



European Year of Volunteering 2011

Leeds Conference



Communiqué



“Volunteering can be the source of personal development and boost local community projects.”



A CHAIR'S VIEW

“As someone who has moved from full time work to a new life of volunteering in Leeds, I am wholeheartedly convinced of the mutual benefit that volunteering has both for individuals and organisations that offer placements – and the huge difference that it can make to local communities.

Volunteering can be the source of personal development and boost local community projects. It can help the unemployed gain valuable skills and confidence and can help those starting out get a foothold in the world of work. Volunteering can give a new lease of life and a sense of contributing usefully to older redundant employees or the retired; and it can recharge the efforts of charities and voluntary organisations.

This inspiring conference has helped us to take stock of the achievements made in Leeds throughout 2010. It has also provided a wonderful opportunity for organisations across public, private and voluntary sectors in Leeds and from their European counterparts to talk, listen, interact, exchange and learn from each other and to share ideas and good practice about volunteering and how we can best support this.

We have all learnt a great deal from each other and have distilled important messages around volunteering, the challenges currently experienced within the voluntary sector and key issues that we must all be mindful of. We have concluded that volunteering needs to be coordinated and supported. We have understood that municipalities and organisations such as the volunteer centre in Leeds can play a key role in facilitating volunteering and brokering links between volunteers and organisations that need them. And we have been reminded of the need to work in partnership.

I would like to urge local partners as well as national and European decision makers to reflect on and take these messages on board.

Finally, I hope that we can use our links with partners in the rest of Europe to explore international volunteering opportunities and continue to learn from one another.”

Rt Hon John Battle, Leeds

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THE AIMS & OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference celebrated the successful completion of the Leeds Year of Volunteering 2010 and launched the European Year of Volunteering 2011. It brought together delegates from the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors in Leeds, along with representatives of UK Government, The European Commission and Volunteering England.

Participants also represented the voluntary and public sector in all of Leeds' European partner cities (that's Lille in France, Brno in the Czech Republic, Brasov in Romania and Siegen and Dortmund in Germany), who took part in a wider exchange of good practice with their local counterparts between the 6 and 8 December 2010.



The event offered an opportunity for dialogue and debate on the issues currently facing the voluntary sector both in Leeds and in cities elsewhere in Europe. It also supported exchange of best practice between participants who represented a wealth and diversity of experience.

The conference programme included presentations on the local experience of volunteering in Leeds and its Czech partner city, Brno, coupled with presentations covering both national agendas and European issues.

Panel discussions, question and answer sessions and interactive workshops provided a platform for participants to discuss the issues raised in the presentations, consider shared challenges and identify innovative solutions and successful approaches to supporting and enabling volunteering in cities.

In this way, it also helped to draw out key messages for local, national and European decision makers as well as explore potential for new partnerships and links to be developed, both on a local and international level.

This report highlights the salient themes and key points that emerged during the conference.

SPEAKER PROFILES

MIKE LOCKE, VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND



Mike Locke has been Director of Public Affairs for Volunteering England since May 2008. Previously he was with the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London, researching and teaching in the fields of volunteering and voluntary and community organisations. Through his role there, he helped create the Institute for Volunteering Research in partnership with the organisation that is now Volunteering

England. As a researcher, he has carried out many studies evaluating government and organisational policies as well as development of faith-based volunteering and of user involvement.

TOM LEFTWICH, OFFICE OF CIVIC SOCIETY

Tom joined the Cabinet Office in Sept 2009 working on a range of programmes aimed at promoting volunteering including the volunteer management programme, DWP volunteer brokerage scheme and the European Year of Volunteering. Since the election Tom has also been supporting the Civic Service programme, through which all civil servants will be encouraged to volunteer, a key part of the Big Society agenda. He volunteers regularly with the Terrance Higgins Trust.



COUNCILLOR LUCINDA YEADON, LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Yeadon is the Executive Board member for Adult Health & Social Care, since June 2010 and is Chair of the Leeds Year of



Volunteering 2010 which has seen a full programme of activities undertaken to promote and support volunteering in the city.

Councillor Yeadon was elected to Council in 2008 for the Kirkstall ward, in Leeds. Her professional background is in learning disability services, working with the voluntary sector for the Royal Mencap Society.

