



A1 & A2: Informal Volunteering Symposium



Australian
National
University

Informal Volunteering Symposium

13 Feb 2023

National Volunteering Conference
13-14 Feb 2023, ANU Canberra



Workshop overview

- International perspective on informal volunteering (MOVE, UK)
- Doing informal volunteering

Morning Tea

- Making sense of informal volunteering (research findings)
- Interactive discussion
- Next steps

MoVE in the UK

Mobilising Volunteers Effectively Project



Dr Harriet Thiery



Professor Joanne Cook

and Dr Jon Burchell



Doing informal volunteering

1. Peter Davis (*Bloodbikes Australia*)

“Pure Volunteering, A new model.
The Bloodbikes Australia story”

2. Heba Al Adawy (*Volunteering Australia and ANU*)

“Informal Volunteering in Faith-Based
and Cultural Sites (The Story Project)”



What is informal volunteering?

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in their General Social Survey informal volunteering is:

“the provision of unpaid work/support to non-household members, excluding that provided only to family members living outside the household” (ABS, 2019).

But is it *really* that simple?

Opening the box of informal volunteering (IV)

Diverse ideas about IV, and its implications for the sector and for public policy

Mode of
collective action

Degree of
informality

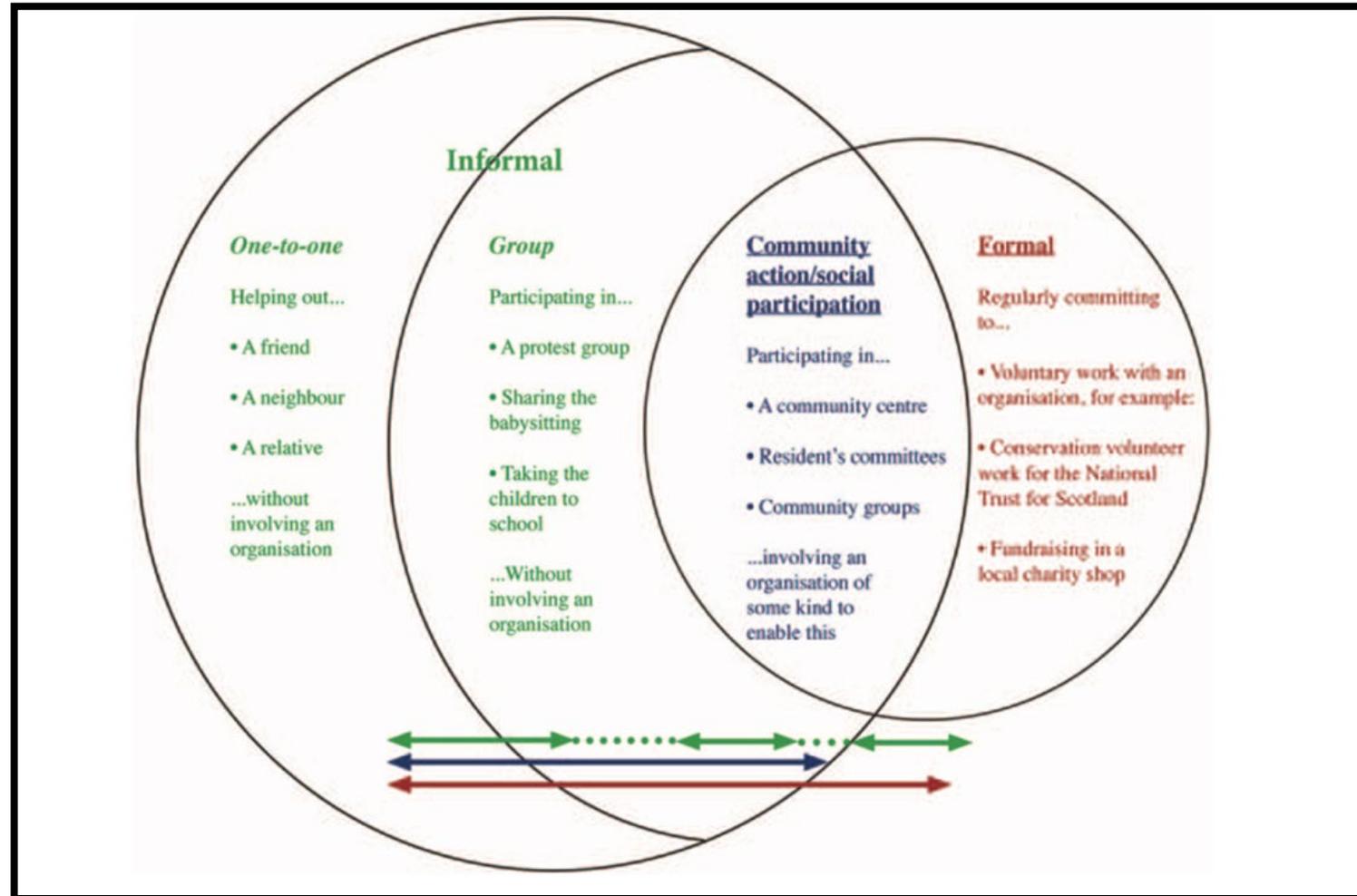


scale and size

Value

Axis 1: Mode of civic and collective action

- Vast range of activities make up informal volunteering (IV)
- IV unsettles conventional boundaries, e.g.:
 - volunteering as ‘apolitical’ ?
 - volunteering as distinct from activism, advocacy, problem solving?



