the *Festivaletteratura* enriches its programme with guided tours to the historical heritage sites of the city, poetry readings, performances and meetings dedicated to art, architecture, design and illustrated books.

The project started in 1997 thanks to eight volunteers – now members of the organisational committee – who created a non-profit association called Filofestival, whose aim is to organise and promote the Festival.

From the beginning, the Festival has had a strong connection with the local community, especially regarding volunteer participation: in 1997 there were 100 volunteers, today there are more than 600. Most of them are young (13-25 years), female (67%) and come from the Mantua area (65%, with 35% from other places in Italy and abroad). Volunteers are recruited through an online pro-forma, which can be used not only to apply but also to indicate one's preferred sector and kind of activity, as well as previous experience and availability, which are the main selection criteria. One of the Festival's main aims is creating a fidelity relationship with volunteers, in order to offer a long-lasting and continuous training experience and to strengthen the ties between the Festival and the city. This objective has already been partially achieved: more than 70% of volunteers who participated in the last Festival had volunteered also in previous ones.

Volunteers' motivations range from the will to have fun to the desire of being useful and of participating in civil life; they are based on personal cultural interests and on the need for socialisation. A very important motivation seems to be the development of personal and social skills, such as communication, team work or realisation of graphic presentations; in some cases, also very specific competencies can be acquired, such as promoting cultural and leisure activities or delivering socio-educational services.

Training for the volunteers in most cases consists of two days of "in the field" training managed by experienced volunteers. For volunteers working with visual documentation, photography or videos, however, one week of training is provided. Another very peculiar feature of the *Festivaletteratura* is the kind of training activities that it offers: they are useful programmes, accessible to everybody and not too demanding in terms of efforts required and of emotional involvement.

During the Festival, volunteers undertake various activities: they are in charge of box-offices and information points, they collaborate in preparing the different locations and the visual and photographic documentation, they manage the Festival's website and they take care of many organisational aspects related to the authors' presence in Mantua as well as some of the secretarial work.

Volunteers from other cities are hosted by members of Filofestival; all volunteers have insurance and are identified by a blue T-shirt which they wear during the Festival. Volunteers receive board and lodging but their expenses are not reimbursed. There is one person in charge of managing volunteers and each activity has a different coordinator.

Young people recognise the *Festivaletteratura* as a training experience which provides them with new skills and improves previous ones: for the great number of young people who every year participate this is surely one of the key areas which explains its great success. Since it is an annual event which lasts only one week, it has a low impact in terms of school or university duties while at the same time offering new and stimulating learning and training opportunities – as well as social ones.

Critical issues related to volunteering during the Festival which have emerged during the years are mainly related to the limited possibility which the small city of Mantua has in terms of hospitality. Due to these constraints, it is not possible in the short term to increase the number of volunteers. Another critical point is the low number of adult and elderly volunteers.

NOTE

¹ - From an interview with Alessandro Della Casa, the Festival's Volunteer Coordinator.



Volunteering as a route to employment

Adele Finley

Volunteering can provide a route to employment for many people, helping unemployed people gain the skills, experience and confidence they need to get back into work or change career path. Dr Justin Davis Smith, Chief Executive of Volunteering England Volunteering is undoubtedly a valuable activity for people who are looking for work or are long-term unemployed. Volunteering can help build new skills that are transferable to the job market and valued by employers. It can help bring people closer to the job market and can build confidence and self-esteem by promoting a positive contribution, risk taking, community involvement, networking and further learning.¹ People who are long-term unemployed or newly unemployed are hit hard. Lacking a job often means lacking social contact and a purpose for many hours of the day. This can lead to social isolation, a lack of motivation and enthusiasm, mental stress and a loss of confidence and self-esteem. The longer a person remains unemployed, it can become increasingly difficult to find a job. Employers may be less willing to take a chance on someone who has not been in a working environment for a long time and individuals may be less willing, due to a lack the confidence or new skills and knowledge, to step outside the comfort zone of home and take risks to find and keep a job.² Volunteering is one way in which individuals can break this vicious circle. It can offer a route to employment because it offers up to date training and skills development alongside work experience. Moreover it offers people the opportunity to venture outside the home into a safe and engaging environment, build social networks, undertake their own study, feel less isolated and find out about the local opportunities and agencies available to them in their search for work. Volunteering can help to generate confidence and optimism, which in turn can motivate people to compile a new CV, apply for jobs, believe in them-

selves at interview and recognise their ability to stick with a job and an organisation if they are successful. For many people volunteering may be a way to give something back to society, be it supporting a local charity or mentoring a young person through a difficult period. For others it may be a good way to socialise, meet new people and just have fun. In the current economic climate however, volunteering can be the springboard into employment or a way to further a career.

NOTE

- 1 - Institute of Volunteering Research (2004) Volunteering among groups deemed at risk of social exclusion, IVR, London
- 2 - Office of the Third Sector (2009) real help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities and Social Enterprises, OTS, London



The In Touch volunteer and training programme

Adele Finley

In Touch is a volunteer and training programme developed jointly by The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North (IWMN) to target disadvantaged individuals in Greater Manchester. Funded for three years by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and working in partnership with local colleges, the programme offers training in a variety of museum roles, combined with an accredited Cultural Heritage Course with embedded Basic Skills.

Over a three year period, In Touch aims to help around 180 disadvantaged individuals access heritage, re-engage with learning and improve their prospects for employment. Through the programme, the museums hope to expand the number of people who volunteer and also to diversify their workforce, to better represent the communities they serve.

The programme brings together two very different museums – The Manchester Museum and IWMN – under the banner of volunteering, adult learning and community engagement. Since 2000 both museums have demonstrated their commitment to lifelong learning and community engagement through their volunteer and outreach programmes. In Touch has provided an opportunity to build on and further develop programmes that already existed.

The participants recruited onto the programme are non-traditional volunteers and/or non-traditional museum goers are from one or more of the following specific target groups:

- Long-term unemployed
- People with low skills levels and outdated skills
- Young people (post 16) at risk of exclusion and/or offending
- Asylum-seekers and refugees
- Single parents
- People with disabilities

The programme has established strong partnerships with Job Centre Plus (JCP) staff across Greater Manchester who actively refer individuals to it. JCP staff recognise the programme as an effective stepping-stone towards gaining new skills and work experience for employment.