SALLY-ANNE GREENFIELD, LEEDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Sally-Anne studied Social Anthropology at Cambridge University before embarking on a career in fundraising. Having worked in several health and heritage organisations she set up a successful fundraising consultancy business which she ran until early 2005. She then became Chief Executive of the Leeds Community Foundation, an organisation that specialises in giving grants to community and voluntary groups primarily in Leeds. Funding comes from the private and public sectors. The Foundation is now the largest independent grant-maker in Leeds and the third largest of the 57 Community Foundations in the



ANTONIA MOCHAN, EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATION IN THE UK

Antonia has been Head of Media at the European Commission's UK Representation since 1998. She has worked for the European Commission since 1995, in a variety of departments, ranging from vocational training to overseas development aid. In 2003 she became Spokesperson for Employment and Social Affairs and in 2004 was appointed Spokesperson for Science and Research. She is a graduate from the London School of Economics and spent an Erasmus term at Leiden University, Netherlands.



VÁCLAV HOLAN, RATOLEST

Václav Holan is the voluntary co-ordinator at Ratolest, based in Leeds' partner city Brno in the Czech Republic, who help disadvantaged children and young people. After a training programme, the SAP (Social Activation Program for children and youth) project fosters a long-term relationship between volunteers aged 18-30 and young person aged 6-20. Through regular weekly meetings between the two, the aim is to offer children a different model of functioning in a social environment, strengthening their social skills, and finding new ways to actively and meaningfully spend their free time.





European Year of Volunteering 2011



Leeds Conference Programme



Tuesday 7 December 2010 at the Royal Armouries, Leeds
Chair : Rt Hon John Battle, Leeds

09.30 Coffee and registration

10.00 Welcome and introductory remarks by chair John Battle

I. NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

10.10 Volunteering - current issues in England:
Mike Locke, Director of Public Affairs, Volunteering England

10.20 The Big Society and Volunteering in the UK:
Tom Leftwich, Policy Advisor, Office of Civil Society

II. THE LEEDS APPROACH

10.30 Leeds Year of Volunteering: Cllr Lucinda Yeadon, Chair of
the Leeds Year of the Volunteering Steering Group, LCC

10.40 Volunteers from Leeds tell their story

10.50 Fundraising and philanthropy: Sally-Anne Greenfield,
Chief Executive, Leeds Community Foundation

11.00 Volunteers from Leeds tell their story

11.15 Coffee

III. EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

11.30 European Commission approach to volunteering and the
European Year of Volunteering 2011: Antonia Mochan, Head
of Media, UK European Commission Representation

11.45 Social activation program for children and youth: Václav
Holan, Ratolest, Brno (Czech Republic)

12.00 Q and A to all speakers

12.15 - 13.15 Lunch

There will be a market place with key volunteer organisations.

IV. LEARNING AND BEST PRACTICE

13.15 Introduction:
Tom Riordan, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council

13.30 Workshops

A. Poverty and homelessness: led by LASSN and
St George's Crypt

B. Young people: led by Learning Partnerships

C. Using environmental volunteering: led by
Groundwork

D. Health and wellbeing: led by NHS Leeds

E. Corporate volunteering: led by Leeds Ahead

F. Older people: led by Leeds Older People's Forum

14.30 Coffee

14.45 Workshops A - F as earlier at 13:30

15.45 Plenary: workshop feedback and panel discussion

16.20 Chair's concluding remarks

16.30 Finish



MAIN THEMES & KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

This section summarises the key themes and discussion points that emerged throughout the day.

These range from: articulating the shared issues and challenges experienced, as well as differences in the way volunteering works across Europe; to discussion of cross-cutting issues such as funding, volunteer recruitment, training and management; and exploring how volunteering can best be supported in Europe's cities.

COMMON ISSUES – SHARED ACROSS EUROPE

- 94 million people in Europe over the age of 15 are involved in volunteering and this is an issue that is important at European and local levels alike.



