

Pathways to Social Inclusion through Volunteering

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1 Executive Summary

Approximately five per cent of the Australian population aged 15 years or older experiences multiple disadvantages. This has a major impact on their ability to learn, work, and engage in their community and have a voice on decisions that affect them and results in costs to the budget, economy, and communities.¹

The Australian Government's vision is one of a socially inclusive society 'in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society'.

The role of volunteering as a means of social inclusion is recognised internationally and is supported by research about the advantages and benefits of volunteering for individuals and communities (European Volunteering Centre (CEV) 2010; Haski-Levanthall, 2009). The benefits of volunteering may offset some of the ill-effects of unemployment and underemployment (Levy, 2009).

Nationally and internationally, the discussion is shifting from participation as a means of people meeting an obligation to one of empowering people to make transitions in their social roles and relationships.

This paper documents preliminary work undertaken by Volunteering Australia to investigate volunteering as a pathway to social inclusion across a range of organisations and settings.

The purpose of the research in this paper was not to prove or disprove whether volunteering can lead to improved social inclusion. The focus of the inquiry was to identify the features and success factors of approaches to volunteering where volunteering does contribute (or has contributed) to assisting people to improve their social inclusion.

It documents a number of key characteristics of volunteering practice in a diverse, albeit limited, number of organisations and communities that have enabled some people to improve their social inclusion. This is a first step toward identifying some of the important ingredients of 'socially inclusive volunteering'.

Ten case studies of practice in Australia were investigated through interviews with key informants. A selected review of literature was undertaken to inform the design of the questions for the case studies and comparative analysis of features and success factors.

The case studies illustrated there is a range of circumstances through which people who are socially excluded find their way to volunteering and they participate in different types and ways of volunteering.

Social inclusion through volunteering is a double sided coin. In the first instance, the research focussed on identifying how the social inclusion of individuals can be increased through their own participation in volunteering. Other dimensions were highlighted through listening to the stories of case study participants.

¹ <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/SIagenda/Priorities/Pages/default.aspx>

Social inclusion is also facilitated where the volunteer him/herself is not socially excluded. This happens through bringing together people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to make a connection, understand each other's perspectives and experiences, develop relationships, and learn from and support each other.

A range of characteristics of volunteering practice that facilitate social inclusion were identified through the case studies.

Key areas	Characteristics identified
Quality of the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusiveness, support, opportunity for input ▪ Acceptance and regard of the volunteer as an equal ▪ Negotiation of goals that stretch, and build on, existing capability.
Responsiveness to individual strengths and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for new experiences, challenges and responsibility that use existing capacities and support new capacities to develop ▪ Reasonable accommodation of people's capacity at different points in time and circumstances, if needed.
Job role and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing choice about environment, culture, tasks ▪ Flexibility that responds to and works with the volunteer's changing capacity ▪ Trial placements or rotations before committing to role.
Peer learning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group interviewing of prospective volunteers ▪ Group/team training of new volunteers ▪ Buddying systems on commencement ▪ Voluntary work undertaken as a service-specific 'team'.
Organisational learning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring of volunteers within the organisation or by partners e.g. senior staff of companies ▪ Mentoring of not-for-profit organisations by their peers with experience in socially inclusive volunteering ▪ Mentoring of not-for-profit organisations by companies and/or access to company training.
Organisational involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ownership and involvement in volunteer program across the organisation and company ▪ Integration of volunteering in the organisation's external services and infrastructure services (where possible and appropriate).
Organisational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptability – an overall process able to change in response to individual volunteers, partners, and community ▪ Flexibility -ability to think and act creatively about options and solutions ▪ Inclusion and participation.
Partnerships between entities and across sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust and open mindedness between partners ▪ Strengths and resources identified and utilised to benefit everyone involved.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff with specialist skills dedicated to community partnerships
Community context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active involvement of all partners in the community - being part of the community.

The following propositions about volunteering's value to social inclusion were developed as a result of investigating practice in different locations and settings in Australia:

- Volunteering is a vehicle to a range of positive social and economic outcomes, including but not limited to, paid employment.
- Volunteering can lead to improved social inclusion for individuals and communities, regardless of whether the social exclusion is experienced by the volunteer him/herself, the people for whom the volunteer effort is undertaken, or by both.
- The inherent culture (ethos, values, principles and behaviours) of volunteering in Australia provides the building blocks for socially inclusive practice.
- The relationships that volunteer-involving organisations have with people who are socially excluded through a range of programs and activities, and their links with other not-for-profit community organisations, government services and businesses provides a key for people to make the transition from user to provider of services and support.
- Volunteering has significant potential to bring together different sectors of society including the not-for-profit sector, corporations, education and government.

In summary, the research undertaken for this paper indicates the:

- value of volunteering as part of the Australian's Government's vision of a socially inclusive society in Australia; and
- importance of public policy settings that enable a sufficient range and options for participation in volunteering to be available to individuals, from which they may choose.

The findings also provide groundwork for further work in action research, and the development of practice and policy. The socially inclusive volunteering practice outlined in the case studies for this paper is likely to represent only the tip of the knowledge, experience and skills in the field.

These findings need to be tested and validated more widely to assess the applicability of the characteristics of socially inclusive approaches/models of volunteering identified through the case studies, and to identify any additional characteristics.

The findings indicate there is a range of approaches and different levels and types of outcomes in relation to social inclusion.

Subject to appropriate resources being available, there is potential for this learning to be shared between people and entities involved in socially inclusive volunteering and transferred across organisations and sectors.

A range of methods could be adopted to develop and transfer learning between not-for-profit organisations, companies, educational institutions and government. Methods may include, but are not limited to: mentoring, coaching, and buddying between different people and entities involved in volunteering.

Learning, testing and becoming better at practices that lead to improved social inclusion require resources.

None of the practice illustrated in the case studies is possible without significant resources – time, knowledge, skill, communication, building and sustaining relationships, organising and documenting. In each case study, each partner is investing resources.

Volunteer-involving organisations and their partners are demonstrating leadership ‘on the ground’ in relation to socially inclusive volunteering.

To be sustained and grow, socially inclusive practice, needs to be supported by appropriate policy settings, funding of pilot programs and ongoing funding of proven models, support of partnerships between not-for-profit, business and educational sectors, and practice-based research and evaluation.

Government and peak bodies in volunteering have an important leadership role to assume at the strategic level to achieve these outcomes.

2 Introduction

Approximately five per cent of the Australian population aged 15 years or older experiences multiple disadvantages. This has a major impact on their ability to learn, work, and engage in their community and have a voice on decisions that affect them.

Social exclusion has an immediate negative impact on those experiencing the exclusion and has economic and social impacts more broadly. It results in costs to the budget, economy, communities, individual and families.²

3 What we mean by social inclusion

In reviewing the origins, concepts and key themes of social inclusion, Hayes et al (2009) found the idea of 'social exclusion' being used in different ways.

The beginnings of social inclusion are found in Europe as early as the 19th century. Despite Australia's long history of assisting people experiencing disadvantage, discussion about the experience and definition of social inclusion in Australia has been more recent.

Hayes et al (ibid) define the scope of exclusion in terms of locational disadvantage; intergenerational disadvantage; children at risk, child poverty and jobless families; employment; mental health problems; disability; homelessness; and relationships.

The Australian Government's vision is one of a socially inclusive society 'in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society. Achieving this vision means that all Australians will have the resources, opportunities and capability to learn, work, engage in the community and have a voice'.³

4 Volunteering and social inclusion

The role of volunteering as a means of social inclusion is recognised internationally as a means of empowerment and social inclusion. Comprising four key dimensions and types of actors and 43 actions, the European Centre for Volunteering (CEV) Brussels Declaration on the Role of Volunteering promotes the volunteering of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and recognising and boosting the potential of volunteering as a way to acquire skills and to enhance employability.

²Australian Government. Social Inclusion
<http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/FAQs/Pages/WhatDoWeMeanBy.aspx>

³ <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Nationally, the Australian Government's vision of a socially inclusive society means that 'all Australians will have the resources, opportunities and capability to:

- Learn by participating in education and training
- Work by participating in employment, in voluntary work and in family and caring
- Engage by connecting with people and using their local community's resources and
- Have a voice so that they can influence decisions that affect them'.

4.1 Existing research findings

There is considerable research about the advantages and benefits of volunteering for individuals and strengthening communities (Putnam, 2000, Ronel, Haski-Leventhal, York and Ben-Diavid, 2009 cited in Haski-Levanthall, 2009).

Efforts to increase voluntary participation in civic organisations have been found to have significant social and economic benefits (Wilson and Mayer, 2006).

Research undertaken in the UK concluded that volunteering is an effective way for many people to alleviate the symptoms and help to address some of the causes of social exclusion (Institute of Volunteering Research, 2004,10 and 2008, 4).

4.1.1 Volunteering as a pathway to employment

The General Assembly of the CEV argues that people who have been involved in volunteering are less likely to be unemployed and that volunteering should be promoted as a way of avoiding unemployment (2007, 8).

A range of good practice examples considered at the CEV General Assembly on Volunteering as a route back to employment indicated volunteering plays an important role in two key ways: 'developing people's potential in general, and contributing to the improvement of self esteem, creating of a personal network of support, development of volunteer's competencies and clarifying professional orientation' (2007, 6).

In Australia, Levy (2009) found the benefits of volunteering may offset some of the ill-effects of unemployment and underemployment. Benefits cited by participants included a wide range of improvements in social and emotional indicators including a sense of purpose, inclusion and greater confidence. Levy found evidence that volunteering may be a stepping stone to employment, with participants reporting favorable employer reactions, new skills and experience and the development of work behaviors and disciplines.

Participants in Levy's research were also generally supportive of the notion of 'giving something back' and of the government including volunteering among a series of participation options.

4.1.2 The complex relationship between social disadvantage and volunteering

This concept of 'giving back' and mutual obligation became a feature of social policy in Australia in the early 2000s (McLure P, 2000, 56). Volunteering was adopted as, and remains, one of the means of meeting this obligation in social security policy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011).

Nationally and internationally, the discussion is shifting from participation as a means of people meeting an obligation, in the sense of 'quid pro quo', to one of empowering people to make transitions in their social roles and relationships.

Whilst acknowledging the positive effect of volunteering, the General Assembly of the CEV 'stated that it must remain a free choice, should not replace social measures to help the unemployed; and must not be an obligation to receive unemployment benefits' (2007, 6).

Levy found evidence of a correlation between favourable 'outcomes' and factors such as the presence of choice, participants' perception that their experience was true volunteering and whether participants were predisposed towards volunteering (2009, 8).

Haski-Leventhal (2009) identifies a twofold relationship between social disadvantage and volunteering - socially disadvantaged persons as (a) recipients of volunteer services and (b) providers of volunteer services and notes there are few recent studies about the impact of volunteering on this two-fold relationship.

In 2005, Shephard's study of volunteering at the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau found 40 percent of the organisation's volunteers had been former clients (cited in Leong, 2008, 71). This finding indicates the transition from recipient of support and resources to assisting and resourcing others in the community has been occurring for some time in local contexts.

4.1.3 Moving towards socially inclusive volunteering

People experiencing a range of circumstances that create disadvantage, including living in low income households, unemployment, and settlement relating to migration, disability or poor health are to varying degrees socially excluded from volunteering. The more social resources people have the more likely it is that they will volunteer, i.e., people with higher income, education, jobs and family to tend to volunteer. (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

The research about the extent to which volunteering is inclusive is still emerging.

The range of practice reviewed by the CEV General Assembly demonstrates significant efforts being made in specific countries to increase the opportunity for people who are experiencing social exclusion to participate in volunteering.

In its research of volunteering in the UK, the Institute of Volunteering Research concluded that volunteering is not yet fully inclusive. Organisations, volunteers and non-volunteers identified a range of psychological barriers and practical barriers. Most of the barriers were common to all three groups, although some were more pertinent to some than to others.

Some of the organisations have ‘tested or mooted’ ways to overcome these including changing their approaches to recruitment, building partnerships with community groups and specialist organisations, building individual’s capacity, creating an inclusive environment and recognising and building on people’s capabilities (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2008).

The evidence of socially inclusive volunteering in Australia is largely anecdotal and in the form of presentations of specific positions, and the practice and projects of individual organisations (for example, Leong, 2008; University of South Australia, 2008; Robertson, 2008; Volunteering Queensland 2009; and NAB, 2010).

However, the available work demonstrates the intent to improve social inclusion in Australia through volunteering by not-for-profit organisations, government and the corporate sector, and emerging approaches to achieve this objective.

Third parties – governments, corporations and educational institutions – are becoming involved in new ways and enhancing volunteering, especially through their impact on volunteerability and recruitability (Haski-Leventhall et al, 2009b).

A review of the Australian experience also highlights the involvement of relatively new partners in social inclusion through volunteering, in particular, the corporate sector. The Westpac Foundation’s investment and involvement in social enterprise (2010) and NAB’s partnership with a range of volunteer-involving organisations through corporate employee volunteering, mentoring and other programs are examples of partnerships across sectors in society that are enabling greater social inclusion.

The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs found the direction of corporate community partnerships is ‘towards an ‘integrative’ stage of collaboration, in which partners create new services and activities as a result of their collaboration’ (2008, v).

5 What we sought to learn

The purpose of the research was not to prove or disprove whether volunteering can lead to improved social inclusion. There are past and current examples that it does.