‘Spectrum’ of participation’ (Woolvin & Hardhill 2013)

Axis 2: Degree of informality



Conventionally informal volunteering = 'un-mediated' by organisations – is this always the case?

Defined by their episodic, ad hoc, and spontaneous character. e.g. C19 mutual aid groups, grassroots emergency responses and recovery

Informal ≠ unstructured, unorganised

Informal volunteering be both formal and non-formal at different times

Axis 3: Scale of action



Name of artwork: Caring for kin

Artist: Bev Garces

Source <https://www.caringathomeproject.com.au/tabid/7152/Default.aspx>

Informal volunteering conventionally located outside of the household.

BUT is the distinction clear between:

- volunteering and caring?
- inside and outside the household?

What are the Indigenous and non-Western implications of these distinctions?

- e.g. informal volunteering can also be caring for kin.

Axis 4: Value

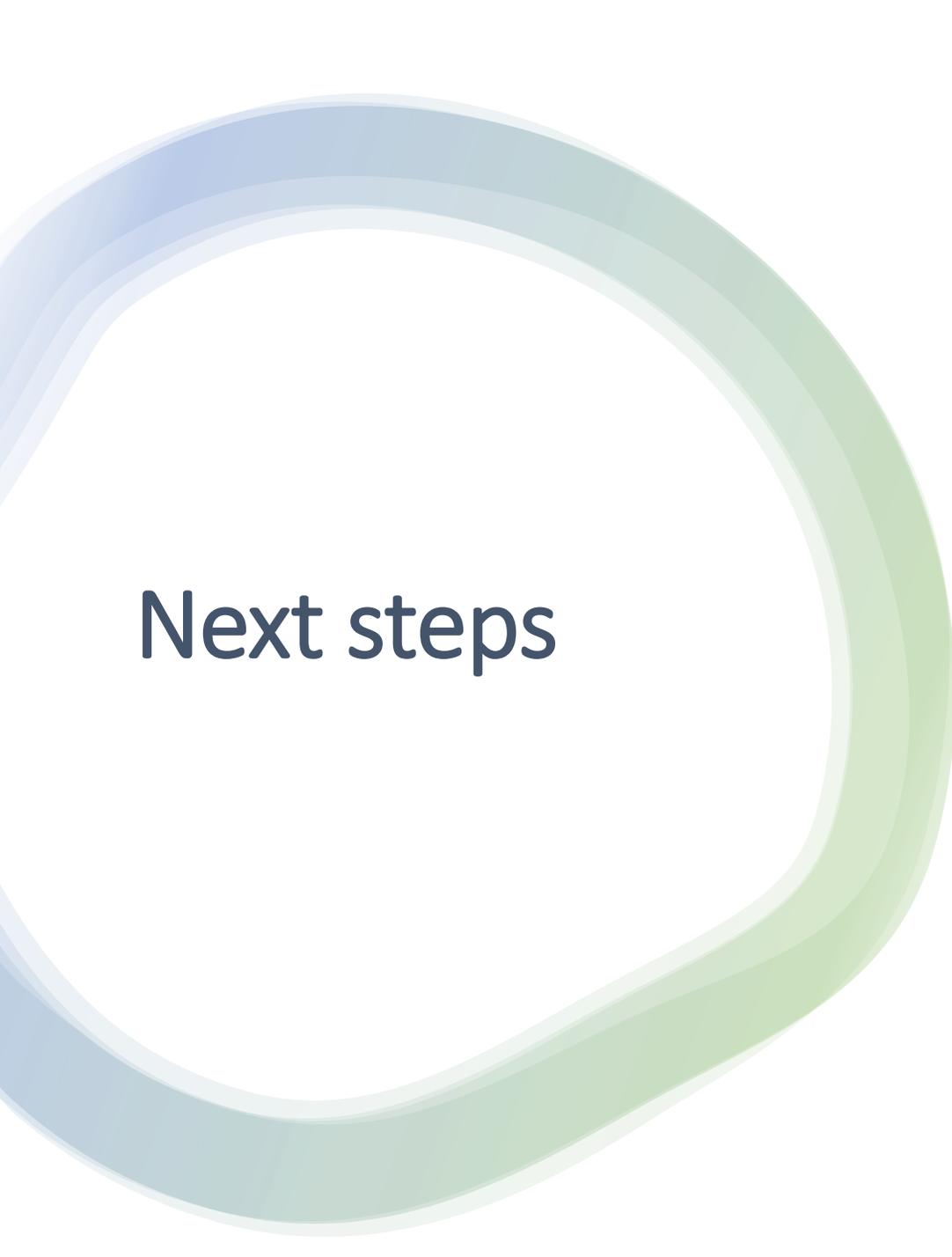
Informal volunteering is linked to the idea of being 'unpaid', but valuation ranges from characterizations of 'altruistic care' to 'unpaid work or labour' and finally, exploitation through off-loading





Implications for the volunteering sector and public policy?

1. How does informal volunteering reshape how we support and represent volunteers?
2. What are the big policy challenges facing informal volunteering?



Next steps

- Discussion Paper finalized end of March 2023
- In the meantime, please send up any further thoughts, questions, suggestions and resources you may have to:
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