- The European Commission has recognised the role that volunteering can play in areas as diverse as promoting active citizenship, social inclusion, integration and harmonious coexistence of diverse groups in society, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, human rights and a sense of solidarity and community spirit. Volunteering is also as providing learning opportunities and improving employability.
- Volunteering covers all areas of Commission policy, from education, training and employment, culture and sport, equal opportunities and social inclusion, as well as environmental and consumer protection. Efforts are therefore being made to involve all Commission services in the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

- Definitions and the concept of volunteering in each locality in different cities and countries vary. The concept of “quality” volunteering also differs from country to country. It is therefore difficult to compare the situation across Europe.
- Statistics point to a big variation in levels of volunteering between the EU member states. In some countries, such as the UK, Sweden, The Netherlands and Austria it exceeds 40%. Elsewhere the rate is less than 10 percent, for instance in Belgium, Greece, Italy and Lithuania, where there is less of a tradition of volunteering. Although this picture may not be as it seems, given divergence in definitions and measurement.
- Even though terminology, laws and definitions of volunteering vary, participants nevertheless agreed that we do have common challenges and issues across different cities in Europe.
- All are struggling with funding issues and the capacity to promote volunteering and all face similar challenges in areas such as recruitment, training and retention of volunteers, promoting quality voluntary placements and management of volunteers.
- We also have much to learn from each other, for instance on ways in which promotion of volunteering opportunities in local areas can be coordinated and supported effectively; ways in which levels of volunteering can be increased and understanding the role that different organisations can play in this field.
- It is clear, too, that having enabling legislation in place and making sure legislation is not too restrictive is important. In some countries, such as the Czech Republic and Romania, legislation tends to be more restrictive and limits the ways in which local authorities can engage with the voluntary sector.
- This is a national, not European, competence but this is a message that the European Commission will consider and will aim to establish whether the European level is hindering or helping.

Supporting, coordinating & enabling volunteering

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

- Understanding why people volunteer and the barriers they may face to doing so is important. The diverse motivations, needs and expectations of potential volunteers need to be taken into account in approaches taken to promote opportunities and recruit new volunteers.
- A wide range of approaches can be taken to recruitment, including peer to peer recruitment, word of mouth and social media – as well as signposting and use of the volunteer centre services. Flexibility is key.

VOLUNTEER CENTRES

- Volunteer centres act as a useful mechanism to coordinate, organise and support volunteering in cities, including signposting and matching volunteers to available placements and sharing good practice in volunteer management.
- Many European cities do have dedicated services tasked with similar functions, however volunteer centres are not available in all cities in the UK and the rest of Europe.
- In Leeds, the volunteer centre needs sustainable funding. Its services could be used better by local voluntary organisations as a mechanism to help find placements for people who have been assessed by them but prove not to be suitable for that organisation. In this case, they can be signposted or referred to the volunteer centre to seek a more suitable placement elsewhere.
- Is a physical space needed for such a coordination and matching role? This could perhaps be done via a virtual volunteering hub without a need to fund an office. The absence of a physical and central presence, however, could impact on visibility of the services offered.

A ROLE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- A key message to emerge was that volunteering needs to be organised, coordinated and supported, to help sustain volunteering activity.
- Local councils can play a useful role, acting as facilitators of volunteering in cities.

Leeds volunteers tell their story



MARK FLETCHER & MARTHA TAYLOR – ARUP

“As a major employer in the city it is essential that we embrace our role in developing closer communities that work together for local improvement and collective benefits. Our people love it, feel fulfilled and we establish new and productive links through the process. It is a thoroughly worthwhile use of our time!”

Arup is a corporate member and sponsor of Leeds Ahead, which is involved as a broker to connect organisations with

local communities. We have worked with Leeds University and other local professional firms on a community clean-up in Hyde Park which was extremely worthwhile, allowing us to connect with the community and improve our environment.

We also raise awareness of engineering and mentor young people in schools, while female staff provide role models to encourage girls to get involved in engineering.

www.arup.com/Global_locations/United_Kingdom/Leeds.aspx
www.arup.com/About_us/Making_a_difference.aspx



SUSTAINING VOLUNTEERING: THE FUNDING CHALLENGE

- Voluntary sector organisations across Europe are faced with diminishing availability of funding to support their work as a result of resource pressures and, in many cases, widespread public sector budget cuts.
- Appropriate and stable core funding needs to be secured to ensure sustainability and to avoid the risk of voluntary organisations slipping from their mission to fit into other funding requirements.
- Volunteering needs to be supported and it can't be done without funding.

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION WITHIN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

- Collaboration and joint working within the sector is crucial and a key challenge will be to prevent decreased funding from forcing organisations to compete for resources.
- Conversely, the reduced funding could be used as an opportunity to actively encourage greater partnership working between organisations.
- There is real value in voluntary organisations working together in local areas, for instance:
 - in matching volunteers to appropriate placements and offering volunteers more options of potential placements,
 - exchanging volunteers between organisations, and
 - cooperating in provision of training, rather than each organisation doing this individually.