The research was undertaken to contribute to policy and practice in volunteering by learning more about the specific approaches that help people who experience social exclusion, particularly those who receive services, to actively participate in volunteering and to increase their social inclusion through this form of participation.

The focus of the inquiry was to identify the features and success factors of approaches to volunteering where it does/has contributed to assisting people improve their social inclusion. Drawing on case studies from different sectors and locations in Australia, the research sought to identify:

- approaches to and models of volunteering that have supported and enabled greater social inclusion, particularly community participation; transitions into paid work
- partnerships within and across sectors and supporting resources
- individual’s expectations, partnerships between sectors, the capacity of organisations and companies, and community capacity.

6 Method

Ten case studies of practice in Australia were investigated through interviews with key informants including volunteer participants, volunteer involving organisations (generally the volunteer coordinator), and a corporate partner.

Collectively, the case studies represent programs and organisations in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

The volunteering programs represented across the case studies involve people in metropolitan, regional and rural/remote communities; both genders; people of different ages across the life cycle, from young people to seniors, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; with high school education only and those with undergraduate and higher degree qualifications; people affected by disability; people of diverse sexual identity and preference.

A selected review of Australian and international literature was undertaken to inform the design of the questions for the case studies and a comparative analysis of features and success factors identified across the case studies.

The following elements were identified as potential factors to investigate in the interviews with key informants through the literature review (see Illustration 1).

Illustration 1: Factors implicated in socially inclusive volunteering

Individual drivers and motivation

- Reason for participation
- Attitude toward participation - pre and post participation
- Degree of choice regarding participation
- Degree of interest in the volunteering work concerned
- Future intention to participate in volunteering

Context and environment

Enabling internal and external environment/s

- Culture of inclusion (values and behaviours)
- Culture of learning (values and behaviours)
- Supportive policies
- Organisational capacity to engage, train and support people who experience significant barriers to social inclusion
- Funding and other resources to support the program
- Leadership

Approach/model of volunteering

- Who were the main actors involved
- Barriers to participation being experienced by potential volunteers
- Approach to building the relationship between the participant and the organisations involved
- Respective roles and responsibilities of the private and voluntary sectors regarding volunteer involvement, employment and delivery of services
- Duration of partnerships e.g. short, long term
- What types of work volunteers undertake
- Support persons/people required – what support did they offer
- Length of time support is provided
- Learning required and provided and (of volunteers, staff, others) how e.g. formal training, mentoring
- Flexibility - in how volunteers are engaged, volunteer roles and organisation support
- Innovative thinking about risk management
- What if any changes to volunteering practice were identified and implemented
- Understanding the links between different forms of participation that enable greater social inclusion
- Additional resources needed to engage with additional support needs
- Relationships between volunteer-involving organisations/volunteer resource centres/employment agencies/business/community

Outcomes for participants in volunteering

- Development of self concept and competencies
- Self efficacy
- Increased sense of individual agency (ability to influence self and others)
- Increased sense of accomplishment and/or purpose
- Reduced experience of stigma
- Increased social connection
- Increased employment related behaviours
- Increased employment related skills
- Increased employment contacts/networks
- Increased knowledge about community services
- Changes in social roles of participant
- Shift from unemployment to employment
- Change in nature of the relationship between the individual and organisation, e.g. from client of the organisation/service to volunteer/active participant in the provision of service

Wider applicability of the approach/model

- Could the approach/model be applied in other settings (geographic, sectors etc)?

7 Learnings about volunteering and social inclusion

Social inclusion through volunteering is a double sided coin.

In the first instance, the research for this paper focussed on identifying how the social inclusion of individuals can be increased through their own participation in volunteering.

Other dimensions were also highlighted through listening to the stories of volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations and business during the case study interviews.

Social inclusion is also facilitated where the volunteer him/herself is not socially excluded by bringing together people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to make a connection, understand each other's perspectives and experiences, develop relationships, and learn from and support each other. The involvement of corporate employee volunteers through community partnerships with not-for-profit organisations illustrates this dimension of social inclusion through volunteering.

Section 7 addresses what was learnt from the case studies about how participating in volunteering helps people to improve their social inclusion and the characteristics of different approaches/models of volunteering that makes this possible.

7.1 Motives for and expectations of participation in volunteering

The motives for volunteering of people who experience social exclusion are diverse. Common themes identified across the case studies were:

- volunteering provided structure in their day/week
- belonging and acceptance – being part of a team and part of a community
- feeling useful, contributing in/to the community - 'giving back'
- learning about and strengthening workplace behaviour
- re-identifying with and using previous skills and competencies
- gaining new skills and knowledge
- gaining evidence of their competence in the workplace e.g. through references and work history.

7.1.1 Opportunities for social inclusion prior to volunteering

The degree and range of opportunity for social inclusion that participants in volunteering programs had prior to volunteering were diverse. In some cases, volunteers had opportunity for community participation - education and employment was the major barrier. In other cases, barriers were experienced to community, educational and employment participation.

7.1.1.1 Social isolation

The case studies highlighted barriers to social connection that happened in different circumstances: where people had relocated to a new community, another state, or from another country; during and after serious and/or recurring episodes of illness, not working either due to unemployment or having retired, or a combination of circumstances.

‘One of the first things people lose when they become unwell is social connectedness. When they are in the recovery phase, some will ask is ‘What can I do?’ We use volunteering here in several ways – to remind people of skills they have, or to create new skills. It has been proven to lead to employment’. Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

Specific factors that limited people’s ability to transition to paid work illustrated in the case studies included:

- trauma experienced prior to arrival in Australia
- non-transferrable skills
- limited or no work experience in the Australian workplace
- no recent work experience e.g. long term unemployment in Australia
- relocation within or from outside Australia
- recurring episodes of serious illness
- disability
- uncertainty about their future direction or options, e.g. during or after completing a qualification, e.g. certificate, or making a transition between types of work or industries.

7.2 Outcomes of volunteering

‘Confidence to look for paid work again, definitely. Just a reminder that those skills are still there and that ability that I could lead people are still within me – the professional skills. These skills still resided in me and I needed reminding’. Violet’s story, Volunteer Task Force.

7.2.1 How participants see themselves

The most common changes in how participants see themselves (i.e. their self concept) identified in the case studies were increased self confidence, improved esteem from taking on valued social roles, purpose, and making a real difference in the lives of others in the community.

Current or former volunteers spoke of the importance to them of being part of a team.

‘Through the volunteering, I felt a level of personal and professional acceptance. I had become one of the team. It was good for my self esteem. I had really enjoyed the work and received a sense of satisfaction from it. I had developed admin skills, worked with people that had refugee experience, and communicated effectively. All of this gave me a new sense of hope’. Megan’s story. Brotherhood of St Laurence.

7.2.2 Social interaction and community participation

A range of opportunities for social interaction, community involvement and representation were made possible through volunteering for people who had limited or no opportunities in this regard before:

- friendships, developing networks with like-minded people based on a shared interest
- older people reconnecting after many years
- assuming roles as speakers about community issues
- becoming a member of local service networks.

For example, hosting and funding of activities by NAB and its employees enable community members to take part in community events and facilities they would not otherwise have the resources to access. Connections to broader community are made, trust is formed, people feel supported, and a positive understanding of Australia develops through all of these programs (see Section 11.2, A partnership created by Jesuit Social Services and NAB)

7.2.3 Expanding roles and relationships

'Supporting other people is the main thing I am doing here [through my volunteering] and in my freelance job as an interpreter as well'. Sita's story. Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB)

The majority of (current and former) volunteers involved in the programs outlined in the case studies had made, or were making, the journey from receiving services to being involved in providing services to others, in some form or another. Examples were identified through the case studies of volunteers of all stages of the life cycle making this transition.

Involvement in providing services was not always in the form of paid employment. The volunteering work in most cases has involved providing care for others in the community, e.g. the frail aged or people with disability, facilitating the learning of other members of the community, e.g. through facilitating groups in daily conversational English (English as a Second Language) and providing services to members of different ages, backgrounds and lifestyles in the community, e.g. guiding tours, gardening, child care, emergency relief and social support.

7.2.4 Transitions to work (where this was the goal)

'Volunteering is work – you are just not getting monetary payment...Volunteers can put it under their work history in their resume'. Aspire. A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

'Yes definitely. When I went into it I didn't think about it a lot – about how I would go about it [finding work]. But I hadn't done it yet. I guess I was at the start of it, I was feeling my way a bit. Now I feel comfortable as far as working at a pace. I don't think would have any difficulty'. Frederick's story, Prahran Mission.

The case studies demonstrated the ways in which volunteering provides opportunities to strengthen people's readiness to seek work. Examples included circumstances where the individuals involved had been unemployed for various periods of time, including 10-20 years.

ACCES Inc. supports clients of the Humanitarian Settlement Service to become bilingual/bicultural workers.

In relation to clients of Jobs Services Australia, the volunteering coordinator works in conjunction with employment coaches to create opportunities for volunteering that coincide with training the client is involved in, e.g. child care, information technology.

A number of the case studies also highlighted the role volunteering plays in assisting people in the settlement phase when they migrate to Australia.

'By working as a volunteer in Australia, I learnt how to understand the system and the experiences of people from multicultural backgrounds, and the problems they face when they come here'. Sita's story. Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB)

Volunteering provides the opportunity to learn about different types of work that is available in Australia, increase one's understanding about the culture and processes of Australian workplaces, e.g. the importance of the resume, networking, recruitment processes, behavioural interviews, and to gain experience and in the Australian workplace.

Through a partnership with between Jesuit Social Services, NAB and another not-for-profit organisation⁴ will be providing a three month Mentoring Program for Young Mothers aged in their teenage years to early 20s. The model is being used as a pilot to introduce young African women, whose English language ranges from basic to good, to employment opportunities beyond those in child care and aged care. The mentors are senior staff from NAB.

Volunteering plays an important role in rural and remote settings with high unemployment and transient populations.

'We have a lot of towns where there is high unemployment. Local employers don't know people because they tend to come and go. Volunteering indicates a degree of commitment to the community. It gives employers confidence to give people a try who otherwise have few skills or qualifications'. Ambulance Tasmania Queenstown

Volunteering had also been a pathway for other people to make a significant transition from one type of work to a very different field, or to improve their employment status.

'I was having a dramatic career change and needing to gather experience. I feel lucky to have been directed to the Ecumenical Migration Centre (EMC). I was doing Certificate III in Community Services, but felt lost and not sure of the next step'. Megan's story. Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Examples were also identified of volunteering assisting people who were no longer able to undertake the work they did prior to a serious illness.

'The job the person did before they became unwell may not be possible now. The key is to find an organisation and job role that fits the participant's needs rather than the other way. We work to find out what their needs are and target new areas as well'. Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

7.3 Attitudes to volunteering post-participation

'I would like to ask everybody to work as a volunteer in some stage in their life to help people and to understand people's needs'. Sita's story. Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB)

Interviewees who had taken part in a volunteering program would recommend it to other people who wanted to improve their participation.

'Yeah, I really would. Just that it was a very valuable stepping stone to paid employment... if people have been unemployed I'd say 'think about volunteering as a segue back to work''. Violet's story. Volunteer Task Force

⁴ Name not included on request.

'I certainly would. I've mentioned to a few people about doing it. But they don't want to do it. It's a real shame. People don't realise what a difference they can really make. One friend of mine was going to become a volunteer because he had seen what I've done and how I have grown'. Pams' story. Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

Attitudes towards volunteering in future were positive, and in many cases participants were still volunteering, even when they transitioned to employment. Time and other existing commitments, e.g. studying and paid employment were the only imitations expressed about volunteering in the future.

'Definitely, for as long as I can get up in the morning have a shower and get dressed. When I was so ill, I thought I might have to give it all away. I set myself the goal of getting back to it'. Esme's story. Australian National Maritime Museum.

7.4 Approaches to and defining features of volunteering

7.4.1 Points of contact and connection

'I was at my job agent at Prahran Mission. I was looking at different industries and decided on the industry and traineeships offered and I needed experience before I applied for the traineeship. They told me they took volunteers at (name of service deleted)⁵. I put my name in'. Frederick's story, Prahran Mission.

People who experience social inclusion come into contact with volunteering programs in a range of ways. Some are intentional and formal. In other instances, they may be incidental.

Formal referral processes include those made by employment agents or coaches, case managers of settlement services, staff of prevocational programs, and case managers of rehabilitation and recovery programs.

Newsletters, word of mouth, and seeing a notice in the newspaper, or while waiting for an appointment to receive a service provided by the volunteer-involving organisation, are also points of contact and entry to volunteering for people who experience social exclusion.

7.4.2 What the programs aim to offer participants

Collectively the volunteering programs investigated offer:

- Social acceptance of participants in social settings and new situations
- Involvement in and belonging to communities
- Confidence and motivation to undertake further training or study e.g. certificate
- Pathways from being a volunteer to employment within the volunteer-involving organisation, or other employer
- Pathways from being a client to a volunteer who provides support or services to others in their community

⁵ Detail deleted to protect the anonymity of the individual

7.4.3 From initial contact to starting volunteering

The journey from the initial contact a prospective person had with the volunteer program to starting their volunteering largely reflected standard industry practice in volunteering. In each case, the starting point was the interests and strengths of the volunteer and exploring potential volunteering opportunities.

The differences that were identified in the case studies in relation to social inclusion related primarily to understanding the specific strengths and needs of the prospective volunteer and considering how these could be accommodated to enable participation in volunteering.

'We meet with the participant and discuss with them whether they are volunteer ready, exploring questions such as how their medication affects them, whether they feel they are better able to volunteer in the morning or afternoon....'. Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

Other aspects of relationship building were identified where the volunteers are corporate employee volunteers.

