

For a greater tomorrow

A critique of the government's role in volunteering

**A dissertation submission for a Masters of Business Administration
(MBA)**

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ABSTRACT

Over the last 20 years Governments have recognised the critical contribution volunteering makes to building a strong and cohesive society. It has promoted volunteering as an essential act of citizenship, a means of combating social exclusion and an important contributor to high quality delivery of public services. This has been achieved through a fervent passion and belief that it works and makes a difference rather than the evidence of tangible and measured outcomes.

The role of government in its widest context in volunteering may fail to appreciate its positive impact and this dissertation will assess the relationship in the context of economic and social development and policy making. Despite the efforts of government, perceptions amongst volunteers suggest motivation and opportunity are developed outwith a coherence of Government inspired initiatives.

This dissertation commits to research on historical and contemporary volunteer developments ranging from the divergent ideologies of mainstream political parties through to the more current debate around volunteering, the Third Sector and concordat arrangements between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities.

A strong feature elicited from the research is of importance to the development of volunteering in a 21st Century context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation required the support of a number of people to whom I am sincerely grateful. To my family, especially my children who presented a sobering thought on the challenges of meeting the demands of the MBA over the last two years -'Daddy I wish the books you read were smaller'.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are appropriate to the approaches used and information and evidence deriving from this research study.

Recommendation 1: Government

As Government policy is integral to the development of volunteering, consideration should be given on how Government uses its position to affect legislative change which help remove barriers to volunteering. In addition, this requires a more concentrated appreciation of how volunteering is evolving in the 21st Century and is embedded in all sectors and policy planning accordingly.

Recommendation 2: Infrastructure

An appraisal of infrastructure arrangements is conducted with key partners including Government, Volunteer Centres and Volunteers, enabling an informed debate on arrangements for the future development of volunteering at both local and national level.

Recommendation 3: Economic

To further analyse the volunteer marketplace assessing the conditions of supply and demand and focus on the mismatch between aspirations and opportunities. This also requires an appreciation of changes to the professionalisation and capacity issues within the voluntary sector and for volunteer management.

Recommendation 4: Co-production

To analyse the potential of a more modern approach to connecting citizens as volunteers, agencies and services and communities in addressing the opportunities and challenges of civic and community life in the 21st Century. This requires an audit of how all sectors engage volunteers against the opportunity for people to volunteer in a context suitable to their lifestyles and concerns.

Recommendation 5: Developing Capacity

Developing the capacity for volunteer management by further appreciating its value in personal and social development.

INTRODUCTION

The author identified and selected this area of enquiry as a result of working in the Scottish Third Sector, as a manager of a local authority wide Volunteer Centre, working closely with existing and emerging strategic policy on volunteering at local and national level. As a student undertaking an MBA in the University of Abertay, this work will prove valuable in raising the focus of volunteering within the application of Human Resource Management practice, Personal Learning and Development (PSD) and the pursuits of economic development through volunteering as a means to employability. Of significant consideration to this study are the wider Social returns of volunteering in building Human and Social Capital and as a catalyst for real and meaningful Community Engagement.

This dissertation suggests that government has a powerful and important role in volunteering, as an enabler rather than a director or organiser. Key to the government's commitment to volunteering is in policy making leading to funding for leadership organisations and developing infrastructure.

Aims

This research based study was designed to scrutinise, examine and analyse the role of Government in volunteer development in both the broad context and more specifically focussing on :

- Analysis of Government interventions (local, national and United Kingdom wide) including the resourcing of infrastructure. This is particularly crucial to the contemporary situation around the Scottish Government Third Sector team advancing of an agenda to engender radical change in infrastructure, suggesting an end to Volunteer Centres in their current form (Pearson April 2008).
- Consideration of the impact of Government ideology, policy making and in turn the perceived and actual engagement of volunteers in the process of decision making; connecting their motivation and experience to achieving on Government priorities.
- Analysis of political interventions on volunteering in a historical context drawing on literature which provides comparatives on approaches used by political parties on volunteering.
- The testing of where Government policies and legislative measures impact on volunteering in relation to key policy priorities of importance to volunteering in the 21st century, namely economic development and prosperity, active citizenship and social inclusion.