TRAINING, MANAGEMENT & RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS

- There is a need for systematic assessment, screening and training of volunteers. Clear role descriptions and tools that can be used for assessment are needed, to evaluate volunteers' suitability for available roles in any given organisation.
- The skills and capacity needed by volunteer managers are significant and there is an issue over how volunteers are managed and the 'professionalism' of volunteering.
- A kite mark to develop volunteers in a professional way and a toolkit to support volunteer managers has been developed in Leeds. There is also a need to develop an infrastructure to ensure that each volunteer has a quality experience.
- Local voluntary organisations in cities experience difficulties in funding the level of support needed by volunteers in performing certain roles.
- There is also a challenge in motivating trained volunteers to stay in touch with the organisation that they have volunteered for after the voluntary organisation has 'invested in their development'. For example in Brno, trained volunteers are often lost after five months (from discussion in health and wellbeing workshop).



Leeds Volunteers tell their story

TERRI LONEY – GIPTON TOGETHER

Gipton Together was founded in 2003 in an area with scant opportunities where young people increasingly drifted into crime and anti-social behaviour.

Local people came together to change things from the streets upwards. After speaking directly with young people to find out what they wanted and then fundraising, a youth facility for art and sport was formed. This is now the biggest provider in Gipton, with over 300 young people aged 6 to 18 years attending a range of activities, paying just £1 each time.

Young people work with the wider community to run this project, which has broken down intergenerational barriers.

“We have seen these young people grow in confidence and make great achievements. This has generated real pride in their area.

“The success of Gipton Together is down to the fact that only the people who live in these deprived communities can fully understand the problems of inner cities. Given the opportunity and resources they are capable of sorting the problems for themselves.”

www.giptontotheryouthactivities.co.uk

VOLUNTEERING IN LOCAL AREAS & ‘COMMUNITY SPIRIT’

- Rooting our work locally and connecting corporate volunteering and philanthropy with the local agenda is crucial.
- Making money and making a difference can go hand in hand and employer supported volunteering makes an important contribution.
- Geography supports the concept of volunteering and it is important to encourage companies to ‘think local’ and not always choose national charities to support.
- A sense of community identity and spirit is being lost as a result of socio-economic factors such as movements into town, social isolation and long working hour ethics, as highlighted by Dortmund, Brasov and Brno (from discussion in older people workshop).



"We need to promote good practice across all sectors."



REFLECTIONS ON PROMOTING & SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

Tom Leftwich – Policy Advisor, Office of Civil Society

- The UK Government is promoting volunteering by: implementing the National Citizen Service; seeking to cut through bureaucracy that creates barriers to volunteering; creating a Civic Service; training 5000 community organisers to act as catalysts for change and social action; and supporting the European Year of Volunteering 2011.
- We need to encourage and enable individuals to make a contribution within their communities and help solve social issues by volunteering.
- We need to promote good practice across all sectors in developing effective employer supported volunteering (ESV) programmes as well as identifying and sharing good practice and resources relating to effective volunteer management.
- We should promote good practice in opening doors to volunteering opportunities to those traditionally less likely to volunteer.

CHANGES IN VOLUNTEERING IN THE UK

Mike Locke – Director of Public Affairs, Volunteering England

- 'The Big Society' agenda of the current UK government raises a number of issues that will have an impact on volunteering.
- As government in the UK withdraws from intervention in many fields in favour of greater responsibility being taken locally – there are expectations of increased participation in volunteering.
- There is a tension between the independent tradition and background of volunteering in local areas versus UK Government rhetoric and 'organised volunteering'.
- Funding cuts will have an impact – for instance on the way in which information about voluntary opportunities is circulated and communicated. There is a risk of losing good practice that has been built up.
- The boundary between paid staff and volunteers is shifting in the UK, with volunteers moving into traditionally paid roles. Any expectations of volunteers taking on the role of paid staff would damage both the voluntary and public sectors and would lead to alienation of the public.



"Funding cuts will have an impact."

THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES & THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTOR / NGOS

- **Question:** In the UK, the biggest ever budget crisis will change the rules of the game, with a need for the voluntary sector to offer services previously delivered by the public sector and for local authorities to shift from service provider to enabler. Are the voluntary and public sectors fit for this change? Is there funding to facilitate this change? (Audience, Volunteering International)
- **Answer:** It will be a very challenging few years and local authorities will need to develop relationships with the voluntary sector. This is starting but the partnership does need to be two-way. The Leeds Compact that was re-launched in 2010 needs to be a living document and evolve during the year. (Councillor Yeadon, Leeds City Council)
- **Answer:** European funding such as ESF and ERDF could potentially be used to effect the transformation required. (Antonia Mochan, European Commission)



Leeds volunteers tell their story

LUTEL JAMES – CHAPELTOWN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CYDC)

“Our community is our collective responsibility. We need to start with young people and involve their parents.

“Local people in Chapeltown have volunteered their time to develop the community and this has helped to turn around the lives of many disengaged young people. Sport has been the means through which we have done this, but community action led from the ground has made this happen.”

The aim of CYDC is to make a difference in young people’s lives. CYDC is a vibrant, dynamic and innovative organisation, which provides a range of organised sports, self development and educational activities for young people.

We cater for ages from 4 to 19 regardless of their background, race, religion, ethnicity or gender. CYDC utilises the popularity of sports to engage young people in positive activity to develop self belief and realise ambitions.

www.cfydc.com



The Big Society & volunteering

Comments made on The Big Society at various points throughout the conference are reproduced below.

TOM LEFTWICH – POLICY ADVISOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

- In the UK, The Big Society is not a government programme. Rather, it is a vision of how society should be – a strategy for building a stronger society.
- It aims to emphasise local need rather than central bureaucracy and attention is being given at the highest level to how the government works with local people and how decisions are made.
- Key themes for The Big Society are:
 - “encouraging social action”,
 - “public service reform”, and
 - “community empowerment”.
- The European Year of Volunteering 2011, with its focus on encouraging social action, fits perfectly with The Big Society.
- Volunteering rates in the UK are high, however there is more that we can do to make sure that the giving of time becomes a social norm and it will be important to understand how local residents can be motivated to contribute.



TERRI LONEY – GIPTON TOGETHER

- Volunteering has always been there. The Big Society is expecting local groups to continue their work and deliver more for nothing. There is a real need for sustainable funding.

SALLY ANN GREENFIELD – CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LEEDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

- The Government’s Big Society agenda talks of promoting volunteering and social action but there is little talk of money. Financial support is needed for the voluntary and community sector, not just practical support.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

- Collaboration and working together – is this what The Big Society is?
- The voluntary and community sector needs to tackle the issues raised by The Big Society rhetoric and a collaborative culture is needed within the sector to promote its strength.

REFLECTIONS ON VOLUNTEERING

TOM RIORDAN – CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

- I am encouraged to note that the volunteer centre and other initiatives undertaken over the course of the Leeds Year of Volunteering in 2010 have already had a demonstrable impact, for instance on increasing the numbers of registered volunteers.
- This is a great start. It will be important in the next phase to take stock of changes in local volunteering activity and to “capture that change”. There is now an opportunity to plan ahead and step up a gear.
- What The Big Society means for Leeds is an important question. The answer is something that we need to come up with together, locally.
- We need to adapt it to a Leeds solution and volunteering is a big element of that. Volunteers are a resource for local organisations and volunteering can be an escalator into jobs for the unemployed.
- I need to work out what Leeds City Council will do as part of that answer, in the context of reduced service delivery and a reduced financial envelope.
- In trying to find the right solution we need to be open about funding decisions and take time to make sure the effect on the sector is understood, avoiding a disproportionate impact on any one organisation or sector.
- Volunteering is central and in sustaining it through a difficult time there are questions over resources and capacity to make volunteering happen. The will is there on the part of Leeds City Council, but we don't have all the answers and we need to work together.
- International links and exchange are important in helping us to understand what best practice is, by allowing us all to compare our experience across national borders with the experiences and know-how developed elsewhere in Europe.

- For instance, this can inform how we improve the way in which we work together on a local level and respond to forthcoming changes and challenges. Volunteering is part of the solution and we need to learn to work differently together.
- I am therefore particularly pleased to be working with all five of Leeds' European partner cities in a European-funded project dedicated to the voluntary sector for the first time and to see them all represented here.
- With 2011 being the European Year of Volunteering, the opportunity that this conference presents for mutual learning between Leeds voluntary organisations and new partners from abroad is timely and I hope that it will lead to new opportunities for cooperation and exchange.