Key elements of the partnership model for employee volunteering included Jesuit Social Service contacting key business units in NAB with which it has a relationship, networking through NAB's Community Champion Network and volunteers being briefed about their assignment.

7.4.4 Approaches to building relationships

Attention to and the nature of the relationship developed between the individual and staff and other volunteers was a defining feature of each of the approaches/models.

Individual volunteers spoke of experiencing respectful, inclusive, supportive and professional relationships.

'They were easy to work with, professional, patient and understanding. They asked me if I needed to have breaks on my shifts. I took the opportunity to do that'. Frederick's story. Prahran Mission.

'Input was always valued. You never felt like you could never say your opinion even though you were a volunteer'. Violet's story. Volunteer Task Force

Achievement of realistic expectations that build on a person's existing capability creates respect and strengthens a person's self-efficacy. Individual volunteers and organisational staff identified the empowering effect on the individual of having expectations of volunteers, believing in their ability, and achievement of expectations.

A distinguishing quality of the relationship identified in a number of case studies was of volunteers being regarded and treated as equals and being an integral part of the team.

'We treat all volunteers in the same way, regardless of where they have come from – JSA, Centrelink, or their own initiative. We believe this is a key to team spirit and a harmonious volunteer environment.

We don't label people. Important health issues will be discussed if required when a volunteer starts and their supervisor will be made aware if appropriate. Other than that, the volunteer just becomes part of the team, the same as any volunteer and that's part of the beauty of it'. Volunteer Task Force.

Being treated equally and as part of the team does not preclude understanding and responding to individual differences and needs.

7.4.5 The voluntary work itself

7.4.5.1 Responsiveness to individuals' strengths and capacities as they change

Understanding and responding to individuals' strengths and capacities at different points in time was also identified as a feature of the approaches to/models investigated in the case studies.

This responsiveness operates at more than one level including:

- Helping people to identify and build on their strengths.
- Creating opportunities through new experiences for participants to see beyond their current perception of what they can do, and to test this in a supported way when they are ready.

'The fact that I could be given a task, and if I felt like I was able, I was trusted to carry it out. I was encouraged to ask questions and to think about my needs. These were really important factors in my volunteering roles and it was these factors that enabled me to develop confidence in my abilities'. Megan's story. Brotherhood of St Laurence.

- Making reasonable accommodation for changes in people's capacity at different points in time and in changing circumstances.

'Last year when I was in hospital when I went back in I had various goals. One was to get back into the museum. I said 'I can't do everything you want me to'. The Volunteers Coordinator took me off various areas and made allowances for me and is still doing that for me. He offered me admin work too. They are very, very accommodating. If you are open with them, they are like that back to you'. Esme's story. Australian National Maritime Museum

7.4.5.2 Appropriate job design

Getting to know the person, getting the right fit between the person and the job (volunteering work) through discussion and appropriate job design, offering trials in different volunteering roles, and following up to make sure the role is suitable each help to create and sustain volunteering experiences that assist people to improve their social inclusion.

7.4.5.3 Flexibility

'We may need to look at flexibility of the role and provide assistance to access help to do the role. For example, one volunteer was fantastic and we wanted to keep him, however he was unable to participate in the day trips he had effectively signed on for. We organised for someone else to assist with the trips and rostered him on for other events. We also connected him with help to overcome his fear of travelling beyond his local area'. Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc.

Flexibility in the job role and how it is undertaken was identified as an important feature of enabling people to participate in volunteering that helps them to improve their social inclusion.

This flexibility depends to a large extent on the barriers, current strengths, and circumstances of the volunteer. It can apply to a range of circumstances.

The key element of this feature is to be able to work with the person's capacity, either as it increases, or decreases. As an example, the Australian National Maritime Museum offers an Associate volunteer program for older volunteers in which volunteering are not required to meet minimum number of hours that apply to the volunteer program.

7.4.6 Training and support

The support provided to volunteers was diverse and dependent on the requirements of the role, pre-existing strengths and skills brought to the role by the volunteer, the volunteer's current needs and future goals.

On-going support 'for as long as it was needed' featured in the majority of the approaches/models investigated.

Training of various levels was offered in the majority of cases, and some form of on-the-job training and support in all cases. Individual volunteers who participated in an interview commented that they had brought existing qualifications and skills to their voluntary work and most had not required formal training.

7.4.7 Enabling transitions from client to volunteer

Examples of active efforts within organisations that provide services to people who experience social exclusion with opportunities to volunteer were identified through the case studies. In the majority of cases, the volunteer work described involved providing support and services to others.

The transition or journey is not necessarily linear, and participants can often wear more than one hat.

For example, most people who volunteer with Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health Inc are, or were, participants of other programs of the organisation. For example, in the case of Aspire, if a participant is involved in volunteering in a different organisation and the need for support arises, it continues to be available and provided by Aspire.

There are also instances where an organisation either has a policy of not allowing former clients to become volunteers, or uses its discretion depending on the role, the issues around the size and closeness of the community involved, and other relevant factors.

7.4.8 Integrating volunteering in organisational operations and services

A number of organisations have adopted approaches where volunteers are an integral part of service delivery and the operations that support providing these services e.g., Human Resources, administration, IT.

ACCES Services Inc. has integrated volunteering within and across the organisation. Volunteer opportunities are offered internally through discussion with:

- ACCES Services Inc.'s departments about their specific work requirements
- each volunteer about his/her interests and goals.

Each department within ACCES Services Inc. is involved in training and recognition of volunteers. ACCES Services Inc. also works in partnership with Volunteering QLD to identify suitable opportunities.

Volunteer Task Force uses volunteers in a range of the services it provides to the community, e.g. gardening and delivered meals. Volunteers are also involved in internal support services including the office of the finance department, the organisation's front desk and general administration.

7.4.9 Organisational culture

'We'll adapt. I have an overall process but it will change with every community and corporate partner'. Jesuit Social Services

'It takes having dedicated people in the team and an ability to understand and engage with both worlds'. NAB

Features of organisational culture that were identified as important to success included adaptability, flexibility, valuing of diversity (of all kinds), and a commitment to learning and sharing knowledge.

Leadership, a 'whole of organisation' ownership of and approach to socially inclusive volunteering and the development of strong participatory culture and practices were also identified as important to success.

The importance of understanding and being able to work with other 'worlds' is played out in socially inclusive volunteering in various ways:

- Staff of not-for profit organisations and companies being able to understand the worlds of people who experience social inclusion
- Volunteering programs understanding the aims and roles of service arms of their organisation
- Operational/service departments understanding the goals of the volunteering program, the perspective and goals of the individual

- Volunteer programs and other services within the organisation working collaboratively toward shared goals and mutual benefit
- Not-for-profit organisations and companies understanding each other's values, priorities, strengths and industry practices, and contributing to meeting their own and each other's goals.

7.4.10 Resources

The approaches/models investigated in the case studies had access to different types and levels of resources from a 0.3 FTE volunteer coordinator to full time volunteer coordinators.

In relation to corporate partnerships with not-for-profits, NAB has a dedicated team with specialist skills resourcing community partnerships.

7.4.11 Involvement of other organisations in the volunteering work

Partner organisations make a significant contribution to creating opportunities for greater social inclusion.

In some of the case studies, the actual volunteering work involved participants liaising and negotiating with other bodies, including government services, not-for-profit organisations and corporations (utility companies, banks). This experience had given former and current volunteers the opportunity to increase their confidence in negotiating and developing relationships with these entities, and to learn about how the different systems and sectors work. This opportunity had particular relevance for volunteers who were new residents in Australia.

Inter-organisational collaboration is also evident in emerging approaches/models of socially inclusive volunteering. For example, Volunteering SA & NT's is developing a program that will work in partnership with the volunteer sector to assist ex-offenders to participate in volunteering activities. A total of 16 local government and non-government volunteer-involving organisations have expressed their willingness to participate in the ex-offender program in partnership with Volunteering SA&NT.

The case studies illustrated that relationships between different entities involved in volunteering (not-for profit organisations, companies, and government) occur across the spectrum from networking, cooperation, collaboration and informal partnerships. These relationships are developed locally, across regions and states and through to the international level.

7.4.12 The power in partnerships

Partnering with other organisations can create synergies and lead to outcomes that would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve by a single organisation alone.

The partnership between Jesuit Social Services and NAB is one example of how the corporate and not-for-profit sectors are working together to provide these opportunities. For example, the African Inclusion Program offers members of the African community a paid placement in NAB that provides an introduction and familiarisation to the Australia corporate environment.

'We probably achieve what we do because of the relationship with NAB and other organisations. Both of us could go away and create the same program, but it wouldn't have the same depth and soul as it does working together. So in some ways the partnerships and resources make the difference. You work within the restrictions you've got and work with what you have. You have to be very creative'. Jesuit Social Services.

Important factors in the success of the partnership and the outcomes achieved include trust between partners, an open mindedness in the community organisation about the company and the involvement of employee volunteers, and having people driving the program both within the company and the community organisation.

Organisations learning from each other, transferring knowledge and building the capacity of different partners was another important feature of socially inclusive volunteering. This was illustrated in the case study of the Skilled Diversity Project.

'Throughout the last 2 years we came to realize the organisations themselves are a great untapped resource and which should be shared amongst all the organisations that participate in this project. That means we get additional skills knowledge and expertise.

So as part of the training we are using another paradigm that bridges networks. We are working in a proven collaborative enterprise environment and if necessary work together on each other's projects. It is one of the keys to success'. The Centre for Volunteering NSW

7.4.13 The culture of local communities

The culture of inclusion in the community, or at least openness to inclusion, was raised in some case studies. Key success factors include being part of local community and service networks that are very intentional about creating this culture in their communities.

'Being a strong part of the local community. I go out and am part of the community'. Ambulance Tasmania Queenstown.

'There is an accepting and inclusive community outside the agency as well'. Volunteer Task Force

7.4.14 Building organisational and network/sector capacity

Organisations help to build the capacity of individuals who are socially excluded through participation in volunteering. The transition from using services to providing services, or from being excluded from paid work to getting a job, involves working with and building on the strengths of the person.

The strength-based approach that builds capacity illustrated in the case studies did not end with volunteers.

Building the capacity of organisations and companies to work in inclusive ways is also essential to volunteering creating a pathway to social inclusion. Giving organisations the resources and support they need in order to make change possible needs to be built into the design stage of socially inclusive models.

The Skilled Diversity Project, led by the Centre for Volunteering NSW links highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers and not-for-profit (NFP) organisations together for mutual benefit. Key strategies include mentoring NFP organisations, providing opportunities for organisations to learn from each other's practice and providing resources that support organisations' growing capacity to offer volunteering in ways that improves social inclusion.

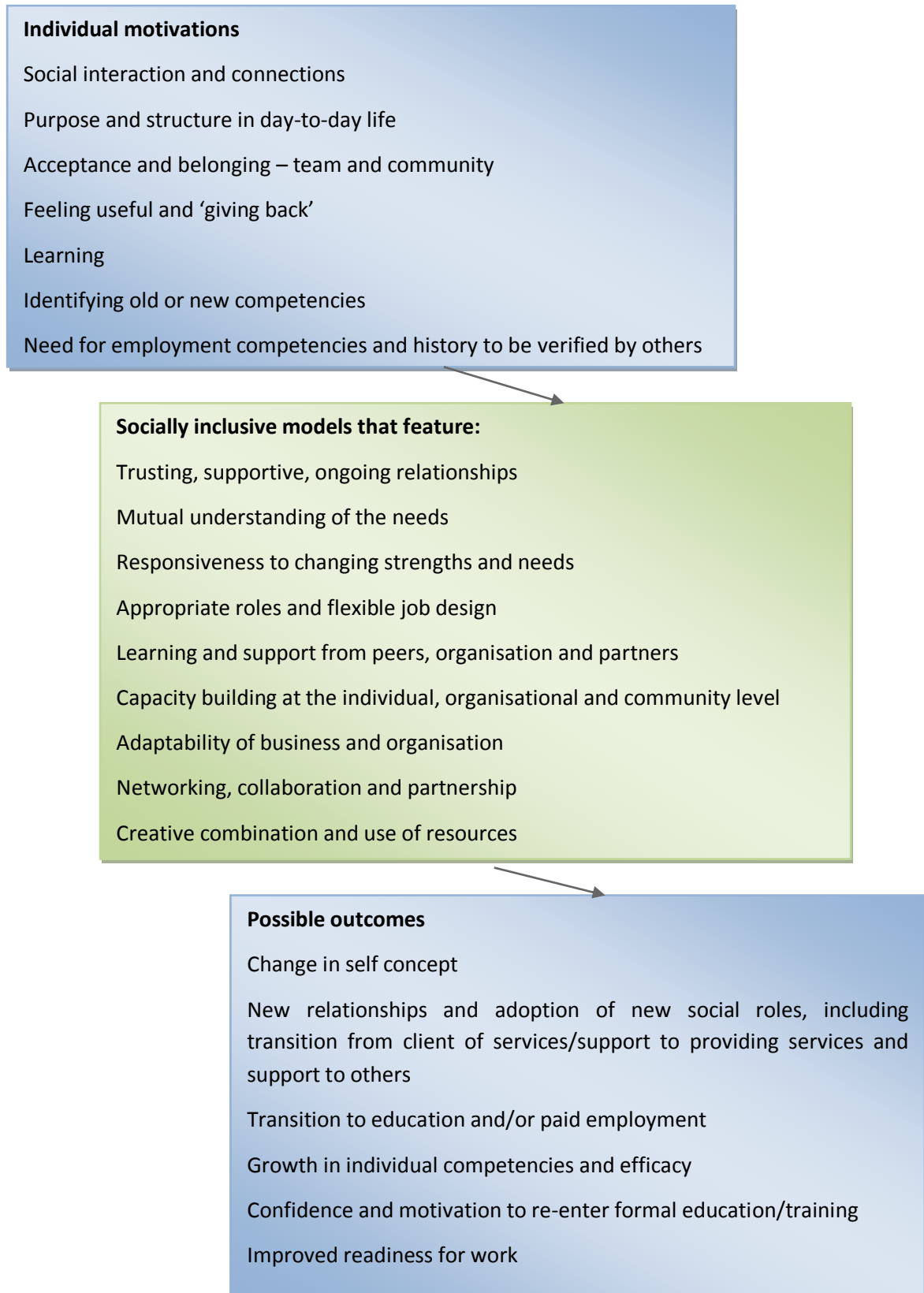
'Through the project, the participating organisations are given free resources and support, e.g. mentoring. All these things come into various levels of requirements for success. If we want to see real inclusion, organisations have to be supported and they need money. Someone has to give it to them'.