The training programme runs three times a year. It is over-subscribed, with 60 to 80 individuals attending a taster session to secure one of the 25 places available on each. Participants take part in a 10 week programme, attending two afternoons a week at their chosen museum. This covers the history of the museum, the museum building, exhibitions, marketing, education, health and safety, collections, conservation, object handling and *You as a Volunteer*. It also incorporates visits to other heritage sites in the North West of England. Embedded within the training programme is the Basic Skills literacy curriculum.

In addition participants are offered further accredited and non-accredited training in customer care, presenta-

tion skills, disability etiquette, refugee awareness and conservation. Both museums also run workshops on the next step for participants from the Open University, Job Centre Plus, other volunteer venues and advice and guidance services.

Throughout the training and volunteering all out of pocket expenditure such as travel, lunch and childcare are reimbursed. For many participants this is invaluable and is the main factor in their choosing to get involved or not. Participation does not affect state benefits, such as job seekers' allowance or incapacity benefit, because the commitment to activities is never more than 12 hours per week (this would vary in other countries). Once trained, participants begin to volunteer in the museum. They are "buddied" with existing volunteers and staff who support them until they are happy and confident to operate on their own.

In Touch has been very successful and it is widely recognised by service providers, community organisations and job referral agencies. It has an 87% retention rate, 42% of participants move on to further learning and / or training and 85% of participants choose to volunteer with the Museum once the training programme has finished. Additionally, even though the programme was not set up to promote employability, it has successfully supported 18% of participants back into work.

For participants In Touch has helped them to develop confidence, self-esteem, key transferable skills and museum knowledge. Some have commented that the course has made them feel less isolated, given a structure within which to plan their time, helped them make friends, made them aware of the opportunities available, motivated them to undertake their own study at local libraries and given them the confidence and optimism to compile a new CV and apply for jobs.

In Touch offers a sustainable model of engagement, learning and partnership working for museums wishing to engage with hard to reach audiences. Its success is dependent on the partnerships with service providers, community groups and government agencies – without whose support the recruitment of participants would be far more difficult. The future of the programme is dependent on further funding and currently a consortium of interested parties across Manchester has been established to ensure that further funding is available after December 2009.

In Touch Participants' Voices



Shaun Bennett joined In Touch in September 2007. "After being made redundant I became very de-motivated and depressed, losing my self-respect and confidence. The In Touch programme was brought to my attention by my local Job Centre. Once I was accepted on the course nothing else that I was going through seemed to matter and as the course progressed I could not wait for the next session. At last my life was getting back on track, going over skills I already possessed and learning new ones. There are so many activities I have enjoyed and the training I have received has helped me gain back my confidence in my personal life and prepared me for my role as a volunteer.

I have also gained a literacy qualification through the programme and am now doing a customer service qualification.”

In December 2008 Shaun gained employment at The Manchester Museum as a Visitor Service assistant. In March 2009 he was promoted to Visitor Service supervisor – a full-time paid post within the Museum.



Erica Shaw joined In Touch in September 2007. “The In Touch programme has given me the opportunity as a lone parent to learn and train in a work-based environment and improve my chances of employment after being long-term unemployed. I have also gained more confidence and increased my knowledge. I have had the advantage of meeting like-minded people with real aspirations and jointly we have greatly advanced our skills and career opportunities.’

In November 2008 Erica gained employment with Manchester Young Lives as a support worker.



Rebecca Gomperts began the 10 week training course in February 2009, she was referred onto the programme by her JCP advisor. Rebecca has been unemployed for 12 years; since joining the programme she has gained confidence, developed new skills and found a new direction within her life. She hopes to combine volunteering with a work placement at The Manchester Museum, which will take her a step closer to gaining employment in the future. Her advisor, Sarah Morgan says:

“In Touch has had a profound impact on Becky’s life – she is like a different person. She is confident, well-presented, maintains regular communication with the Job Centre, attends all her appointments, has an air of ‘can do’ about her which she never had before. She is also realistic and positive about the road ahead of her. It’s still going to be a long journey, but she has a ‘survival kit’ now and I can’t thank the museum and all the staff involved in the programme enough. They have managed to take on one of our most challenging customers and done a fantastic job of turning her life around.”

Reaching new communities: Museums Connect

Janja Rebolj

The City Museum Ljubljana (Mestni muzej Ljubljana) has addressed volunteer work since 1996, when it made a significant contribution to the Matra¹ project, in which Slovene museum experts first experienced working in an organised way with volunteers in museums. The first project in which volunteers were “officially”² included was the exhibition *New Year’s Eve Celebrations in Ljubljana in the 20th Century*.³ This was a positive experience, but due to the renovation of the museum’s original premises, volunteer work could not develop at a tempo that would be really effective. Notwithstanding the renovation, these pilot projects with volunteers continued from 2001 onwards.

From the beginning volunteerism was seen by the City Museum Ljubljana in the context of increasing the museum’s accessibility. By means of trial projects some of the museum’s stakeholders were enabled to act as volunteers in various areas including documentation, preparing exhibitions, guiding through an exhibition, public relations and promotion. Most of the work with volunteers was planned and led by the author, whose priority in this period was also the training the museum’s professional staff in the field of museum management and soft skills. Combining the knowledge and experience of an adult educator and of a professional museum worker with experience of custodian work, public relations and marketing proved very successful for pilot projects in volunteer work as well.

These experiences with volunteers were brought together in the 2007 project *Museums Connect*, which complemented the new permanent installation “Faces of Ljubljana.” The purpose of the project was to reach new publics by recording stories of different communities living in Ljubljana, documenting the objects linked with their life, extending knowledge of effective care for items that represent a potential cultural heritage and preparing a presentation of the community in the renovated museum.

For the first project the museum decided to present religious communities.⁴ An invitation was sent to all the registered communities to contribute. The museum offered professional help and space, while the communities would prepare and finance their exhibition and accompanying events. The museum suggested the structure of the presentation⁵ and recommended holding at least two events: a round table about the challenges of the life of community members in Ljubljana, and a cookery workshop, which would show important food items for the community. Additional events would be left to the community’s choice.