LEARNING & BEST PRACTICE: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Interactive workshops were held focusing on six areas of volunteering, each facilitated by one or more organisations active in the relevant field.

Facilitators were invited to summarise key points discussed during their workshop and in particular to highlight a:

- **key challenge**
- **'eureka moment'** (e.g. a key learning point or opportunity identified), and
- **key message** for decision makers locally, nationally or at European level.



“The ability to manage volunteers and doing this well is key.”

HEALTH & WELLBEING – led by NHS Leeds

Key challenge:

- Ensuring voluntary sector organisations collaborate rather than allowing restrictions in funding to force them into competition. Collaboration within the sector is key.

Eureka moment:

- It is important to have quality standards – the more universal the better. Management, recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers does not come for nothing and we need to ensure that the skills for ‘managing well’ are there robustly in the sector.

Key message:

- Enabling legislation is important – in many countries legislation is too restrictive and mitigates against volunteering.

POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS – led by LASSN & St George’s Crypt

Key challenges:

- We need to mitigate against funding cuts and each organisation needs to have clarity about what it will do and what it won’t do.
- The ability to manage volunteers and doing this well is key and there is a need for terms to be put in place for voluntary placements.

Eureka moment:

- The need to develop relationships and see people as human beings: It would be useful for public servants to spend time with voluntary sector organisations and people to gain a better understanding of the sector and how local authorities and voluntary organisations can work together.

Key message:

- Small changes in services can make a big difference and appraisals/ tender specifications should take account of the needs of smaller organisations.

YOUNG PEOPLE – led by Learning Partnerships

Key challenges:

- Engaging young people from one particular group (be it female volunteers or other identifiable target group) or getting volunteers from one particular geographical area to become involved.
- Best practice was discussed in responding to the challenges of recruiting young volunteers and offering them positive experiences of volunteering.

Eureka moments:

- Working in partnership with other organisations to recruit volunteers is an effective approach, both in the experience of Leeds organisations and in Lille.
- Having flexible ways of involving young people and flexible, diverse approaches to the promotion of volunteering, including peer to peer recruitment is key.
- The innovative model of civic service employed in Lille, where young people are offered a living allowance to volunteer full time, is an interesting approach to consider.



OLDER PEOPLE – led by Leeds Older People's Forum

Key challenges:

- Recruiting older people, including newly retired people aged 50-65, is a challenge as people have caring responsibilities or are working longer, limiting time for volunteering.
- It is important to have an awareness of barriers around volunteering by older people and to avoid placing too many expectations on them.
- Voluntary organisations also need to be flexible in the opportunities for volunteering that are available and build these opportunities around what people can offer.

Eureka moment:

- Peer to peer recruitment, using older people to recruit other older people, is the most effective way of communicating this message and engaging older people in volunteering activity.

Key message:

- We need to communicate the huge value and rewards that volunteering can bring and recapture the community spirit.

ENVIRONMENT – led by Ground Work

Key challenge:

- Involving the business community in volunteering and the need for funding to support training of volunteers.

Eureka moment:

- The value of partnership working and linking with local organisations, including businesses and universities, in volunteering for the environment. Benefits include identifying potential volunteers and matching them to a project and generating creative approaches to achieving project aims using the skills and knowledge of a range of organisations.

Key messages:

- Volunteers do it for themselves and their involvement depends on getting something out of volunteering. Skills development is important and there is a need to recognise skills developed through volunteering. This is useful for young people and for the organisation for which they volunteer.
- We need to make volunteering accessible and to fit in with people's lifestyles and responsibilities.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING – led by Leeds Ahead

Key challenges:

- There is a lack of understanding between some voluntary organisations and businesses and there is a need to manage expectations on both sides.
- Adequate resourcing and infrastructure/structures are not in place. These are needed to ensure that volunteering activity is well organised and supported.

Eureka moments:

- The experience of corporate volunteering is diverse in Leeds and other European cities.
- The value of coordinated matchmaking and use of databases to ensure the right activity is matched to the right person.

Key message:

- The corporate contribution is key, but is it volunteering? Should we call it something else?



FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE PANEL

COUNCILLOR LUCINDA YEADON – LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

- Challenge for voluntary organisations: ensuring there is infrastructure capacity and support for volunteers.
- Challenge for local authorities: ensuring there is good two way communication between the local authority and the third sector, including voluntary and other organisations.
- Funding challenge: securing appropriate core funding to ensure sustainability and avoid the risk that organisations slip from their mission to fit into other funding requirements.
- Eureka moment: becoming aware of the strong sense of community spirit that fosters volunteering in local areas and understanding that people are more willing to volunteer in their local area (community spirit versus The Big Society).