The Centre for Volunteering NSW

Comparison of the case studies illustrate that there is a range of circumstances through which people who are socially excluded find their way to volunteering, that they participate in different types and ways of volunteering. However, particular characteristics of approaches/models that have assisted people to improve their social inclusion and an overall pathway for social inclusion were identified across the case studies.

8 The pathway and characteristics of socially inclusive volunteering

Section 8 outlines the overall pathway of social inclusion and the characteristics of approaches/models that have assisted people to improve their social inclusion.



8.1 Characteristics of models that enable social inclusion

Key areas	Characteristics identified
Quality of the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusiveness, support, opportunity for input ▪ Acceptance and regard of the volunteer as an equal ▪ Negotiation of goals that stretch, and build on, existing capability.
Responsiveness to individual strengths and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for new experiences, challenges and responsibility that use existing capacities and support new capacities to develop ▪ Reasonable accommodation of people’s capacity at different points in time and circumstances, if needed.
Job role and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing choice about environment, culture, tasks ▪ Flexibility that responds to and works with the volunteer’s changing capacity ▪ Trial placements or rotations before committing to role.
Peer learning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group interviewing of prospective volunteers ▪ Group/team training of new volunteers ▪ Buddying systems on commencement ▪ Voluntary work undertaken as a service-specific ‘team’.
Organisational learning and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring of volunteers within the organisation or by partners e.g. senior staff of companies ▪ Mentoring of not-for-profit organisations by their peers with experience in socially inclusive volunteering ▪ Mentoring of not-for-profit organisations by companies and/or access to company training.
Organisational involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ownership and involvement in volunteer program across the organisation and company ▪ Integration of volunteering in the organisation’s external services and infrastructure services (where possible and appropriate).
Organisational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptability – an overall process able to change in response to individual volunteers, partners, and community ▪ Flexibility -ability to think and act creatively about options and solutions ▪ Inclusion and participation.
Partnerships between entities and across sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust and open mindedness between partners ▪ Strengths and resources identified and utilised to benefit everyone involved.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff with specialist skills dedicated to community partnerships
Community context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active involvement of all partners in the community - being part of the community.

9 Value propositions - volunteering and social inclusion

The following propositions about volunteering's value as a pathway to social inclusion were developed as a result of investigating practice in different locations and settings in Australia in the selected case studies.

- Volunteering is a vehicle to a range of positive social and economic outcomes, including but not limited to, paid employment.
- Volunteering can lead to improved social inclusion for individuals and communities, regardless of whether the social exclusion is experienced by the volunteer him/herself, the people for whom the volunteer effort is undertaken, or by both.
- The inherent culture (ethos, values, principles and behaviours) of volunteering in Australia provides the building blocks for socially inclusive practice.
- The relationships volunteer-involving organisations have with people who are socially excluded through their participation in a range of services and activities, and their links with other not-for-profit community organisations, government services and businesses, provides a key for people to make the transition from user to provider of services and support.
- Volunteering has significant potential to bring together different sectors of society including the not-for-profit sector, corporations, education and government.

10 Where to from here?

This paper documents key characteristics in volunteering practice that have enabled some people to improve their social inclusion. These characteristics were identified in a diverse, albeit limited, number of organisations and communities. This is a first step toward identifying some of the important ingredients of 'socially inclusive volunteering'.

The case studies investigated for this paper contribute to documenting the value of volunteering as part of the Australian's Government's vision of a socially inclusive society in Australia and indicate the importance of public policies that enable a range of options for participation in volunteering to be available to individuals and from which they may choose.

The findings are consistent with Levy's argument that 'where their volunteering demonstrably builds capability, income support recipients with a government requirements, should be encouraged to volunteer and have that time counted towards meeting their requirements' (2009, 8).

The preliminary work for this paper also provides the ground work for undertaking further action research about socially inclusive volunteering practice and the implications for policy. The findings need to be tested and validated more widely to assess the applicability of the characteristics of socially inclusive approaches/models of volunteering identified through the selected case studies, and to identify any additional characteristics.

10.1 Building further capacity in socially inclusive practice

The socially inclusive volunteering practice outlined in the case studies for this paper is likely to represent the tip of knowledge, experience and skills in the field. The case studies also indicate there is a range of approaches and different levels and types of outcomes in relation to social inclusion.

Subject to appropriate resources being available, there is potential for this learning to be shared between people and entities involved in socially inclusive volunteering and transferred across organisations and sectors.

A range of methods could be adopted to develop and transfer learning between not-for-profit organisations, companies, educational institutions and government. Methods may include, but are not limited to: mentoring, coaching, and buddying between different people and entities involved in volunteering.

Learning, testing and becoming better at practices that lead to improved social inclusion require resources.

None of the practice illustrated in the case studies is possible without significant resources – time, knowledge, skill, communication, building and sustaining relationships, organising and documenting. In each case study, each partner is investing resources.

10.2 Demonstrating leadership

Volunteer-involving organisations and their partners are demonstrating leadership ‘on the ground’ in relation to socially inclusive volunteering.

To be sustained and grow, socially inclusive practice, needs to be supported by appropriate policy settings, funding of pilot programs and ongoing funding of proven models, support of partnerships between not-for-profit, business and educational sectors, and practice-based research and evaluation.

Government and peak bodies in volunteering have an important leadership role to assume at the strategic level for these outcomes to be achieved.

11 Case Studies of socially inclusive volunteering

11.1 Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health

'Volunteering is work – you are just not getting monetary payment. All the expectations of the staff member are adhered to. Volunteers can put it under their work history in their resume'.

Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health is a community managed mental health organisation operating across South West Victoria and Tasmania that assists people with a diagnosed mental illness in their recovery and rehabilitation. Aspire also supports carers. The organisation is involved in the Southwest Volunteer Network made up of approximately 15 organisations.

The people

Most people who volunteer with Aspire are, or were, participants or clients of other programs in the organisation. They range from 18 to over 60 years of age. The majority have experienced enduring, debilitating mental illness, including periods of hospitalization. Some people have not worked for 10-20 years. Most, although not all, are receiving the Disability Support Pension.

One of the first things people lose when become unwell is social connectedness. Once they are feeling well, they want to participate; they want to be doing something. Many want to give back and sometimes they don't know what that is.

When they are in the recovery phase, some will ask 'What can I do?'

The approach/model

When participants know they are ready, but don't know what is next, Aspire offers the Next Step course. As participants go through recovery they see volunteering as a way forward. They connect with volunteering opportunities within Aspire or in other organisations.

Participants come into contact with the volunteering program through their rehabilitation and recovery worker, or the pre-vocational program at Aspire.

Aspire uses its volunteering program in several ways – to remind people of skills they have, or to create new skills. Volunteering has been proven here and in many other settings to lead to employment. Volunteering gives an opportunity to find a fit between the person's interests and strengths and voluntary or paid work. The job a person did before he/she became unwell may not be possible now. The key is to find an organisation and a job role that fits the participant's needs. Targeting new areas and opportunities is also important.

Aspire staff meet with the participant and discuss with them whether they are volunteer ready, exploring questions, such as, 'how much does your medication affect you', 'do you feel you are better able to volunteer in the morning or afternoon?'

When they are volunteer ready, Aspire staff and the participant talk together about the participants interests, skills, ideas of what they'd like to do, and then look for a position that is available that could offer the right fit.

'We may need to look at flexibility of the role and provide assistance to access help to do the role. For example, one volunteer was fantastic and we wanted to keep him. However he was unable to participate in the day trips he had effectively signed on for. We organised for someone else to assist with the trips and rostered him on for other events, we also connected him with help to overcome his fear of travelling beyond his local area'.

The participants are involved in a range of voluntary work – from facilitating activities that enable participants of Aspire's programs to get to and from activities, involvement in the Community Support Service that assists people in Supported Residential Services, to participation on Aspire's Board of Governance. Aspire volunteers also work with Aspire's Health Promotion Program and talk in schools about their experience with mental health. For some it is a stepping stone into the workforce. Participants in the volunteering program can be linked with any other volunteer organisation, e.g. Lifeline, Coast Care ...the possibilities are endless.

Volunteers at Aspire have access to training and support and are offered feedback for growth and development. Support is provided for as long as it is needed. Whether a participant is involved in volunteering at Aspire, or another organisation, if the need for support arises, it continues to be available and provided by Aspire.

Aspire's volunteering program is resourced by a part-time 0.3 FTE Volunteer Program Coordinator.

The impact

People who take part in the volunteering program grow – we see their posture changing, they start giving suggestions about how things could be done, and they begin networking for themselves and they are open to participating on committees. Confidence grows as people find their purpose, feel part of society, appreciated and valued. Participants have gone on to study and to paid employment.

As a result of many ECT treatments, a woman in her 50s had forgotten she had worked in retail earlier in her life. She started her volunteering and developed the self confidence to go through the job network. With Aspire's support, she completed a pre vocational course and now has permanent part-time work working in a shop. This was a three year process.

In another situation, volunteering has offered a man who was fired from his job the opportunity to 'career shop' – to identify new career opportunities that suit his interests and needs now, without pressure.

Ingredients for success

Social acceptance of the participant in social settings, being accepted and feeling comfortable in new situations, e.g. a committee with peers, and destigmatising mental illness are ingredients for success. A key to volunteering as a pathway to social inclusion is to find an organisation and role that fits the participant's needs. Bringing communities members with you goes a long way toward that goal. Discuss the culture toward people with mental illness you want to create in and with the community.

In Aspire's view, the model it is developing could be adopted in other settings, with some adaptation to take into account local factors.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Tanya Taylor, Volunteer Coordinator and Project Officer Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health for providing material for this case study.

Pam's story

Pam is a volunteer of Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health. She is starting Certificate IV in Disability Studies in August 2011. She asked and has given Volunteering Australia permission to use her name.

Getting started

'I moved to Warrnambool 14 years ago from South Australia. I'd done a variety of work in the meat works, retail and hospitality.

I was a participant at Aspire and I was suffering with fairly severe depression. I wasn't sure how I would cope with some changes that were happening in my family life.

Well there were lots of opportunities for paid work but I had trouble sticking to those jobs. I was so down on myself. It was the same for community activities. I hadn't taken part in any since I came to Warrnambool. I was very involved in community activities before my marriage break up.

I thought that volunteering would give me that community involvement, getting out and meeting people. It gave me something to do and also gave me that sense of achievement, of being worthy'.

The volunteering work

'Tanya interviewed me and found out my interests. She said she might have something I was interested in. The CSS worker took me along to Themar Heights to see if I would help out with bingo.

It was very daunting walking in there, and I really thought I couldn't do it. But after going one morning, just to see the pleasure the residents got from an hour of bingo, it made me feel I was worthy, and seeing how much better off I was from others.

I didn't really have any training. Basically once I started bingo and people got to know me, they thought I was a natural at it.

I am still involved with the CSS. The CSS worker with Aspire is the one I help. We have just been on a three day camp to take five ladies on a holiday. Last year, we took a group of five men. I go as a carer. Some of the people need quite a bit of assistance. Others don't need so much assistance.

I'm on the Zest for Life Committee which involves organisations who support people with a range of needs including mental and physical disabilities. We run dances twice a year and activity days twice a year. I was in charge of the kitchen that made lunches for 150 people. It's a reasonably small committee doing all this work.

In Zest for Life we have basically every organisation you can think of from aged care facilities to Southern Way that deal with disabled or aged care. They all deal with different types of people – it has made me very aware of the needs of aged care people and physically disabled people.

I'm also on the panel for Disability Support Fund run through Barwon Health at Geelong – anyone with a disability can apply for assistance. I'm on the panel to decide grants.

I've made a big decision this week to go back to study to get a diploma or Cert IV in disability so I can do some paid work in the same area that I do my volunteering'.

Outcomes of volunteering

'Mainly confidence and self worth. Getting involved in social events communities, thinking about doing study, wanting to get some paid work. It makes you really stop and think that there are more people worse off than you are.

Probably three and a half years ago when I was put on the Disability Support Pension, I thought I wouldn't ever go back to work, or want to go back to work. The way I think about everything [has changed]. Before, everything worried and stressed me. I have a new way of dealing with everything'.