In the museum the project was supported with volunteer work by students, members of the study group *The museum from behind*,⁶ who expressed a desire to test out their knowledge and experience of museum work with an actual project. *Museums Connect* appeared to be ideal, since the volunteers could cooperate at all stages. In addition student volunteers would share their newly acquired knowledge about religious communities with visitors to the exhibition.

Within the framework of the project five religious communities have so far presented: Jewish, Baha’ist,

Adventist, Muslim and Buddhist. The presentations have been well-received by visitors and attendance has been good (averaging almost 1500 visitors in three weeks). The new visitors are members of the communities who generally had not visited before. Young volunteers worked on average 250 hours for the exhibition and events, and at least twice that amount during preparations and promotion, work which would have cost the museum at least 11,000 EUROS.

The advantages of such accessibility are clearly seen for the museum in the professional sphere (documentation) as well as in making the museum better known and reaching new target groups of visitors. The experiences of the first five presentations constitutes a valuable guide for organising volunteer work in the museum and a useful model for cooperating with different communities in the city – not to mention the awareness of difference, which extends tolerance and increases the capacity for coexistence. In short, a synergic project, which was conceived with many different aspects and based on all the values of volunteer work, active citizenship and lifelong learning for both creators and visitors. It was also a particularly suitable model for young volunteers in those countries of Europe where volunteer work in museums does not have a long tradition.

NOTE

1 - A project of the Dutch Museum Association, the Museum Association of Slovenia and the Slovene Museum Society, which brought Slovene museums knowledge from the field of museum management.

2 - Also before this a great deal of unpaid work was done in museums in Slovenia, but neither museum staff nor the public understood it in the context of volunteer work.

3 - These were: Istok Šostarec, designer and costume designer, Urša Loboda, scene painter and designer, and Taja Gubenšek, a history student.

4 - For the really simple reason that the addresses of all the registered religious communities are available on the web page of the Office for Religious Communities.

5 - The basis of belief, the daily life of a member of the community, the festival year, the community's contribution to the variety of life in Ljubljana.

6 - The group's programme arose within the framework of the project of Inti, the Centre for Lifelong Learning, in which the museum cooperated with various institutions for adult education. In weekly meetings through the academic year the students were acquainted on the spot with all the spheres of museum work, with special emphasis on communications and communication skills.

Responding to a changing community

Justyna Chmielewska

At the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (see p. 53) the intercultural programme is run largely by Education Services with a panel of freelance facilitators employed to work on specific projects. Volunteers – especially tour guides – often work with different groups within the immediate community, including primary and post-primary schools, youth groups, adult education, active retirement associations, religious communities and minority communities, as many cultures are represented in the Library's collection.

The Library already supports disadvantaged groups and offers services free of charge to people with learning difficulties, mental or physical disabilities or to those who have a refugee or asylum seekers status. All services are currently offered in English. In order to facilitate engagement by people from a variety of communities, the Museum is looking to establish Community Ambassadors through the Volunteer Programme. It wishes to recruit people fluent in Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and other languages, who can speak to people in their own language. The goal is to train new volunteers so they are able to conduct tours of the permanent collection and provide information on the key exhibits from Asia, Europe, North Africa and Middle East. Ideally the Community Ambassadors will be native speakers, sensitive to cultural differences and aware of religious and social customs. As a result they will represent the Library and the community at the same time.

Older volunteers in Spanish museums

José Luis Jordana Laguna, Secretary General, CEATE

The Spanish Classrooms' Confederation of Seniors (CEATE) is a private, non-profit, national organisation, with 30 years' experience in the field of culture and elderly people. CEATE brings together 100 "classrooms of the elderly" born in 1978 following the example of the universities of third age founded by Pierre Vellas (1973, Toulouse, France). These classrooms host more than 100,000 seniors who participate daily in varied cultural, educational, and social activities aimed at both physical and mental development.

CEATE has a renowned and multidisciplinary team of professionals and technicians including philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, educators, lawyers, physicians, geriatricians, gerontologists, social workers, managers, cultural, socio-cultural experts in adult education and more, who are specialised in socio-cultural management and in volunteering.

CEATE AND SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

CEATE strongly believes that elderly people have great potential, especially in terms of free time that they can devote to volunteering activities. Within CEATE a special unit works with them on the specific issues related to cultural volunteering: at the heart of this work lies the understanding of culture and heritage as a legacy, as a means of creativity and participation, as a result of human activity. Elderly people become cultural creators, as well as cultural consumers and promoters.

In 1993, during the European Year of Elderly People and Intergenerational Solidarity, CEATE launched an ambitious project called *Voluntarios Culturales Mayores para enseñar los Museos de España a niños, jóvenes y jubilados* (Elderly volunteers to teach Spanish museums to children, youth and retired people). This was not only a pioneer project in Spain, but also worldwide, due to its ambitious goals, scope, results, impact on the media, awards received and success in other countries.

TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION

To support the project, each year in Madrid CEATE organises two four-day training courses on museum volunteering and the elderly. The aim of each course is to provide elderly people with training experience related to general cultural heritage and to the heritage of the main Spanish cities. Teachers and speakers are members of the CEATE technical team. The agenda focuses on definition and basic characteristics of volunteers and volunteering, motivations, attitudes and skills, rights and duties of the volunteer, juridical aspects, potential problems and risks.

After the training, volunteers are allocated to a museum, cathedral, palace or other sites, where they receive two to three months of further training strictly related to the cultural, historical and artistic features of that institution. This specific training is provided by the institution's executives, professionals and technicians.

Once volunteers have completed their training and reached a good level of general and specific knowledge and competency, they receive a diploma accrediting their capacity as cultural volunteers. This accreditation

defines the role of volunteers and clarifies their function, providing them with recognition which is meaningful not only in terms of personal satisfaction, but also in terms of their relationship with visitors and museum professionals.

Over 120 museums, six cathedrals, churches, shrines, palaces, monasteries, the botanical garden, and other cultural institutions and monuments in Spain are now involved in this ambitious project. There are more than 1,200 volunteers involved between 55 and 90 years of age. The project has been running for more than 15 years, providing cultural services for more than three million children and young students, adults and retired people. It has received widespread media coverage as well as awards from the highest authorities of the Spanish State and from many museum directors.