ANTONIA MOCHAN – EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATION IN THE UK

- Definitions of volunteering in each locality and in different cities and countries vary.
- Eureka moment: becoming aware of the issue on enabling legislation. This is a national competence but I will take this message back to colleagues in the European Commission with a view to establish whether the European level is hindering or helping.



"We must recognise the importance of connecting corporate volunteering with the local agenda."



VÁCLAV HOLAN – RATOLEST, CZECH REPUBLIC

- Terminology, laws and definitions of volunteering may vary but we do have common challenges and issues across different cities in Europe and we are all struggling with funding issues.
- The question of whether ESF or ERDF funded activity can be used to support volunteering is an interesting point to explore.
- Eureka moment: volunteering needs to be organised and supported. Local voluntary organisations need to unify to convey this as a key message to public authorities.

NORMA THOMPSON – NHS LEEDS

- We must recognise the importance of connecting corporate volunteering with the local agenda.

CONCLUSIONS & KEY MESSAGES

- Definitions and levels of volunteering, the concept of 'quality' and legal frameworks in different cities and countries, vary.
- Nevertheless, there are shared issues and common challenges across different cities in Europe such as: availability of funding and infrastructure capacity to support volunteering; volunteer recruitment, retention and management; promoting quality voluntary opportunities and increasing levels of volunteering.
- Enabling legislation is important in allowing volunteering to flourish - in some countries, legislation is too restrictive.
- Volunteering needs to be promoted, coordinated, supported and managed well.
- Volunteering benefits local areas, the organisations that use volunteers and the volunteers themselves.



- The experiences of volunteering vary from individual to individual and there are diverse motivations, needs and expectations to consider in promoting voluntary opportunities.
- Volunteering can't be done for nothing – funding is needed to support it.
- There is a role for local authorities as facilitators and enablers of volunteering.
- Collaboration and joint working within the sector and with local municipalities is crucial.
- Rooting our work locally is important. However we need to think and act both locally and globally, at the same time.



THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING IN LEEDS: NEXT STEPS

"The Leeds Year of Volunteering 2010 has been a successful campaign to celebrate and promote volunteering in the city.

I am delighted that we have seen the number of recorded volunteers increase by over 200 percent over the course of last year and more than 350 additional organisations have registered new volunteering places. With the support of the Volunteer Centre, 1800 volunteers have been helped to find placements and the estimated benefit to the Leeds economy of this centre is well over £1 million.

There is now a pressing need to identify new volunteering opportunities and Leeds City Council remains committed to supporting volunteering. Throughout the European Year of Volunteering 2011, we aim to work with partners to sustain the increased levels of volunteering achieved throughout 2010 and to further increase the number of volunteering placements offered. Within Leeds City Council, we plan to review the way we use volunteers and we are also keen to support the work of volunteer organisations that are tackling our most difficult issues.

As we look to the future of volunteering in our city, it is also important to recognise the value of our international connections and I am pleased that we have been able to reflect on the value of volunteering not only here in Leeds but also in cities across Europe. I therefore look forward to cooperating with Leeds' partner cities to share know-how, promote links between voluntary organisations and identify further opportunities for mutual learning and exchange throughout 2011 and beyond. Let's grasp these and do everything we can to support volunteering in all of our cities."

Councillor Lucinda Yeadon

Leeds City Council, Chair of Leeds Year of Volunteering Steering Group &
Lead member for Health and Adult Social Care



"There is now a pressing need to identify new volunteering opportunities in Leeds."

FURTHER INFORMATION

A delegate list, copies of the presentation slides and notes of the workshop discussions are also available online from
www.international-leeds.org.uk

For further information about the European Year of Volunteering 2011 in Leeds and how to get involved, please see:
www.val.org.uk/page/european-year-of-volunteering

To discuss ideas and potential opportunities for international cooperation with organisations from Leeds' partner cities in Europe, please contact:
international@leeds.gov.uk

The "Volunteering in the European Union" report by Directorate General Education and Culture, highlighting difference of volunteering between European countries.
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1015_en.htm



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European Year of Volunteering 2011

Leeds Conference
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