What made these outcomes possible

'They just treat me like one of their co-workers. You don't feel any different to them. It's hard to describe. As an equal, yes, definitely.

Basically, they have left it up to me to sort of volunteer in the fields I want to volunteer. It's a bit hard to describe. I don't volunteer for everything I'm asked to volunteer for. I was volunteering for a sewing group but I don't have time for that. There are no pressures. They know I love to do what I'm doing'.

Recommending volunteering to others

'I certainly would. I've mentioned to a few people about doing it. But they don't want to do it. It's a real shame. People don't realise what a difference they can really make. One friend of mine was going to become a volunteer because he had seen what I've done and how I have grown'.

Intentions about volunteering in future

'Not at this stage – there is more volunteering I could do with Aspire but I'm already too busy, especially if I go back to study'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Pam for sharing her experience for this case study.

11.2 A partnership created by Jesuit Social Services and NAB

'We probably achieve what we do because of the relationship with NAB and other organisations. Both of us could go away and create the same program, but it wouldn't have the same depth and soul as it does working it together. So in some ways the partnerships and resources make the difference. You work within the restrictions you've got and work with what you have. You have to be very creative'. Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services works to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

Volunteering at Jesuit Social Services supports the delivery of the organisation's programs in justice and crime prevention; settlement and community building; mental health support and wellbeing; and education, training and employment.

Volunteers mentor, tutor, attend to reception and administration, research and undertake other skilled activities. They also support community activities and have social interaction with clients at Jesuit Social Services who participate in volunteer-hosted activities.

The people

Corporate employee volunteers, professionals including from overseas, students, members from the community including employed, unemployed, retired and semi retired.

People volunteer for many reasons: having the time to give; solidarity with the mission and values of the organisation; meeting personal needs; wanting to help others and to give to the community; to feeling a sense of purpose. Many volunteers want to enter the workforce and build on their experience. A new trend is university students who need specific hours of community work to meet their study requirements.

The case study focuses on Jesuit Social Services' and NAB's corporate/community partnership.

The approach/model

NAB has 10 local community partnerships, including Jesuit Social Services. Based in Melbourne, community partnerships began 3 years ago through a specific business unit and have become centralized within the company.

The relationship between Jesuit Social Services and NAB brings the experience of the corporate and not-for-profit sectors together as a conduit for creating social inclusion, and works on a number of levels.

Jesuit Social Services and NAB's experience is leveraged through a range of programs:

The **African Inclusion Program** is a 6 month program provided in partnership with NAB. Members of the African community are offered a paid placement in NAB that provides an introduction and familiarization to the Australian corporate environment.

The program has been operating for about 3 years and is into its 6th round with 17 roles in the current round. Business units in NAB are invited to express interest in taking part in the program by offering a placement to a participant.

The program is highly regarded across the African community with about 150 community members attending the information sessions and 100-120 applications being submitted. It has helped to provide an opportunity for participants to launch their career and get past barriers. Much of the interest about the program is generated by word-of-mouth.

The **African Visitation and Mentoring Program** supports men in prison who are disconnected from their community and to provide a platform for reentering community.

Through a partnership with Jesuit Social Services, another not-for-profit organisation and NAB will be providing a 3 month **Mentoring Program for Young Mothers** aged in their teenage years to early 20s. This model is being used as a pilot to introduce young African women to employment opportunities beyond child care and aged care. African women whose English language competency ranges from very basic to good level are offered mentoring. The mentors are senior staff from NAB.

NAB funds and provides employee volunteers who contribute to social inclusion through their participation in **community activities** with clients of Jesuit Social Services. NAB covers all the associated costs of these activities.

Corporate employee volunteers host community activities and, through these, participate in conversations with clients at Jesuit Social Services. There have been school holiday excursions in partnership with the Community Development Program, special occasion lunches with the Brosnan Youth Centre involving young people who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system, a sports day involving 12-20 volunteers, and Abbotsford Biscuits involving 20 NAB volunteers and excursions with 70 African community members who live in high rise public housing, and a breakfast series to discuss issues such as social hardship.

The impact

These programs provided through the partnership help to address a range of barriers to social inclusion people face, particularly when they have not had previous experience working in Australian workplace. Participants improve their social inclusion by developing greater understanding of Australian workplace culture, for example: what is considered fair and what is not in the Australian culture, how we behave in the workplace, the role of networking, how recruitment processes work; and the importance of the resume in getting an interview. They gain practical experience of behavioural interview techniques and work experience that can be included in their resume.

Hosting and funding of activities by NAB and its employees enable community members to take part in community events and facilities they would not otherwise have the resources to access.

Connections to broader community are made, trust is formed, people feel supported, and a positive understanding of Australia develops through all of these programs. Through their partnership, Jesuit Social Services and NAB are starting to open pathways to social inclusion,

including successes in people finding work. Transition from receiving services and support to providing these to others is also being made possible.

The benefits are shared. From NAB's perspective, the community partnership with Jesuit Social Services 'Ignites the social consciousness of employees'. Employees gain insight into issues in the community, new cultural and religious perspectives, and the opportunity to use their skills to contribute to the community.

Ingredients for success

- Creating opportunities to talk and getting the right balance between the needs of different stakeholders.

For the clients and the community the key factor that helps to create the pathway to inclusion is access to resources. What is the community looking for?' For the employee volunteer, the focus is 'what is the person or group looking for, what are the options, what can be offered'.

- An organic, flexible approach that creates adaptability

Jesuit Social Services describes its approach to working with the community, volunteers and corporate partners and to developing the programs as 'organic'. It has an overall process which it changes and adapts with every community and corporate partner.

- Networking

Jesuit Social Service networks with key business units in NAB with which it has a relationship, and through NAB's Community Champion Network.

- People and relationships

NAB describes the approach of its employee volunteers' to their relationship with Jesuit Social Services clients as one of respect and trust and does not under-estimate the importance of corporate employees being genuine and authentic in their engagement with communities and not-for-profit organisations.

The success of the partnership and the outcomes depends on trust between the partners, an open mindedness in the community organisation about the company and the involvement of employee volunteers, and people driving the program, within the company and the organisation.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Monica Smyrek, Volunteer Coordinator, Jesuit Social Services and Francesca Hunter, Manager Community Partners, Local Community Partnerships, Corporate Responsibility for providing material for this case study.

11.3 Volunteer Task Force

'We treat all volunteers in the same way, regardless of where they have come from - JSA, Centrelink or their own initiative. We believe this is key to team spirit and a harmonious volunteer environment'.

'I think we are proactive. We go out there and actively promote volunteering across many target markets. We talk to seniors groups about healthy ageing, schools, church groups, motivational groups and try to include everyone. We strive to be fair and equitable'.

Volunteer Task Force (VTF) has been serving the Perth community since 1970. Our clients are frail aged people and younger people with a disability, and their carers.

Its aim is to help people with limited means – financial, social and physical – to live with safety, amenity and comfort in surroundings of their choosing. Our services support independence. Our focus is 'with a client', not 'for a client' or 'to a client'.

The people

Volunteering Task Force is a well established agency with a 40 year history. People find out about the volunteering program through the agency's networking. Areas and markets of potential new volunteers are actively targeted through networking and promotion activities. Referrals to the volunteering programs are made through mental health rehabilitation services and job agencies.

Volunteer Task Force has approximately 570 volunteers, with 110 volunteering weekly. The age range of participants varies from 13 years old school students to people in their mid 80s. Approximately half of the regular volunteers participate in volunteering as part of their income support requirements although this proportion fluctuates with the employment market. People who volunteer to fulfill income support participation requirements are in their 20's through to their 50's.

Every person's situation is different. Social interaction, being part of a team again, and giving meaning to their day are reasons most people participate in the volunteering program. Many people see it as way of getting to know their local community, including newly arrived immigrants who want to improve their English skills. Some people look to volunteering as an opportunity to rebuild their confidence after experiencing physical or mental illness.

The approach/model

The gardening service provided by Volunteer Task Force across the metropolitan area has the greatest volunteer involvement. Other areas include meals on wheels, social support, finance, the organisation's front desk and general administration.

Potential volunteers are invited to take part in an informal interview with a volunteer support officer to talk about what they want to achieve and the type of volunteering they are looking for. Following a police and reference check, volunteers are given a volunteer handbook, introduced to the buddy system if applicable, and a time to start their volunteering is arranged. On the job and formal training is organized followed by an introduction to the team the volunteer will be part of.

A feature of Volunteering Task Force model is the use of buddy systems and teams of volunteers working together to provide a specific service to the community.

The buddy system is used with volunteers who provide social support to clients. This approach enables the volunteer to learn their role before they go out on their own with a client. Volunteers involved in the gardening service go out with a team of volunteers and coordinators who provide supervision and guidance. Working in a team can often become a very solid and healthy network for people. The teams themselves are dynamic. Observing people's confidence growing is very noticeable.

Volunteering Task Force endeavours to make it as easy as possible to access volunteering – through ongoing development and support. The agency provides quarterly training for social support volunteers and regular events.

Volunteering Task Force partners with other organisations for example Volunteering WA, schools, corporations, and job agencies. It introduced the 2 for 20 and the Vehicle to volunteering program in partnership with VWA which enabled it to work with students in education support. Corporate employees volunteer in teams in Volunteering Tasks Force's gardening program.

The impact

Volunteering provides an opportunity for social interaction, to add more structure to the day, and to be reintroduced to the workforce, especially for people who are long term unemployed. The difference between someone taking part in a volunteer program, or not, is enormous for their resume, their own self worth, social interaction and ability to work as part of a team.

People who have participated in volunteering go on to apply for jobs and to get part time and full time work. Many volunteers have made the transition from receiving services and support from for government or community organisations to supporting others in the community by volunteering at Volunteer Task Force. Whilst volunteering is not the only factor leading to this outcome, it is considered part of a bigger picture and certainly does help people retain or gain better wellbeing, which can have a very positive effect.

Ingredients for success

Attitude and environment are major ingredients for success, particularly being open and honest, alongside, the ability to accommodate people's individual's interests, strengths and needs within a clear framework of policies and procedures. An inclusive wider community, recognition and reward provides the broader context for the success of social inclusion through volunteering.

'Volunteer Task Force believes the model it has developed can be adapted in other settings. Look at who you need to talk to, who is the target audience. Make partnerships and networks so that you are not coming in and reinventing the wheel. Make a difference, hand-in-hand with the community'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Kath Snell, Volunteer Task Force, for providing material for this case study.

Violet's story

'It was a very valuable stepping stone to paid employment... if people have been unemployed I'd say think about volunteering as a segue back to work'.

Violet (not her real name) volunteered through Volunteer Task Force. She is now in paid part-time employment.

Getting started

'My mother suggested I start doing some volunteer work as I had been unemployed for a long time due to a long-term mental illness. She worked for an organisation that had volunteering and suggested I volunteer.

I have a journalism degree and worked as a journalist and subeditor. I studied at law school for some time too.

I had been very unwell for a long time – about 3 years. It was very difficult to get any stability in work or study. At that time I had gone to TAFE and gained a Certificate III in Youth Work and was able to hold down some casual work in a café. It was very turbulent.

I thought volunteering would give me some routine, and give me the opportunity to meet people. I thought it would give me confidence, a chance to use my skills again, and to learn new skills.

I wanted to fill my days. I had a lot of time to myself and I wanted to be more productive with my time, and to give back to the community. I had received services as a consumer of mental health services. I knew I wasn't ready for paid work at that stage and wanted a bridge to give me skills and confidence. That was the main reason'.

The volunteering work

'It was like a buddy relationship I went a couple of times with someone else to the Step into Life who showed me the ropes. Then I did it by myself.

Basically we would have an instructor come in and run line dancing or yoga. A lot of the clients are seniors or people with a disability and I would mimic the moves one-on-one to the people who were having difficulty with the moves. Afterwards I would organise the coffee and tea and then I'd facilitate the chat and make sure everyone was included and participating.

So I got to learn these new things. And if there was anything I needed help with, all I need to do is call the support officers. I met them when I went in for my interview at the very start.

Volunteer Task Force also runs a lot of events, e.g. Christmas in July, end of summer BBQs morning and afternoon teas that I went to'.

Outcomes of volunteering

'Confidence to look for paid work again, definitely. Just a reminder that those skills are still there and that ability that I could lead people are still within me - the professional skills. Those skills still resided in me and I needed reminding.

I did start to feel more confident. Like at the weekly fun class that seniors would go to - line dancing or yoga. You would participate and have a cup of tea afterwards and I would help the instructor and be there on time. I felt people were relying on me and that felt good.

In this case, it had a big effect [i.e. being ready to look for work]. They knew me through being a volunteer and they knew about me and my disorder and knew I was reliable for them. They had that record...I think it counted really well in my favour. I think it showed I had that ethos they were looking for.

Now, I recruit and retain volunteers, and match volunteers with clients. I'm working part time, 2 days'.

What made these outcomes possible

'They were very welcoming and when I disclosed my condition they were totally accepting and there was no judging there.

Input was always valued you never felt like you could never say your opinion even though you were a volunteer.

I think it is also the kind of organisation that recognises that if the person has that tenacity and the drive, they will work with someone's strengths.

There were always opportunities for training as a volunteer - quarterly training, and a lot of social get-togethers. They are always looking after volunteers, and there are a lot of events to go to'.

Recommending volunteering to others

'Yeah, I really would. Especially the gardening program which is really great. They are a team program. They go out in the utes together with 2 coordinators and a team of 4 to a few houses each day. They are a team and they are outdoors. It's a really healthy environment'.