Volunteering Context

It is suggested that since the turning of the 20th/21st centuries volunteering has never been higher on the social and political stage and at the top table of decision making in international, national and local government planning. (IVR 2008) Arguably, the contemporary challenges and opportunities for volunteering, for infrastructure and leadership organisations and the voluntary sector, will feature in the most radical shake up of re-distribution of resources through a concordat agreement between central and local government on single outcome agreements where volunteering has to find its place beside other priorities.

In a society predicated on volunteering the main body of discussion will assess the potential impact of volunteering in the context of social and economic policy setting and relevant to the contemporary political situation where the Scottish Government seeks new arrangements for building the infrastructure for volunteering through both its public sector reform agenda and its Third Sector development policy framework. Of notable consideration in this regard is a discussion beyond the constraints of the Third Sector portfolio locating volunteering as an important element across all government directorates furthermore recognising its growth in a tri-sector context (Voluntary, Statutory and Business sectors)

The Government's role in volunteering is arguably engendered through a fervent passion that volunteering works, is making a difference, addressing social exclusion, combating poverty and in developing active citizenship rather than tangible evidence of outcome. It is hoped that this dissertation will open up further enquiry and actions to both provide articulation in the role of volunteering in meeting the challenges and opportunities facing government in the 21st century and provide some basis on which to take forward a task group on the role of volunteering.

The evidence from research undertaken by the author and drawn on available literature pertaining to the subject provides a critique of the role of Government in relation to volunteering. The research undertaken by the author is drawn from a range of different research methodologies including structured one-to-one interviews with key political advisors for both the UK and Scottish Governments and focus group discussions involving volunteers engaged in diverse activities.

Laid out in four chapters this dissertation describes:

- Chapter One - A review of literature pertaining to Government and its role in volunteer development analysed in a wide context of strategic policy development and practice.
- Chapter Two - Research Methodology to using qualitative research methods to increase intellectual and theoretical understanding of the subject matter.
- Chapter Three -Research findings.
- Chapter Four -Discussion on findings

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature centres on the values and image of volunteering, the emergence of political ideologies and government actions seeking to develop a progressive volunteer culture. Volunteering is a contentious political issue but nevertheless embraced across all mainstream political parties albeit through a polarity of ideology and belief.

Volunteering: values, definition and image

Volunteering is a direct term used to describe a range of different activities which are underpinned by a value base. The United Nations Declaration on Volunteering is critical to suggesting volunteering potential in the pursuit of a more socially just and inclusive volunteering societies where brought actions by Governments lead to volunteering as a right of all people in the world to enjoy. The UN declaration also describes volunteering as an activity undertaken without concern for financial gain and by freewill and choice, free from coercion, manipulation and also going on to describe it as a right that everyone should have. This description is critical to the challenges of volunteering in the 21st Century where the continued mismatch between aspirations and opportunities results in people most at risk of social exclusion being less likely to enjoy the benefits of volunteering

The United Nations plays a major role in developing a political argument for volunteering internationally. In the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in January 2002, the UN makes key recommendations for the role of governments across the globe. These recommendations suggest ways in which governments could support volunteering.

Their recommendations include the following:

- To facilitate the establishment of functioning Volunteer Centres which provide a valuable stimulus to formal service volunteering through advocacy, monitoring and encouraging new initiatives. National Volunteer Centres provide effective leadership for the formal volunteering movement
- Enabling fiscal, legislative and other frameworks including community based organisations and not for profit organisations to engage in volunteering
- Introduce, enable and legislate where the goal is to encourage and inspire citizens to volunteering, but to allow the choice to rest with the individual

(United Nations 56/38)

The United Nations declaration impacts very much on the value base inherent on policy setting within the UK. In the UK according to the Institute of Volunteering Research, (Volunteering Works 2008 :22-28), volunteering is an activity which involves spending time unpaid doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than or in addition to close relatives. This definition is more broader than the United Nations one as it goes on to describe volunteering within the context of formal volunteering and informal volunteering. (Formal volunteering being where volunteering activity is generally within an organisation such as the voluntary sector and informal volunteering could include a different context such as Time Banks community volunteering and volunteering that happens outwith an organisation)

A Typology of volunteer activity

“Volunteers themselves undertake a huge range of activities and can be appreciated within its diversity by using a four fold typology of volunteering”

(IVR 2008 : 8)