The project has undoubtedly been a success; however CEATE is aware of ways in which the project could be improved.

- CEATE relies on a dedicated team of professionals and technical specialists, however because of the project's dimensions it can be difficult to maintain and develop the training courses, to monitor, control and evaluate the whole project.
- Over the last 15 years, CEATE has received financial support from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the *Obra Social Caja Madrid*. However, the organisation requires greater financial support to respond to the growing demand of training for cultural volunteers at national level as well as to meet the requirements of other countries, mainly in Latin America and Europe, which are asking CEATE for advice and support, in order to carry out similar projects elsewhere.

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

The CEATE project has identified the following good practice points for museums to consider when working with volunteers:

- Museums must provide adequate resources for training volunteers, including source material for self-study;
- Team units involving museum professionals and volunteers can help to increase understanding and foster more effective working practices;
- Museums should provide volunteers with a place for meetings, preparation and rest away from staff or public areas;
- Ways need to be found to improve the recognition and valuing of volunteer activities both by the visiting public as well as by museum professionals themselves.

For further information please visit www.ceate.org.es.

Youth Volunteering in the National Trust

Stefan Wathan

The National Trust is one of the largest charities in the UK. Independent of government, it works to preserve and protect the buildings, countryside and coastline of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, through practical conservation, learning and discovery, and encouraging everyone to visit and enjoy their national heritage.¹ Forty years ago the National Trust began its Working Holiday programme inspired by the notion that voluntary work might attract young people to the organisation and help get work done. The first “Acorn to Oak Work Camp” took place in 1967. The Trust charged £3 for people to take part in conservation work, spending a week’s residential course in a wooden hut on the Stratford Canal.

In 2000 the programme had grown to almost 400 holidays a year. Young people had to be aged 17 to take part and many of these were using the experience to gain the Residential section of their Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.² However, change was on its way and with the introduction of new child protection measures the Trust developed a pilot programme aimed at 16-18 year olds called Youth Discovery.

YOUTH DISCOVERY

The Trust was keen for these “holidays” to be recognised as a youth development programme, but one which is entirely voluntary for the participants and retains the pioneering spirit of those early years. About 200 young people a year now take part in 15 discovery working holidays (limited by the weeks available in the school calendar and the number of volunteer leaders available at any given time).

Some groups bond within a day, for most it tends to be the middle of the week before they are fully relaxed in each other’s company. The best moments are often those where young people have experienced something for the first time. Cooking a meal successfully for 12 people, sleeping under the stars or seeing 50 metres of newly-built stone path provide memories that will stay with young people for many years to come.

Conservation is still a strong factor in these volunteering holidays but the Trust continues to find new ways of attracting young people who might never consider this sort of experience by introducing for example, photographic holidays. It’s also a great way of showing the more playful side of what some might see as an organisation for “older” volunteers.

LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

The Trust is on the look-out for young people who are potential leaders of the future: those who offer a little bit more of themselves, who don’t always go with the crowd or wait to be told what needs doing, or who use their particular skill, personality or confidence to help bring people together and to get the job done.

The Young Heritage Leaders programme offers opportunities to learn about and experience leadership.

Young people undertake 50 hours of volunteering with a charity and a mentor, complete an on-line workbook and take part in two short residentials to learn the basics of how to plan, manage and execute a conservation task. At the end of the programme they are assessed and if successful gain a level two qualification in Team



Leadership recognised by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Another project the Trust supports is You, Me and the Climate through which young people have the opportunity to develop campaigning skills so that they can take a lead within their own communities on raising awareness and developing action on climate change. In order to develop these areas of work further the Trust supports the development of the recently formed National Body for Youth Leadership.

One challenge is how to make these opportunities more visible to young people, to ensure that volunteering is used as a stepping stone to further opportunities with the Trust, the heritage sector or elsewhere.

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The National Trust has a small number qualified youth workers but relies largely on volunteers and paid staff, such as wardens, learning officers, conservators, gardeners, office workers and others. They are given training and advice on working with young people, safeguarding issues and working with youth organisations. Projects such as “Getting into the Past and V Heritage Volunteering” provide opportunities for a broad range of staff to play their part and learn to successfully develop young volunteers. Instead of creating a workforce of youth workers, the Trust wants to ensure that staff have empathy with young people and are confident in their company so that they can share their wisdom, knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines.

Overall these programmes form only a small part of the Trust’s youth volunteering and participation activity. They are the “shop window” to young people across the UK, but there are also many thousands of young people engaging at a local level with built environment and countryside properties, work experience placements, student placements, Careerships and internships, short and full-time volunteering and group volunteers from the Young Farmers, the Prince’s Trust, Scouts, Guides, Youth Services and V teams.³ These make a real difference to the Trust’s conservation work and to the experiences and enjoyment of visitors. In return the Trust hopes that the young volunteers feel they have made a difference as well as having a sense of achievement, new skills, direction and a lifelong connection with the organisation and its cause.

NOTE

1 - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-index.htm>

2 - The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is for young people ages 14-19 who complete a series of personal challenges and tasks – including volunteering – to earn Awards at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. <http://www.dofe.org/en/content/cms/home/home.aspx>

3 - is an independent charity aiming to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) in England. <http://www.vinspired.com/v>

VALUE: Volunteering & Lifelong Learning in Universities in Europe Alison Hughes

The VALUE network comprises 20 organisations representing universities and the volunteering sector from 13 European countries. It is supported by the Grundtvig strand of the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Programme.

The partners share the belief that the development of volunteers, through university lifelong learning, can play a key role in the development of European society as a whole. At the centre of the network’s investigations are volunteers and the sophisticated learning – both formal and informal – that they experience in their volunteering work.

VALUE brings the two sectors together to share ideas and models of working together and to explore the potential for developing new university lifelong learning opportunities for both volunteers and staff in volunteering organisations.

VALUE is also developing a resource base which includes materials such as reports, case studies and bibliographic references and which will be of interest to organisations in both sectors. The resource base – together with information about the network’s meetings – is available on the project website <http://www.valuenetwork.org.uk/>.

In spring 2011 the VALUE final conference will take place in Ankara, Turkey. The conference will summarise the network outputs and plan for future collaborative initiatives. The event will be open to all interested parties – see the website for further information.