Intentions about volunteering in future

'Well I volunteer at my tennis club and at Mission Australia's Christmas in the Park. There are other events I'm sure will come up in future. I'll say yes. I'll get involved in that'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Violet for sharing her experience for this case study.

11.4 ACCES Services Inc.

ACCES Services Inc (Assisting, Collaborative, Community, Employment, Support Services Inc) is a community based, not-for-profit organisation based in Logan City. It is committed to fostering community development, settlement and employment initiatives and to providing personal support programs to address the needs of disadvantaged community groups including migrants, refugees, humanitarian entrants and temporary protection visa holders.

The City of Logan has a comparatively lower socio economic profile than for the Statistical Division of Brisbane. The unemployment rate is higher than the national average. Residents from refugee backgrounds who are settling in Brisbane represent a relatively recent trend in the demographic profile of the community.

The people

There are approximately 90 volunteers registered with ACCES Services Inc., evenly spread across each of the following age groups: 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years and 45 plus years.

About one third to a half of volunteers is former or current clients, i.e. Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) clients, or former and current Job Services Australia (JSA) clients. The majority of IHSS volunteers are unemployed. All JSA volunteers are unemployed.

Other volunteers include students or other community members in higher socio economic circumstances, e.g., high employment skills and proficiency in English.

The main barrier to social inclusion for most volunteers is paid employment. Gaining experience and proficiency in English, workplace skills and confidence are major motivators for 50% of volunteers.

Confidence to be in the community, and to work, is a particularly relevant for women who have experienced oppression in their country of origin. For people with non transferrable skills, those who have experienced trauma, and/or have little work experience, the ability to transition to paid work is limited.

The approach/model

'The most important thing I try to incorporate is that volunteers are treated as staff – in staff functions, or an important staff meeting. We make sure volunteers feel included.'

'I try to be as flexible as possible. Before I tell a volunteer we don't have a place for them we try a few things out. I don't think you can be anything but flexible.'

'Each department is involved in training and recognition of volunteers. It's not just my program. I have made it quite a permanent fixture.'

The Volunteering Program is staffed by a full time coordinator.

Participants come into contact with the volunteering program in a number of ways. One way is through other services at ACCES. JSA clients are referred through their employment coaches. HSS clients are referred through their case managers.

A major pathway to improved social inclusion for IHSS clients is the transition that is made from being a volunteer to a bilingual bicultural worker. Once volunteers acquire life and language skills in Australia, they can be offered work as bilingual and bicultural assistants. Depending on their ability to learn, many build up the skills to go into paid work.

With respect to JSA clients, the volunteering program at ACCES Services Inc. works in conjunction with employment coaches who request they do volunteering that coincides with their training e.g. child care, IT computer.

A 2 hour session on employment skills is offered to anyone in the volunteer program who needs it, regardless of whether they are an IHSS or JSA client.

Volunteers are placed internally. The Volunteer Coordinator works collaboratively with managers to identify each department's volunteer requirements. Where appropriate volunteer opportunities are not available within the organisation, external volunteering opportunities are sought through VQLD.

A prospective volunteer takes part in a registration appointment and induction. Once 1-2 areas of volunteer work are decided, ACCES Services Inc offers the volunteer a trial in a particular area, to enable them to determine whether it is what they want. It is common for most volunteers to try a couple of roles/locations before making a commitment. Once they have decided the area they want a roster is developed.

Volunteers are involved in the HUB – a language and life skills centre where they can work as teachers' assistants, or in child care. Helping Hand, an external not-for-profit service operated by volunteers is directly linked and funded through ACCES Services Inc and used for all Humanitarian Settlement Services. ACCES Inc.'s training office uses reception volunteers. Volunteering also work as support assistants who take people to TAFE assessments, or to doctors appointments, or to see real estate. The IHSS involve volunteers in data entry tasks.

Each department is fully encouraged to train their volunteers. Training is provided every 3-6 months. The line manager provides the day-to-day support. Volunteers are made aware that the volunteer coordinator is their HR contact and has an open door policy.

ACCES Services Inc. has considerable work involving IHSS clients with complex needs e.g. previous experience of trauma. The organisation ensures volunteers have support from staff such as debriefing. It also gives volunteers the choice not to undertake that work.

All volunteering, including IHSS and JSA clients are treated in the same way, including performance management.

ACCES Services Inc. is working toward becoming a Registered Training Organisations which will enable opportunities for transition to education.

VQLD plays an important supportive role in ACCES Services Inc. volunteering program, particularly facilitating the link with communities in Logan. The two organisations work collaboratively on good practice in volunteering, networks and referrals, and recognition of volunteers.

The impact

Approximately, 50% of clients who are refugees have made a transition from receiving services only to providing services to others, either during or after taking part in volunteering. Many people achieve this transition within a 12 month period.

The most significant outcome the volunteering program offers people is the opportunity to develop their workplace skills. It is estimated that approximately 10% of volunteers have found paid employment in the past 3 months.

An increase in self confidence is a very common outcome for all volunteers, whether they are students, JSA or IHSS clients. People have greater involvement with their community and realise they can take part in how their community runs. They start joining community groups and have a positive input.

There are definite positive boosts [in participants' readiness to look for paid employment]. For example, refugee clients develop confidence in working in the Australian work place. Some have an ability to pick up skills in a short time. Many are immediately ready to work.

Ingredients of success

'I think it is definitely the culture of being supportive. I really try to promote a culture of volunteer inclusion when we have morning teas the big thing volunteers say is that they are included in the organisation. That contributes to their self esteem'.

'I don't think there is a model that can be transferred yet. I think the flexibility is a big thing that other areas could learn from'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Sarah Jones, Settlement Support Coordinator, ACCES Services Inc. for providing material for this case study.

11.5 Ambulance Tasmania Queenstown

'We have a lot of towns where there is high unemployment. Local employers don't know people because they tend to come and go. Volunteering indicates a degree of commitment to the community and gives employers confidence to give people a try who otherwise have few skills or qualifications'.

Queenstown, Tasmania has a long history of mining.

The people

The age of volunteers ranges from young people to people in their 70s – men and women. The backgrounds, circumstances and lifestyles of the volunteers are diverse. There is a culture of acceptance and inclusion among the volunteers.

The motivations for volunteering are different for each volunteer. However, for many, volunteering is the first serious thing they have done. The program offers people the opportunity to gain skills, experience and a work history.

The approach/model

'Every volunteer is different. One style doesn't suit all. The person doing the recruitment and training has to be flexible. If you are going to be successful you need to be there with them [the volunteers] and you have to be very proactive. That volunteers can see you have their best interests at heart, and that wherever possible, you will support, guide, and allow them to grow in whatever way is possible'.

The role of Volunteer Ambulance Officers is to support the paramedics by preparing logistically and physically for people having medical and traumatic emergencies. These volunteers are required to be on call a shift a fortnight. Most do more – up to 4-5 days per week.

The service welcomes diversity and is committed to involving volunteers with a range of backgrounds and experiences and providing them with support and direction.

After the selection process, the coordinator sets the scene for what volunteers are going to do. The group is small and diverse and the volunteers are encouraged to support each other.

Group and one-on-one training in paramedic support is provided, e.g. such as safe platform driving, and knowledge of medical supplies. Ongoing coaching and development is offered.

Clear policies and working agreements are established and discussed with volunteers. The work has high degree of confidentiality. For example, there is an agreement that what happens at training remains confidential.

The ambulance service works closely with other emergency services, including joint training with SES volunteers, who are natural partners for the ambulance service.

The impact

Ambulance Tasmania Queenstown sees volunteering making a difference in people's lives.

All of those who were not working previously have made the transition to providing a service to others in the community when they became an ambulance support volunteer. Most of the current volunteers are employed. Approximately 5-7% moved into employment, either during or after volunteering. Volunteering has motivated some volunteers to take up study.

A mum with a large family used the hours she was volunteering to meet her participation requirements for Centrelink. She plans to go to university to become a paramedic.

A retired man came to Tasmania from the mainland after a difficult experience. He was isolated and didn't want to know about people. Now he laughs and says it just feels like a big family to him. During the Christmas parade... He said 'I never believed I would be part of something - that people would feel like this about us'. Now he can walk down the street and he knows people'.

Volunteering helps make these outcomes possible in a number of ways – it helps with socialisation, becoming part of a community, time management skills, and goal setting. Employers have confidence in employing people who have volunteered. They have new skills that are valued in the workplace.

Ingredients of success

The ingredients that make these outcomes possible include:

- understanding what motivates people, including their previous experiences, and taking an interest in what is going on in their lives—a prerequisite to meeting their needs as individuals
- having realistic goals and expectations
- a flexible, personal and democratic approach, particularly to training and support
- being a strong part of the local community
- a high level of support and a culture of volunteering in community.

The model could be adopted in other settings, especially with rural and regional communities that are isolated.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Ron Fossey, Ambulance Tasmania Queenstown for providing material for this case study.

11.6 Skilled Diversity Project (Centre for Volunteering NSW)

‘Throughout the last 2 years we came to realize the organisations themselves are a great untapped resource and which should be shared amongst all the organisations that participate in this project. That means we get additional skills knowledge and expertise.

So as part of the training we are using another paradigm that bridges networks. We are working in a proven collaborative enterprise environment and if necessary work together on each other’s projects. It is one of the keys to success’.

The Skilled Diversity Project links highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers and not-for-profit organisations for mutual benefit.

The Centre for Volunteering NSW’s 2008 research showed that of the organisations using culturally diverse volunteers, highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers represented only 2%. The same research also found 65% of highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers were performing tasks unrelated to their skills and capabilities. Yet, 64% of not-for-profit organisations said they would like to utilize the skills and capabilities of highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers.

The Skilled Diversity Project came into being from a commitment to improve the social inclusion of highly skilled culturally diverse people through volunteering in not-for-profit organisations.

The model/approach

Structured around 3 phases: continuing the research; using this knowledge to develop training and resources for organisations; and mentoring, the Skilled Diversity Project has two objectives:

- To get skills and resources into organisations, and
- To improve highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers opportunity to get paid employment.

Organisations can improve their resource capacity by recruiting people who have skills and capability.

The project provides a range of organisational support including, documentation, check lists, strategies, possible team structures and guidance for designing jobs for highly skilled people.

Culturally diverse volunteer are better placed to make the transition into paid employment.

Highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers face barriers to being competitive in the labour market. Most have high levels of technical skills. They have often worked in management and senior management and bring a range of capabilities that are not associated with their technical ability.

The main barriers to employment are not having a full cultural understanding of Australia, particularly of the Australian workplace. Volunteering in appropriate roles in not-for-profit organisations provides opportunities for learning - about the culture, and the idiom of workplace language. It gives people local work experience through which they can use existing skills and develop new skills.

Volunteer participants in the Skilled Diversity Project can undertake the Certificate Level 1 for active volunteering through the Centre for Volunteering NSW's, School for Volunteering Management. Completion of the certificate is evidence that the individual has been assessed as being workplace ready in the Australian workforce.

Through the Skilled Diversity Project, the Centre for Volunteering NSW mentors organisations about particular ideas, processes and paradigms that they can adopt, if they are not doing so already.

Organisations are selected to take part in the project who are willing to use new approaches presented to them, and that will treat the volunteers equitably and within an acceptable framework. All participating organisations are expected to comply with national volunteer standards, or another acceptable benchmark, and must have appropriate volunteer insurance.

The Centre for Volunteering NSW is working collaboratively with 40 of the 80 organisations it surveyed. Ten of the 40 organisations have taken part in training. Appropriate role design and placement of volunteers is part of the process of cultural diversity and is covered in the training. The focus of the first day of training is on decision makers in the organisations, and is followed by line managers on the second day. During the training sessions the Centre for Volunteering NSW brings together organisations that have different levels of skill and competence in relation to involving highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers and provides time for them to interact with and learn from one another.

Mentoring of organisations on a case by case basis is provided after training has been completed.

The aim of the Skilled Diversity Project is to give highly skilled culturally diverse volunteers the things they need to be competitive to get jobs. However, there is no guarantee that the individual will gain employment, either with the organisation in which they are volunteering, or another workplace.

The Centre for Volunteering NSW is not involved in any contractual arrangements between the organisation and the volunteer. The recruitment and management of the volunteer remains a matter between the organisation and the volunteer.

Ingredients for success

Involvement of decision makers

Cultural change and acceptance of the concept of inclusive practice requires having the person/people with leadership and authority in the organisation engaged and commitment to the aims and process of the project.

Promotion

Interest in the project has been enormous. Partner organisations have played a very important role in promoting the project across society. A wide range of organisations have approached the Centre for Volunteering NSW about the project.

Partners

A range of partners are involved in the project including people from the NSW State Government, and the community and corporate sectors. Local government participate on the steering committee, have promoted the project and been very active in helping the Centre for Volunteering NSWs make connections with other organisations.

Collaboration between participating organisations.

Collaboration is fundamental to success. Participating organisations recognise the ability to collaborate together is fundamental to working effectively and that their volunteers relate with each other and share their resources.

Providing resources and support for organisations to build their capacity

Giving organisations the resources and support they need to make change possible was built into the design stage of the project.

Through the project, the participating organisations are given free resources and support, e.g. mentoring. All these things come into various levels of requirements for success. If we want to see real inclusion, organisations have to be supported and they need money. Someone has to give it to them.

The Centre for Volunteering NSW is implementing the Skilled Diversity Project through volunteers, and with 10% funding of the project costs, contributed by the City of Sydney and the NSW Community Relations Commission.