Smith (2000) identified this typology as typically:

1. Mutual aid or self help: people with shared problems, challenges or conditions working together to address them
2. Philanthropy or services to others: most commonly volunteering through a voluntary organisation to provide some form of service to one or more third parties or beneficiaries
3. Participation: The involvement of individuals in the political governance or decision making at any level
4. Advocacy and Campaigning: Collective action or informal groups or as individuals to secure or prevent change

(Smith J, 2000,9-23)

This typology does not claim to describe the full breadth of volunteering; it does not explore volunteering significantly by activity. But is useful to looking at definitions of volunteering which connect across the main directorates of government where volunteering can be recognised and planned for.

These could be considered as development, safer and stronger communities, social inclusion, quality of life and life long learning.

Image of volunteering

The term volunteering according to Lukka, P and Ellis, A (2001:87-109) occupies a “paradoxical position” where on the one hand it lacks precision

with no clear cut definition on what it encompasses” Shread J (1995:33-44) and Handy et al (2000:45-65). On the other hand it becomes narrowly defined in the minds of the general public where people form their own constructs which are “inevitably culturally and socially specific where the dominant representation is of volunteering as the domain of white, middle aged females who volunteer in social care settings or charity shops” (Lyons et al 1998:45-54)“like Emily Bishop from Coronation Street.....an elderly, kind hearted woman who would do anything for anyone” (Kamat 2001:67).

Volunteering in the UK : Political context

Volunteering can clearly be affected both directly and indirectly by changes in the role of the state as defined by political ideologies. According to Kearney (2001:6) “the election of a conservative government in 1979 saw the rolling back of the welfare state and importation of the market economy, a consequence of this was through the community care reforms and a mixed economy of welfare service provision was located in a competitive environment engendering a contract culture where resulting in a more fundamental role for volunteering in service delivery voluntary sector organisations.” In countenance to Conservative ideology the commission on the future of volunteering, based on feedback from volunteers suggests “Public Services are required by people who need them most. Volunteers are truly dedicated people but should not be used by the Government to cut costs and provide public services” (IVR 2008:13).

In the UK key developments in volunteering could be tracked back to powerful policy directors emanating from government. As far back as John Majors’ government and his election in 1992 as Prime Minister of the UK, one of the main strands of his policy manifesto was Make a Difference through volunteering. The Make a Difference campaign resulted in “a surge of activity around the development of Volunteer Centres ensuring people had greater opportunity to become involved in volunteering” (IVR 2008:23). From John Major Make a Difference initiative from 1994 to the Year of the Volunteer 2005, the establishment of Gold Star, Project Scotland, Millennium Volunteering, successive governments have sought ways to promote volunteering and to increase its take up (Lukka,P& Ellis Paine,A. 2008:34-37).

Attempts have also been made to rationalise volunteering infrastructure and in recent years the creation of Volunteering England and Volunteering Scotland with the establishment of a national data base, the beginning of a modernisation programme of local Volunteer Centres and local volunteer development agencies.

“But despite all these positive trends, volunteering faces a number of challenges if it is to fully face its potential. There may be declining trust in institutions both public and private, growing sectarianism and we are

increasingly risk adverse and consumer orientated. “Many feel that in the last few decades we have lost something important and this is a sense of neighbourhood and collective sympathy”. (IVR 2008:12-22). “Some people might describe us as a society in which many people are cash rich but time poor, many cash poor are also time poor. Yet there are also positive signs, we are now reversibly a society of many cultures, faiths, values and approaches. Our society is more productive and vibrant as a result” (Smith J 2008:22)

Government intervention on volunteering

Whilst there is wide spread agreement that volunteering has rarely received as much support from government as it has since Labour were elected in 1997, (Volunteering England 2008:2 manifest for change) building on a long history of volunteering within this country, many of the Government’s policies have influenced, encouraged and enabled volunteering. Whilst perhaps seen as a government social responsibility, this support for Volunteering has in turn had a positive impact on a wide range of Government policies and agenda throughout the rest of society. The role of Government is suggested as strategic direction – coherence not interference. (IVR 2008:5)

A key championing message within Conservative ideology has been identified as seeing volunteering as an antidote to an ‘unresponsive bureaucratic welfare state that stifles choice and community initiatives’ (*Fyfe, 2005, 539*)

In pursuing an active citizenship relationship between volunteering, and a broadening of better community engagement agenda both the UK Government and Scottish Executive introduced a range of measures (Blunkett 2006 Citizenship Strategy) and Scottish Executives Better Community Engagement Framework (2007) The relationship between Volunteering, Citizenship and democracy is also explored in the Power Report where evidence suggests “people who volunteer are more likely to vote but where they don’t they continue to engage in political acts by nature of their volunteering” (Rowntree Foundation 2006: 97-112).