AIMS OF VALUE

The overall aim of the VALUE network is to facilitate and stimulate the development of cooperation between universities and the volunteering sector in the delivery of university lifelong learning (ULLL) to volunteers and volunteering organisation staff. In the context of VALUE, ULLL means the provision of learning opportunities which:

- Recognise the complex, and often sophisticated, learning that volunteering brings;
- Respond to the diverse range of individualised goals and needs of volunteer learners.

VALUE’s secondary aims are to:

- Facilitate learning within the network. VALUE partners work together as an entire network, in small groups and on a one-to-one basis – in virtual and real modes;
- Import experience and expertise from outside the network both to further its own learning and to contribute to the development of its resource base;
- Make an impact beyond its membership. VALUE is using both the web and individual partners to disseminate its outputs as widely as possible. The final conference, a key dissemination activity, will be open to external participants.

The accreditation of undergraduate volunteering with the University of Reading's Museums and Special Collections

Rhianedd Smith

Over the past four years the University of Reading's Museums and Special Collections Service has developed its existing volunteer programme to offer new opportunities and training to community and student volunteers. This case study focuses on the Service's work to engage undergraduate students with volunteering as a means of developing their transferable skills and enhancing their employability. It focuses on a 2008-2009 project funded by two University Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and a workforce development grant from the regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Council for South East England. The project supported the creation of new training resources and the development of a scheme for the accreditation of volunteer work for University of Reading students.

BRINGING STUDENTS INTO THE COLLECTIONS

The University Museums at Reading have had a longstanding involvement with volunteers, but mainly on an ad hoc and small scale basis. In 2005 funding was secured for a Volunteer Development Project to enable the University's Museums and Special Collections Service (UMASCS) to employ, for the first time, a Volunteer Development Officer.¹ Its role has been to centralise and coordinate existing volunteer activities and to develop engagement with students as a way of expanding and enhancing the volunteer workforce.

The project was supported by the HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Applied Undergraduate Research Skills (CETL-AURS).² With the support of CETL-AURS, an Undergraduate Learning Officer was appointed to develop formal undergraduate modules that utilised the collections. These modules engaged students with enquiry based learning and focused on developing students' skills at self-directed learning.

Subsequent funding enabled UMASCS to build on the undergraduate teaching programme by establishing a project to support a formal volunteer training scheme. By utilising practice and theory from the formal teaching project, the volunteer project became integrated with the teaching and learning aims of the University. The formal modules also became an important source of recruitment for new volunteers.

In the early stages of both projects the Volunteer Officer and the Undergraduate Learning Officer worked together with various internal and external specialists to develop new training. The Undergraduate Learning Officer's other work with enquiry based learning ensured that the training included hands-on interactive experiences which helped students to develop lifelong learning skills. However, the training was usually task specific and didn't always give students a wider sense of the heritage sector.

ACCREDITATION OF STUDENT VOLUNTEERING

Unlike the majority of older community volunteers, UMASCS staff found that many student volunteers planned to pursue careers in the heritage sector. Many students asked for heritage careers advice and expressed an interest in gaining formal recognition for their volunteering. In response the Service was able to acquire development funding from the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Career Management Skills (CCMS) and MLA South East's Workforce Development Fund.³ Both were interested in exploring how the existing offer could be developed through a further project to accredit student volunteering with collections. An appropriate framework to support the accreditation scheme was found through a partnership with the University's Student Union. The Union had already piloted and developed the Modular Accreditation for Students Involved in Volunteering scheme (MASIV), designed to recognise the wide range of volunteering activity undertaken by students.⁴ This scheme requires students to keep a log of activities and compile a portfolio of evidence which demonstrates the impact of their volunteer work. They also submit a short written piece reflecting on the personal value of their volunteer experience and obtain two references from supervisors and co-volunteers. This evidence is marked on a pass / fail basis by a Board of Studies and appears on students' degree transcripts. It is "non-credit bearing," which means that it does not affect their overall degree result. However, the presence of the module on the degree transcript illustrates to potential employers that this work has been recognised by the University.

There are a number of ways in which the scheme has proved highly effective. Although the MASIV scheme does not require volunteers to undertake any additional training, students who volunteer to work with UMASCS are interested in gaining more general knowledge of museums and heritage. Therefore the project has also developed new workshops and resources. These workshops give sector specific careers advice and practical training in various aspects of heritage management. Workshops give an introduction to collections management, archive and library work, marketing and front of house skills. Accompanying resources will be made available to a wider audience via the web.

EVALUATION AND IMPACT

The quantitative impact of the volunteer project is that there are now 150 volunteers at any one time, approximately 95 of whom are students. 24 of those students took part in the pilot accreditation scheme with 17 completing the entire programme. As a group the volunteers contribute hours equivalent to three full time members of staff per year. The qualitative feedback from the new training sessions has been overwhelmingly positive and focus groups are being set up to acquire more in-depth data.

In the longer-term the University wishes to research the impact that work experience has on student career management. Such information is notoriously difficult to capture. However, in the first instance social networking technology has been utilised to keep track of volunteers once they have left full time education. A Facebook site is used to advertise "starter posts" and internships and to provide ongoing support. In turn the UMASCS volunteer team use this site to retrieve information about student activity post-graduation. Initial feedback suggests that many students continue to volunteer after graduating and / or seek out post-graduate degrees or work in the heritage sector. Students have also stated that volunteer work has had an impact on the way that they approach their formal learning and has given them confidence and new transferable skills.

On an organisational level this work has created a cultural shift in the way that volunteers are viewed. Volunteer work is now being written into funding proposals and staff are actively seeking out opportunities to train and utilise volunteers. In light of this, the project team is developing a staff training workshop on volunteer management. Requests to make use of student volunteers are also coming in from other museums in the local area and from an increasing number of smaller collections on campus. In this way the structure can help understaffed institutions or those who want specific assistance in attracting well-trained student volunteers.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In the long-term there are plans to extend the training programme so that community volunteers may also get their work accredited. In the short-term it is hoped to make resources generated through the current project available to other institutions online. The Service is also intending to develop further links with other heritage based volunteer managers in the local area in order to share experiences, skills and resources.

Hence, volunteers are now seen as an important additional audience with clear learning needs and have become integral to the successful functioning of the Service's collections management and community programming. In this way they both contribute to and are a part of its wider organisational approach to lifelong learning.