Potential to adopt the model in other settings

To begin with, the geographic scope of the project is the Sydney LGA. After piloting in the Sydney LGA, the model could be implemented across the state. There is also potential to offer it on a national scale, if funding was secured.

The Centre for Volunteering notes that applying the model needs to be approached appropriately - recognizing who you are working with, and selecting a geographic area where there is a need, where there are the resources and that these are compatible. If there are other projects, aim to complement those.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Tony Frew, Research Development and Policy Manager, Centre for Volunteering NSW for providing material for this case study.

11.7 Australian National Maritime Museum

The Australian National Maritime Museum, on the western shore of Sydney's Darling Harbour houses exhibitions that:

- explore Australia's links with the sea
- consider how maritime activities and issues have shaped the lives of people in Australia⁶.

The people

Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to achieving the museum's mission. Key outcomes for volunteers are social inclusion, friendships, developing networks with like minded people and doing work that has a basis in their interest in maritime history.

The Australian National Maritime Museum ('the museum') currently has 1101 volunteers. The majority are between 50-70 years of age, with slightly more women than men. Recent years have seen an increase in participation in volunteering at the museum by women and younger people.

As well as a shared interest in maritime history, motivations for volunteering include gaining work experience that can be included in one's CV, and meeting the requirements of a secondary or university course, or Centrelink participation requirements. The latter represent a small proportion of volunteers.

The approach/model

Historically, connection with the museum's volunteering program has been through advertising and the Centre for Volunteering NSW. Recruitment directly through the museum's website and by word-of-mouth has grown in the last 2 years. The demand for volunteering has increased, with approximately 200 people currently on the museum's volunteer waiting list.

70-75% of volunteers are involved as tour guides. Other volunteers support full time staff in 20 different sections of the museum. Volunteers are involved in administration, records management, public affairs, marketing, audience, branch library registration, conservation, vessel maintenance, retailing, the members' lounge and office, and occasionally curatorial roles. The volunteers' department includes volunteers in administrative and clerical duties. Volunteers have taken up opportunities to participate in social activities outside the museum. The museum has an exclusive website for all its volunteers where notes, discussions and training can be posted by volunteers.

The museum's approach to social inclusion is consistent with Federal Government workplace diversity policies. Examples of specific features of the museum's approach to volunteering that support improved social inclusion include the Hardship Allowance that enables the museum to cover the costs of an unemployed person's volunteering 100% e.g. their travel. It also provides travel assistance for volunteers with a disability who have special transport needs.

⁶ <http://www.anmm.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1199>

Inclusion is also enabled by offering flexible volunteering that works around the person's availability and capacity. For example, as age reduces their ability to undertake certain tasks or to work a particular number of hours, many volunteers consider having to leave. The museum has responded to this barrier by introducing an Associate Volunteer Program for older volunteers that does not require the minimum hours of volunteering expected of other volunteers and offers the options of occasional volunteering.

The museum takes the volunteer's individual circumstances on a case by case basis to reduce barriers where possible. Offering this flexibility can enable volunteers to continue their involvement in the museum, within their capabilities.

The impact

Changes that emerge through volunteering include improved self confidence, personal satisfaction, networking, a willingness to take on additional tasks and personal satisfaction.

Like minded people have re-established social connections - through networking around hobbies and similar interests and networking to find past ship mates. Some people have been through the navy. They have connected with people haven't seen for 30 years through the volunteering community.

Other job opportunities may come to light within the museum or externally. For example, one volunteer has moved to full time employment. Approximately, 5-8 have gained paid employment as casual teacher guides, and two have been employed on a part time basis to relieve office staff.

Ingredients for success

Ingredients for success include flexibility, relationships, networks, gradual change management, consistency, respect, loyalty and confidence.

The Volunteers Coordinator considers the National Maritime Museum's model of volunteering could be adapted in its entirety in other locations.

The museum is also thinking creatively about other possible ways to reduce barriers to participation in volunteering.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Peter Wood, Volunteers Coordinator, Australian Maritime Museum for providing material for this case study.

Esme's story

'Volunteering breeds equality (and I love it)'

Esme (not her real name) is a volunteer of the Australian National Maritime Museum.

Getting started

I'm 75 years of age, Australian, born here in Sydney. I worked in various jobs as a milliner, dress maker and in the peace time air force. I married, raised a family and worked as a shop assistant and department head. I was a finance controller for many years before I retired.

It was my doctor who suggested it when I retired from work 17 years. He said to me 'what are you going to do now'? We discussed all sorts of things... maybe going back to school, but I couldn't see any ready reason to. I didn't want to do that.

I wanted to use my brain. When I gave up work I did nothing at all for 6 months. My brain decided it retired. I virtually lost thinking power. And just to enlarge on that, I was speaking to a friend of mine and he had the same experience. When people retire, the brain just shuts down and you have to retrain.

I had no real opportunities [for social participation] at all. I think because the people I had worked with were younger than me, any community involvement there was, I wasn't interested. I wanted to make a difference. I didn't get involved with any community groups other than going to church. I was a guide leader earlier in my life, years before retirement.

One day, I picked up a little notice in paper that said 'Would you like to meet people?' When I rang, it was the Australian National Maritime Museum, which I'd never heard of'. When I found out where it was I decided 'I should go in and have a look at the place. I realised that it is about Australian history, and I love Australian history. I thought 'I can do this'. I liked what I saw. My son in law said 'you realize what maritime means? They have got boats out there. I said 'I wouldn't have to do that'. But once I was on board the Vampire. I just melted.

The volunteering work

I was interviewed like a proper job and [asked] questions that I didn't understand because job interviews are different to way back when I was employed. I had so much support from our coordinator. He gave me as much help as possible.

Our curators train us in the various aspects of the museum. We had classes about guiding, customer service, looking after children, how to interact with people and the correct way to present things. We learnt a lot of things on preparing for the job of guiding so that you could be confident the end result would be what they wanted for the museum.

We've had training on each gallery. All training is updated every 3 years. There are miles of manuals. We have an exclusive website for our volunteers. Training is ongoing and given by expert people.

I had a lot of illness last year and have gone on light duties. I go into the office and work on the mail outs or kits for new volunteers for 500 volunteers around Australia. If there are any special functions like the Scotts Antarctic... I do the tours with other guides. I also volunteer at the ABC.

Outcomes of volunteering

I would say self confidence. I'm on a speakers' panel. I had done public speaking with the girl guides in the past. I used to be a very shy, withdrawn person. For me, to having to stand up and talk in front of 10 plus young girls was very difficult. With the museum I've been able to hone that skill better. Now I don't have difficult standing up in an auditorium of people.

I feel I've contributed a lot. I feel quite proud of what I've done. The greatest feeling is to tell people something they never knew – to be able to impart information. You see the look on their face that says 'I never knew that'. It's a terrific feeling for yourself and for the museum. That we are able to give so much knowledge and information.

We did a lot of historical things in the Girl Guides. I liked that the museum volunteering was opening up that door again, and I could learn and tell people about the city.

I've met a lot of fabulous people, and the knowledge... You never stop wanting to learn. This is why I feel everybody somewhere along the way should do something like this. I do mentoring as well. They are astounded. I knew nothing [before]. It's amazing what you can learn.

I have met new people. On the last Wednesday of the month we meet at the local hotel – there can be 6 to 20 to 30 people. And we just hash over the day. There is a whole lot of interaction and we all benefit and look forward to that day.

What made these outcomes possible

The Volunteers Coordinator was very friendly. He treated me as his equal. Last year when I was in hospital when I went back in I had various goals. One was to get back into the museum. I said 'I can't do everything you want me to'. The Volunteers Coordinator took me off various areas and made allowances for me and is still doing that for me. He offered me admin work too. They are very, very accommodating. If you are open with them, they are like that back to you.

Recommending volunteering to others

Definitely. My word. I think for anyone who is retired, they should get involved and there are so many areas. There are so many avenues. They couldn't use the excuse 'I couldn't do that'.

Intentions about volunteering in future

Definitely, for as long as I can get up in the morning have a shower and get dressed. When I was so ill, I thought I might have to give it all away. I set myself the goal of getting back to it.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Esme for sharing her experience in this case study.

11.8 Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB)

The Bureau is a community-based organisation, established in 1971, which exists to provide practical services for people in the City of Greater Dandenong. It is situated in Springvale, a culturally and linguistically diverse community of Melbourne. The Bureau offers a 'front door' to anyone in the community seeking information or assistance through a daily drop-in session as well as specific-purpose appointments.

It believes that everyone has the right to adequate information about their rights, access to the services they need, assistance in times of hardship and representation on their behalf if needed. It seeks to both ensure these are available and work towards a stronger, fairer community.

The people

Volunteers have a broad range of backgrounds and are aged from 20-75 years. Cultural backgrounds represented by volunteers include: Sudanese, Indian, Sri Lankan, Phillipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Macedonian, English, Australian, Afghan, Bangladesh, Mauritian, Cambodian, French, Scottish, Polish, New Zealand and Iran.

80% of volunteers have higher education qualifications, degrees and diplomas. One quarter is male. The majority are local. However approximately 10 travel up to 30 kilometres from Endeavour Hills, St Kilda and the city to participate in the program. They come by word of mouth. Some volunteers have been out of the workforce for many years whilst raising families. Most volunteers have part time work, are studying, or receive a pension. A small number are self funded retirees.

Most volunteers want to gain work experience and there are also a number who have commenced studying after volunteering. The main barriers to paid work community members have faced before taking part in the volunteering program at SCAAB are:

- lack of confidence and self esteem
- language barriers
- being newly arrived to Australia and experiencing a different workplace environment e.g. some newly arrived residents did not have electricity in their country of origin
- lack of work experience in the Australian workplace, or a long absence from employment, for example due to absence from the workforce for many years while they raised a family.

The approach/model

The volunteering program offers opportunity to increase confidence, self esteem and skills through volunteers involvement in the administration and delivery of emergency relief. Volunteering in this way also offers develops knowledge and an understanding about social issues in the local community.

The volunteering program at SCAAB liaises with other programs within the agency, including Job Services Australia and Youth Links (for 15-24 years), and other volunteer agencies in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. Some referrals come through the Adult Multicultural Education Service (AMES) and Monash Volunteer Resource Centre and TAFE. The approach to developing the relationship with volunteers is collaborative and supportive.

The relationship building starts at the selection interview focusing on the volunteers' strengths and interests. Selection interviews and induction are conducted in groups. New volunteers are 'buddied' with more experienced volunteers. The interaction between volunteers on a daily basis is very inclusive. Financial support for training is provided if hardship is an issue.

The majority of volunteers work in IRASS, interviewing clients and assessing their needs. This also involves developing client files, writing case notes, statistical entry, filing, contacting utility companies and advocating on behalf of clients of the emergency relief program.

Three volunteers also manage reception, phone inquiries and being the initial contact point for clients visiting the agency. Volunteers also provide administrative services, e.g. photocopying, filing, maintaining brochures etc, act as community guides in the settlement program, and assist people to learn to use public transport. Volunteers occasionally undertake specific projects.

Training is provided in interview techniques, case note writing, data collection. Support, supervision, debriefing are provided. Ongoing training is provided quarterly on specific issues, e.g. housing, mental health. Volunteers are also invited to attend staff development and training. CIVIC training for those who do not currently hold welfare qualifications is also available. Support is provided as long as the volunteers are involved with SCAAB.

The volunteering program is resourced and supported by having a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator position who works 3 days per week, rotating days over 2 weeks. Additional support is provided by the Intake and Duty workers.

The impact

Approximately 50% of volunteers have obtained employment from October 2010 to June 2011. A number of students on placement with the agency have become volunteers.

These outcomes are made possible by providing an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in a well respected service. Working alongside paid workers increases understanding about the workplace and provides experience and greater knowledge of community issues such as homelessness and poverty. The volunteer's own skills such as the ability to advocate on behalf of others are recognised, relied on, and expanded. Increased social inclusion for individuals and communities is also enabled by people developing relationship with and deepening their understanding about people from other cultures.

Ingredients for success

The culture of the agency is an important ingredient for success, particularly values and behaviours of inclusiveness, respect, and a sense of fun! The organisation's flexibility and ability to accommodate individual skills and needs, and its commitment to intensive training and support are also key factors. Finally, the program is supported by funding and resources provided by both the Commonwealth Government and the agency.

The transferability of the model has been demonstrated. It has been adopted in Emergency Relief programs across Australia.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Pam Mansfield, Volunteer Coordinator, SCAAB, for providing material for this case study.

Sita's story

'I would like to ask everybody to work as a volunteer in some stage in their life to help people and to understand peoples' need'.

Sita is a volunteer of the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB) and works as a freelance interpreter. Sita gave permission for Volunteering Australia to use her name.

Getting started

'I came to Australia from Sri Lanka in May 2009. I had studied in Australia during 1996-1998 and have my diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology. Previously, I was teaching medical students in a Sri Lankan Medical college.

I applied for a lot of jobs. I wasn't successful in getting an interview or a job. I was not involved in the community at that time.

I started as a volunteer in 2009. I was looking to apply for some jobs and I thought if I could get some experience in Australia, I could get a job. I always enjoy helping people, especially newly arrived migrants. At the same time as I started volunteering, I got a job as a freelance interpreter'.

The volunteering work

'I came into contact with the volunteering program at SCAAB when I came here to get free legal help. I When I was waiting for my appointment, I saw a notice about becoming a volunteer. I contacted the volunteer coordinator and she arranged an interview.