NOTE

1 UMASCS <http://www.reading.ac.uk/about/about-museums.asp>

2 CETL-AURS <http://www.reading.ac.uk/cetl-aurs/>

3 CCMS <http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/>

4 MASIV http://www.rusu.co.uk/home/Get_Involved/MASIV_home.aspx



Friends of the Museum and Volunteering

An organisation of Friends can make an enormous contribution to the success and well-being of a museum. Friends are keen advocates and supporters of the museum's work, raising money for acquisitions and activities, and volunteering their time – indeed, many small museums across Europe are run by associations of Friends. With their independent or semi-independent status they are in a position to support the museum in a way which complements the institution's work.

There is also the potential for conflict. Friends can become attached to 'their' museum and may not

welcome change or be open to question on how they operate. A new director, a change in the display or interpretation of a much-loved collection, or the introduction of a policy designed to attract more diverse audiences may all be seen as threats. The social nature of Friends' groups means they have the potential to turn into closed clubs, unwelcoming to newcomers. Communication and negotiation are key skills needed by the museum professional to ensure that Friends remain open to all and a valuable asset to the museum.



Friends and the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

Mark Richards, Director of Operations

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (the Museum) was founded by Royal Charter in 1907. It derives its funding in the main from the Welsh Assembly Government as an Assembly Government Sponsored Body. It consists of National Museum Cardiff, St Fagans: National History Museum, the National Slate Museum, the National Wool Museum, the National Roman Legion Museum, Big Pit: National Coal Museum, the National Waterfront Museum and the National Collections Centre.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS

In 1954 the Friends of the National Museum of Wales Committee was formed to purchase “things of interest to Wales,” which the Museum might otherwise lack the financial resources to acquire. A successful membership drive followed and in 1955 the Committee made its first purchase: a set of Bronze Age artefacts costing £300. From these modest beginnings the Friends' contributions to the Museum have now exceeded £350,000. By the 1980s the Friends' role had expanded: members volunteered as exhibition guides and organised social group visits to places of interest. In 1983 the Museum hosted the Annual Conference of the British Association of Friends of Museums, which it had helped to found. At around this time, Friends became an independent body with an elected, rather than Museum-appointed, Committee.

Developments in the 1990s included a growing involvement in the curatorial work of the Museum as they offered to assist in documenting some of the collections. The Friends began to produce their own award-winning newsletter and magazine. A Friends' desk was set up in the main hall of the National Museum Cardiff in order to assist visitors and to encourage the recruitment of more Friends.

By 2005 the Friends of the Museum had over 1,000 members. Most of these were passive, that is they paid their subscription but did not attend many Friends' events, but there was also a dedicated core group of members who volunteered on the Friends' desk.

RENEGOTIATING THE MUSEUM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FRIENDS

The Friends' desk became the focus of potential conflict between the Museum and the organisation of Friends. While the majority of volunteers were knowledgeable, committed and effective, there were times where incorrect or misleading information about the Museum was given. This caused confusion among members of the public because it conflicted with information which the Museum was giving out. It also reflected a lack of input by the Museum in order to brief the Friends correctly on its work.

Although the individuals in question were not employees of the Museum, the public considered them to be so, since the Friends were occupying an official position within the institution. After a number of unsuccessful attempts to resolve the situation the Museum decided to remove the desk and no longer to have a public Friends'

presence in its main hall. This action severely tested the relationship between the Museum and the Friends. At around this time, a new Chair of the Friends Committee was appointed and the role of liaising with the Friends was given to the Director of Operations of the Museum. These two individuals, neither of whom had been involved in the previous discussions, were committed to developing a stronger relationship between the Friends and the Museum.

Over the past few years this has been achieved through monthly meetings, regular updates on the Museum's activities at all Friends' committee meetings, Friends' events being programmed into the Museum's calendar, incorporating the Friends' website into the Museum's website, and the Friends' Newsletter focusing on activities within the Museum rather than external or social activities.

The Friends now have a national focus and are celebrated as being ambassadors for the Museum both internally and internationally. In order to maintain this successful relationship, the Museum will continue to work in partnership with this key stakeholder group.



Strengthening the Relationship: The Prato Textile Museum and the Association of Friends

Filippo Guarini and Chiara Lastrucci

Prato Textile Museum is Italy's largest centre for the study, conservation and exhibition of historic and contemporary textiles. The collections include over 6,000 items of interest and document the production of textiles from the pre-Christian era to modern times.

Although founded in 1975, only in 1997 did Prato Textile Museum consider itself a real and proper museum, an institute open to the public on a daily basis and able to supply a wide range of services. The museum has since worked constantly to increase its collections, offer new services and manage increasingly complicated activities and projects.

Its relationship with the local territory also strengthened so much over the years that, in 2001, the museum began to collaborate with the Prato Association of Friends of Museums and Environmental Heritage,¹ a voluntary association whose members' initial tasks were to ensure the Sunday afternoon opening of the museum facilities and to supervise members of the public visiting the Museum's exhibits.

In 2003, on the occasion of the opening of Museum's new facilities in the former Cimatoria Campolmi textile mill, it was decided to regulate this relationship via the signing of a protocol of understanding which ensured both the continuity of the relationship and protected the work of the volunteers. One of the main features was the opportunity to revise the contents and redefine the rights and duties of the two parties involved on an annual basis. The volunteers' esteem of the Museum was manifest with their decision to finance the construction of an in-house textile restoration workshop.

When the volunteers expressed their desire to increase their participation in the life of the Museum in 2004, by extending their activities to include welcoming the public and supplying various services, the Museum decided to set up a voluntary worker training scheme, a 30-40 hour course, divided into weekly meetings focusing on the history of the museum, the collections, conservation, museum management and the services to the public. Via this course the Museum not only validated the work and role of each volunteer, but also enhanced their skills and recognised their strategic contribution both within and outside the institution.

In 2007 the relationship between the Museum and the Association of Friends was further enhanced following the completion of a survey of volunteer job satisfaction. At that time the Museum decided to enhance the potential and skills of a number of volunteers by entrusting them with the weekend management of the Museum bookshop and the organisation of initiatives such as guided tours and workshops for families.