She asked me about my interests and experience. Before I started volunteering, I was shown the site plan so that I was familiar with everything in the organisation and I was introduced to every staff member in the organisation.

I have always been offered training but never taken it up as I was busy with my interpreting job. I have learnt on the job. My [previous] experience of working in the university with the students helped me a lot.

I am interviewing the clients, giving food vouchers, negotiating with banks and utility companies [on behalf of clients] for extensions to payments, and making arrangements for payment plans. I refer clients to other community centres. Last year, I was offered to work in the school relief program. I accepted, and through this program I provided help to 135 students in 65 families'.

Outcomes of volunteering

'This [social connection] happened when I went a couple of times to the information session for newly arrived migrants.

Volunteering has given me an understanding about how systems are working in Australia, and community problems. It has given me everything. Communication skills, my own happiness, and job satisfaction.

I think I have very good interpersonal skills. I represent the agency very well, what it can offer and what limitations we have in helping people. I think I have improved my interviewing and communication skills especially with people in multicultural backgrounds.

I contributed a lot of my skills to this. I didn't have any intention to work in community services before'.

'I am already working as a freelance interpreter. The volunteering I am doing now might help me find [another] job in the future. I feel like I can do a job in community services and continue with freelance interpreting.

Supporting other people is the main thing I am doing here [through my volunteering] and in my freelance job as an interpreter as well.

The best example of what the volunteering gives me is that I am always here at work. All days when I am not having assignments as an interpreter'.

What made these outcomes possible

'We work as a team. The team is very friendly. They are always taking care of us. It makes us very comfortable.

Before we start working with clients volunteers, they let us observe other experienced volunteers working with clients. Sometimes our work with clients can be difficult. On those occasions, you need some counselling [to talk about your work]. There is always a duty worker available for volunteers to debrief [if they need to]'.
'

Recommending volunteering to others

'Certainly, I would'.

Intentions about volunteering in future

'I am already volunteering 3-4 days during the week, for at least 6-12 hours per week'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Sita for sharing her experience in this case study.

11.9 Brotherhood of St Laurence

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (the Brotherhood) works not just to alleviate poverty but to prevent it. It focuses on assisting people who are at risk during the four critical stages (transitions) in their lives:

- children and families in the early years, both at home and in school
- young people in the years through school to work and further education
- adults seeking employment and training
- older people facing the challenges of retirement and ageing.

Within this framework, the organisation also pays particular attention to issues relating to refugees and settlement, as well as the financial inclusion of vulnerable members of the community.

Two case studies are presented.

Megan's story

Megan is a former volunteer of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and is currently employed full time.

Megan has given Volunteering Australia permission to use her name.

'I was going through a dramatic career change and needing to gather experience. I feel lucky to have been directed to the Ecumenical Migration Centre (EMC). I was doing Certificate III in Community Service, but felt lost and not sure of the next step.

I thought volunteering could offer me new experience and learning [I was looking to make a career change]'

The volunteering work

'Initially, I volunteered as the receptionist. I went on to coordinate a program supporting refugees at the EMC.

Being on reception involved me answering phones and learning about the internal services/ programs and building my knowledge in local resources, so I could be able to guide customers to appropriate services.

The program developed my administrative skills, as I was co-ordinating an education plan to support people with English as a second language understand and interpret the Learner's handbook. This role also led to supporting people through doing the Vicroads online assessment, and giving individual support as each person sat their test.

I worked quite closely with the Operations Manager at the EMC and had regular support, in both my roles. A lot of my learning was through observation'

Outcomes of volunteering

'On-the-job experience, networking skills, developing front of house skills, and really appreciating processes. The EMC gave me 80 hours of work experience to contribute to my certificate. It gave me the opportunity to do more complex voluntary work'

'Through the volunteering, I felt a level of personal and professional acceptance. I had become one of the team. It was good for my self-esteem. I had really enjoyed the work and received a sense of satisfaction from it. I had developed admin skills, worked with people that had suffered the refugee experience, communicated effectively. All of this gave me a new sense of hope.

I worked with people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This was a great learning experience on so many different levels.

The RACV, Vicroads, and The Fitzroy Learning network were partners in the program. It increased my confidence as I developed relationships within these organisations/businesses.

The satisfaction and knowledge I have gathered from this volunteering experience is giving real drive and motivation in my current career'

'The volunteering helped me choose which sector of community service I would like to continue to work in. Being involved in the program had given me quite a few personal challenges. An example being - I had had a fear of public speaking. In my volunteering role, I found myself in a room full of people doing PowerPoint presentations. Also I had never been in a situation where I'd even had to create a PowerPoint, let alone deliver it to a group that had English as a second language. It was challenging but really rewarding.

It definitely made an impact being able to support others. You have to be supported to support others'.

What made these outcomes possible

'The fact that I could be given a task and if I felt like I was able, I was trusted to carry it out. I was encouraged to ask questions and think about my needs. These were really important factors in my volunteering roles and it was these factors that enabled me to develop confidence in my abilities.

I was considered one of their team. The people at the EMC believed in supporting and listening to their volunteers. They are really supporting people in the community to develop skills. I was shown appreciation and received constructive feedback and advice in relation to my work with them. I was very appreciative to the staff for their support, as it's not always easy in a busy environment'.

After volunteering....

'I would definitely recommend volunteering to everyone. It is great for learning, sharing your skills or supporting others.

It seems organisations that are looking for volunteers now are after people with experience. Many people need volunteering to gain experience, as I did'.

Getting involved in other volunteering activities in future

'It has crossed my mind. It's very easy to volunteer your time in community services. It's hard not to when you believe in social justice'.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Megan for sharing her experience in this case study.

The Centre for Work and Learning, Yarra

The people

The Centre for Work and Learning, Yarra (CWLY) is an innovative employment and training community hub run by the Brotherhood in the inner Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy. At the CWLY, there are two main activities in which volunteers are involved – reception and Job Club. Volunteers assisting at the CWLY range in age from 19 years upward. A number are completing Certificates III in business and administration, others are studying at university, and one holds a Master's degree.

The approach/model

At reception, volunteers are involved in administration support, while in the Job Club they support members of the CWLY with job search. This involves assisting people in applying for jobs and writing resumes.

Volunteer activity on-site is managed by a volunteer coordinator. Two further activity supervisors oversee the specific work of volunteers in either reception or Job Club.

There is a trial period of one month for all new volunteers. This gives the volunteer and volunteer supervisor a chance to discuss and deal with any difficulties faced. The Volunteer Coordinator is available to discuss volunteer progress during this time and ensures the volunteers feels they have a voice and can be supported in their role.

The impact

Volunteers grow in confidence and develop skills in working with different client groups. A number of the CWLY volunteers have gone on to secure work with the Brotherhood and elsewhere.

Most people who volunteer at the Brotherhood do so because of their interest in humanitarian issues. For these volunteers, the program gives the participants practical experience to complement their education.

Ingredients of success

Having volunteers assisting in the CWLY's programs and activities primarily develops volunteer skills in communication and administration. Both of the volunteer functions involve working closely with the general public and with Brotherhood staff. Generally these roles also involve making connections with external services, so the opportunities for social and professional connectedness are quite broad.

11.10 Prahran Mission

Established in 1946 Prahran Mission, an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, provides emergency relief services to those experiencing poverty, homelessness and economic disadvantage as well as rehabilitation services to those experiencing mental illness and psychiatric disability. We believe that everyone deserves a decent life'.⁷

Frederick's story

Frederick (not his real name) is a volunteer at Prahran Mission

Getting started

I was at my job agent at Prahran Mission. I was looking at different industries and decided on the industry and traineeships offered. I needed experience before I applied for the traineeship. They told me they took volunteers at (name of program/centre deleted)⁸. I put my name in.

I wanted the experience generally and to see if I could get a paid job with Prahran Mission, and also to put something back into the community.

[In the past], I had finished year 11. I had a job in special employment program doing process work. I wasn't working. I wasn't involved in community activities.

I thought the volunteering would give me social stimulation, general experience, help applying for the traineeship and paid employment.

My job agency person is also at Prahran Mission and he spoke to the manager of the (program/centre) about me and what I wanted to do. The manager told me to come down when I wanted to. I filled out some forms and I had to do a police check.

Outcomes of volunteering

I enjoyed working there. I've met some really nice people. I've got a bit of experience under my belt. I've potentially got an increased chance of getting paid employment. They give voluntary employees first pick when they hire staff.

We had a change of manager in the time I've been there and the new manager is really quick. I can work at the different paces.

Being ready to look for work

Yes definitely. When I went into it I didn't think about it a lot - about how I would go about it. But I hadn't done it yet. I guess I was at the start of it, I was feeling my way a bit. Now I feel comfortable as far as working at a pace. I don't think I would have any difficulty.

My skills in working with the public have increased. I've got increased social skills and can use equipment I hadn't used before, but can use now to certain level. I provide a service to people.

⁷ http://www.prahranmission.org.au/about_us.html

⁸ Name of program/centre deleted to protect anonymity.

What made these outcomes possible

They gave me a chance to learn and they were friendly, patient understanding. They were easy to work with, professional, patient and understanding. They asked me if I needed to have breaks on my shifts. I took the opportunity to do that, so that was a provision they made.

I think if I put in a bit of work with them then they will provide me with the opportunities they have.

My employment agent looks for work for me or might come to a job interview and arrange someone to visit me on site. He may also negotiate or liaise with my employers. My job agent knew the manager where I volunteer at Prahran Mission and he recommended me, so I think that definitely would have made a difference.

Getting involved in other volunteering activities in future

Yeah, maybe. Especially if I wanted to change industries. It's hard to volunteer all the time, but if you can it's a winner.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Frederick for sharing his experience in this case study.

11.11 Assisting ex-offenders to improve their social inclusion (Volunteering SA & NT)

Over the past year Volunteering SA & NT has been developing a program that will work in partnership with the volunteer sector to assist ex-offenders to participate in volunteering activities. Volunteering can provide the opportunity to learn new skills, improve one's sense of self-worth and feel a part of the community. The benefits that volunteering can provide could be instrumental in reducing the high rate of recidivism whilst providing the volunteer sector with potential volunteers who have a lot to offer. This program is still in the pilot phase.

The volunteers

A relatively small number of people currently incarcerated have expressed an interest in the program. Most of these potential volunteers are males aged between 19 and 35 years and will be placed when they exit the custodial system.

Their main motivation for volunteering is to give back to the community, to gain experience that will help get paid employment, to use spare time meaningfully and to demonstrate that they are ready and willing to be active positive citizens.

All of these potential volunteers have spent time incarcerated in either prison or remand and anticipate having difficulty being accepted back into the community as volunteers or employees due to their criminal history.

Volunteering SA & NT's experience with other ex-offenders over the past 5 years shows that people who find themselves in the prison system generally have low levels of education prior to being a part of the correctional system however they have often been involved in the workforce in some way.

Seventeen organisations have expressed willingness to take on ex-offender volunteer placements supported by Volunteering SA & NT.

Inter-organisational collaboration

This program is running in collaboration with Volunteering SA & NT members who are volunteering involving organisations in the local government and not-for-profit sectors. Volunteering SA & NT has also received support and advice from other organisations with experience working with ex-offenders.

Volunteer Edinburgh has shared information about its experience of running a similar program. In Australia, consultation and advice has been provided by OARS Community Transitions and the Department of Corrections has given in-principal support for the program and provided Volunteering SA & NT staff with professional visit access to potential volunteers. The support Volunteering SA & NT has received from these organisations has been invaluable in the establishment phase but no partnering arrangements have been established.

Program staff continue to liaise with relevant agencies and regularly update stakeholders.

The approach/model

The ex-offender volunteer program aims to provide ex-offenders the opportunity to volunteer in community organisations with the added opportunity of support and mentoring if needed.

It is expected the opportunity to volunteer will provide ex-offenders with a positive connection to the community that may be different to their experience up to this point. Volunteering will also provide the development of skills and a pathway to paid employment.

The participants who have expressed interest in the program so far have come to know about it through word of mouth and through the Adelaide Remand Centre Chaplaincy service. A marketing strategy is currently being developed and the program will initially be promoted through parole services.

Participation in the program is through a four-phase process:

Phase One: Scoping

- Preliminary consultation between ex-offender volunteer placement program staff and client to ascertain client needs and specific circumstances.
- Secondary consultation with placement consultant to obtain three volunteering opportunities.
- Review by client of placement options.

Phase Two: Placement Arrangement

- Client contacts organisation to arrange interview.
- Client is assisted with preparation for interview process by ex-offender volunteer placement program staff during which time a placement plan is agreed. The plan will include agreement on the level of mentoring and monitoring needed to support the placement and a program exit date.
- Client attends interview.
- If successful, client arranges commencement. If unsuccessful, ex-offender volunteer placement program staff and client review process and proceed with other options from the three original referrals or return to Phase 1 and/or 2.

Phase Three: Placement

- Client commences volunteering role.
- Mentoring and monitoring proceed according to agreed placement plan.

Phase Four: Evaluation

- Program staff implement a review process with client and organisation.
- Client exits program or placement plan is extended.

Looking to the future

Volunteering SA & NT expects the findings and experiences gained from implementing this pilot program will assist in developing more inclusive guidelines for involving volunteers. It expects to distribute these guidelines and the results of the program to other volunteering peak bodies in other states and overseas.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Matthew Todd, Policy Officer, Volunteering SA & NT for providing material for this case study.

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