In recognition of the new tasks and increased responsibility of the volunteers, in 2007 the Museum appointed a Volunteer Coordinator, a member of staff responsible for defining the duties and monthly rotas of the various teams of volunteers, together with a Coordinator from the Association of Friends. The Coordinators

organise periodic meetings to address any problems, satisfy new needs and supply additional training. Over the last year (2008), Prato Association of Friends has suffered a drop in membership with a resulting cut to Museum services. In order to resolve this problem, the Museum has started a new communication and awareness campaign. It hopes this will attract new citizens to the Association with a view to increasing its membership and involving the new recruits in the life of Prato Textile Museum. The new recruits will supply their services pursuant to a “body of associates” method wherein a large number of people will participate in the life of the Museum for no more than a set number of hours per year or in order to complete specific projects.

NOTE

1 - Associazione Pratese Amici dei Musei e dei Beni Ambientali, a branch of the Italian National Association of Friends of Museums and Environmental Heritage founded in 1980 in order to disseminate knowledge and promote the care and safeguarding of Prato's cultural heritage (amicimuseiprato@libero.it; www.amicimuseiprato.net).



Curating Botanical Collections on the Internet

Leander Wolstenholme

HERBARIA

A herbarium is a collection of dried, pressed plants usually held in a museum, university or botanic garden. A label attached to each specimen gives details of the name of the species, the collection locality, the name of the collector and the collection date. Herbaria can vary in size from a small private collection of one or two hundred specimens to very large institutional herbaria which often hold several million specimens. Many herbaria are historic, with collections that go back two hundred years or more. The data on the labels serves to provide a map of the distribution of plant species showing where they were growing and when. This can be very useful information for studies into the effects of climate change and other environmental factors affecting the distribution of plants around the globe. In addition, the label data can also be used to piece together the lives of the collectors themselves, letting us know where they travelled and when. The specimens can therefore give us a fascinating insight into historic biodiversity and the lives of collectors.

THE IDEA

Many herbaria (and consequently the data they hold) are inaccessible for a number of reasons. Many are unstaffed or under-resourced such that the label data held with the specimens won't be transferred onto computer database within the next 50-100 years. In 2006 a volunteer at the Manchester Museum, Tom Humphrey, devised a website, Herbaria@Home, to help tackle these problems.¹ The concept behind the scheme is to take digital images of specimens and post them onto a website where they appear alongside a database form. Volunteers then log on and transcribe the label data into the appropriate fields in the database. In this way the specimens become available 24 hours a day and can be viewed from anywhere in the world. The project opens up collections to many more users, allowing communities to become aware of the collections, to take ownership and become involved in natural history in a way that many people would never have thought possible.

PROGRESS

The system has been running since the summer of 2006 and has so far proved to be very successful. Over 40,000 specimens have now been documented by over 200 volunteers from all around the globe. The project has engaged users with diverse levels of expertise and experience and not confined to botanical experts. The scheme has proved very useful, particularly for herbaria without a curator and the collections at Aberystwyth University, Shrewsbury School and Launceston Museum have been documented in their entirety. Once catalogued the data has been returned to the host institution's own databases, thereby helping them gain a fuller knowledge of what is in their collections. The accuracy and utility of the data recorded is of paramount importance to the project. Records are subject

to peer-review and expert oversight which can catch most errors or ambiguities. A recent audit found that 91% of the recorded fields had been entered correctly.

THE FUTURE

The scheme initially had no funding but is now supported by the Botanical Society of the British Isles. Herbaria@Home opens up opportunities for community involvement in previously hidden collections and it has always been the intention to run workshops to encourage greater community involvement in the project and in natural history and the environment in general. However, thus far this has only happened on a limited scale, primarily due to lack of funding but there is huge potential in this area.

Herbaria@Home is a ground breaking and innovative project and has proved to be an excellent example of 'citizen science'. It deserves support from funders and has huge potential to go from strength to strength. Let's hope it does.

NOTE

1 - <http://herbariumathome.org/>



Adapt or Disappear! Do small volunteer-run museums still have a future?

Liesbeth Tonckens

Just a few kilometres outside the Veluwe village of Epe (32,000 inhabitants), in the central part of the Netherlands, is a farm established in 1715, which today is a museum. A noisy class enters the yard and the children are directed inside. While eating their lunch, they watch a film about farm life around 1920, after which a guided tour of the property will be held. The guide, dressed in a peasant blouse and wearing a cap, talks to another group of visitors. Meanwhile, the curator consults with the counter clerk about the shop and the volunteer coordinator is on the phone with a member of the board.

This is just another Thursday morning in May like any other in this Veluwe regional volunteer-run museum. In 2008, the museum had 7500 visitors; between 2000 and 2006, this number was about 2200 annually. Behind the tranquillity of the farmstead is an organisation well aware that change is required for a small museum to survive.

Leaving aside financial aspects, the future of small-scale volunteer-run museums depends on two factors: is it possible to recruit sufficient volunteers to keep the organisation going and will there be sufficient visitors in the future who consider the museum worthwhile? This problem is not solved simply by appointing two or three paid staff. Even a small-scale museum with a couple of permanent positions depends on volunteers to keep things going.

From 2000 onwards, the board of the Veluwe museum has shown that it is willing to change, and this has given the organisation a positive impulse. But it is still too soon to sit back and relax. This paper examines those changes, the role of the board and the implication for small-scale volunteer-run museums.

FROM BARN TO REGIONAL MUSEUM

In 1964, this 18th century farm was opened to the public. In the early years guided tours were given by the farm's tenants. Following its opening as a museum, the farm underwent two extensive renovations. In 1988, the exhibition space was expanded and an adjacent shed transformed into an entrance building. New volunteers were recruited to conduct guided tours and look after the cash register and shop. Among that group of volunteers was the current curator, who, as a member of the board, gained an in-depth knowledge of the collection and museum field on a practical level. The organisation at that time was simple: a different but fixed group of volunteers worked on each day of the week.

The second major change was initiated around 2000, when the board decided to create an entirely new entrance and exhibition building, an impulse that seemed necessary to inject new life into the museum. Visitor numbers were low and the volunteers stuck in set patterns. In June 2007, this period of change was concluded with the festive opening of the renovated museum.

In the intervening years, however, major changes had taken place, both on the museological and organisational levels. In 2005, the museum joined the Dutch Museum Register, a national quality care system. The tasks and responsibilities of the various working groups were clearly defined; the day schedules were adapted and fixed volunteer groups dissolved (which was not universally popular). The new developments, however, succeeded in attracting new volunteers who accepted the more formal, professional organisation as a matter of course. Without an ambitious and powerful board, the museum would have been unable to change after 2000. Instead of a drowsy farm museum where volunteers played games to pass the time, an organisation was set up with clear agreements, tasks and roles.

A significant force behind this change has been the voluntary curator, who is also a member of the board and the only person with knowledge about museology. With an extensive group of willing, but largely older, leisure volunteers (who enjoy relating stories of the old days or serving coffee in a friendly atmosphere), she is the person most involved in carrying out the board's vision through management, preservation and research into the collection.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

However motivated and involved, the unexpected or long-term drop-out of volunteers remains a weak spot within the organisation. The already heavily-loaded curator has to assume responsibility for press contacts and educational tasks because nobody else can or is willing to do this. The Dutch government encourages the educational system to include local heritage in its lessons, but for this regional museum, no one can be found to enter into and maintain structural contacts in the field of education.

Guides instead love to tell about the old farm life. They are advancing in age and the question is whether they can still fulfil visitors' wishes for a smart and topical story. The use of multimedia (audio tours) may overcome this problem, but will partly marginalise these very committed guides. Volunteer and visitor requirements are starting to diverge.

The curator is starting to consider her own retirement from this voluntary work, but has so far been unable to find someone to take over part of her responsibilities. In the twenty years she has been working here, she has become indispensable. Who can replace her? Is there a lack of enterprising people who wish to develop themselves in the area of museums, or has she been pulling the strings so well for all this time that no one dares to step in and take over her role?

The situation in other museums is similar: the voluntary curator leaves, a period of uncertainty sets in for the board. Often, a successor tends to leave after just a few years and the problem recurs. Who, these days, will commit twenty years as an expert volunteer? This continuity issue and the diverging requirements of volunteers and visitors constitute the most important threats to the continued existence of these small museums managed by volunteers.

The volunteer coordinator is an important person, where the timely resolution of these issues is concerned. His or her main task is to keep up the motivation among the volunteers and to recognise and develop the qualities the volunteers have. A museum will not have any future with a group of volunteers who are only willing to carry out undemanding work. The trick is to distil from the existing volunteer group those people who wish

to develop their capabilities in terms of more specialised museological tasks – enterprising people who will dare to take on responsibilities. Competencies can be made visible using volunteer contracts and annual progress reviews. In doing this the organisation indicates that this is serious work which involves certain demands. At the same time, the volunteers are getting older and there is a desperate need for younger workers. Consolidation and expansion of the local support network is a priority, because both new volunteers and a large group of visitors come from the direct vicinity of the museum. Even local residents who do not visit often tell tourists of the unique opportunities that the museum offers. Rejuvenation is again required to obtain a positive character locally, in addition to an increased number of volunteers in the 45-65 age group, and a greater number of projects and activities with younger people between 14 and 30. It is not just the age of volunteers that has to come down; the appearance and choice of themes in the museum presentations have to fit in with current themes and trends.

Many small museums are well aware of the need for change, but questions remain. How do you go about it without upsetting the current volunteers? And where to start: with these younger volunteers or renewed themes and presentations? Again, the essence of the answer is in the strong and ambitious members of the board who are inclined to change. They can decide to follow a new avenue, formulate clear and realistic goals and thus provide the museum with meaning for the people living in the direct vicinity. The board can recruit new members of the board and volunteers who naturally endorse the new method. This is not an easy process and there will certainly be resistance from some of the existing volunteers, but waiting until no older volunteers are left is not an option.

The Netherlands has many more small museums in addition to this one, without any paid workers and which mainly rest on the dedication of one single person and a committed board. They hold the organisation together and see to it that enthusiastic volunteers do not carry out their personal hobbies there. The presence of a number of enterprising and proactive people for crucial tasks in the museum is of great importance for the continued existence of the volunteer organisation.

Volunteers together at the Hartberg Museum

Evelyn Kaindl-Ranzinger

Hartberg Museum, the city museum of an Austrian district capital of about 4000 inhabitants is run by members of the historical society in Hartberg. Contrary to the saying “too many cooks spoil the broth,” the volunteers follow the motto “the more the merrier.” It doesn’t matter if you are an expert or an amateur, everyone is welcome. Everyone does what he or she can do best. Counter service is managed between Wednesday and Sunday. Departments such as the museum library, archive, building services, homepage maintenance, marketing and organisation of events are run by former executives. A former civil servant is now the museum carpenter. A former pharmacy technician takes notes for the general practitioner, who is also the chairman of the historical society. Different generations from diverse social and professional backgrounds work together for the success of the project. They can profit from each other.

The museum has a strong local profile. People from the city of Hartberg regularly visit lectures and cultural events in the museum. They are always ready to help the museum, for example organising events and exhibitions. Of course, there can be disagreement, but that is part of the social process. To have or to develop social and verbal competences is as important as mutual understanding and give and take. As soon as you become aware of these potentials you can only profit – for yourself and for the Hartberg Museum.



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CONTEST

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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WEBSITES

BAFM – British Association of Friends of Museums (<http://www.bafm.org.uk>)

CEV - European Volunteer Centre (<http://www.cev.be/>)

CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation (http://www.civicus.org/new/intro_new.asp)

European Union (<http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering>)

IAVE – International Association for Volunteer Effort (<http://www.iave.org/>)

ICOM - International Council of Museums (<http://www.icom.org>)

UNV - United Nations Volunteers (<http://www.unv.org/>)

Volonteurope (<http://www.csv.org.uk/about+us/csv+international/european+network/>)

WFFM - World Federation of Friends of Museums (<http://www.museumsfriends.com/>)

NOTE

¹ - As this handbook addresses a European audience, the decision has been made by the project Partners to select mainly texts in English. Most of these have international relevance – either through general good practice guidance or through specific examples in case studies or policy context. Further resources are available in the project background research (www.amitie.it/voch/index4.htm), available on www.amitie.it/voch.

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