According to Paterman (1970:66) “Volunteering is the Nursery of citizenship where we learn to participate by participating”. Volunteering and active citizenship are intrinsically linked and to dissect it “creates an unhelpful dichotomy” (Eade1997:127). The Conservatives approach to citizenship was claimed to be a way to achieve balance between rights and duties whereby the merging Labour commitment to volunteering was concerned with defending collective fabric of public life again the approachment of the free market (*Marinetta, 2003, 107*).

Inconsistent with the very ethos of volunteering in terms of developing a collective and civic society, was Margaret Thatcher’s comment that there was no such thing as society. The Thatcher years are often connected with

aggressive individualisation culture where people looked after themselves and the notion of community was fragmented. It could be argued the election of the Labour government in 1997 moved the agenda of volunteering from active citizens to active communities and this is clearly visible in the rhetoric inherent in the Active Communities Strategy which again was a major milestone in developing the direction and resourcing of volunteering locating volunteering at the heart of policy (Scottish Executive 2000)

This neo communitarian approach undertaken by New Labour is also well documented by Clark & Newman, 1997, Lewis, 1999, Howatt & Lock, 1999, Kendall, 2000 and Marinetto, 2003. Fairclough sights this communitarianism discourse as a key way in which New Labour distinguished itself from both Thatcherite and socialist power (*Marinetto, 2000, 37 - 38.*) The new Labour aspirations suggested more attention to partnership, community, mutual aid, help and support for those in need (Gordon Brown, 2004:4).

Despite the apparent shift in philosophy, the Labour focus of volunteering could still be traced back to Conservative policies of the Eighties and Nineties according to (Fyfe:2003) "As crucially lying between market centred and state centred approaches through a third way of engaging citizenship as clients and consumers". Within Labour's election manifesto was the establishment and support for the setting up of devolution in Scotland under a new Scottish Executive. Labour held power within the new Scottish Executive arguably playing a significant role in increasing the prominence of volunteering in Scottish economic and social policy setting. This is a similar situation in England where the report on the future commission on volunteering suggests:.

"We realise that in some ways volunteering has never had it so good. Volunteering is higher on the public policy agenda than ever before and governments of all political persuasion are courting it to a solution to some of the major economic and social problems of our time (IVR 2008:4).

Emergence of political policy on volunteering in Scotland

The main policy drivers for this were the active communities strategy of 2000 and the Scottish Executives Volunteering policy 2004-2007. These policies reflected the spirit of communitarian and associational life, collective action and civic engagement. The early establishment of an Active Communities strategy in January 2000 was seen as a major strategic date for promoting the role of volunteering and community action (Danson, 2003:8). This was on the back of extensive consultation by the Scottish Executive where the Active Communities strategy associated actions and the funding to deliver on four main objectives which were:

- To bring about more positive attitudes at all levels to volunteering and community action
- To locate volunteering and community action at the heart of policy practice
- To broaden the range of people involved in volunteering
- To increase the numbers of people involved in volunteering

(The Scottish Executive, 2000:1-4)

This strategy, through Government resources into the strengthening of volunteering infrastructure saw a marked increase in the number of Volunteer Centres operating throughout Scotland. By 2002, Volunteer Centres were operating in every local authority area in Scotland and this is seen to be as a result of the Active Communities Strategy. But the clear terminology between Conservative ideology of individualism and volunteering as an antidote to the bureaucracy in the state compared to Labour's pathway of collectivism and collaborative citizenship is well documented.

The Scottish Executives Volunteer Strategy 2004-07

The Scottish Executive continued its development at a political level, raising the profile of volunteering and modernising its image, tackling inequalities and locating volunteering at the top table of social and economic policy agenda by the introduction of the Volunteering Strategy in 2004.

“We have come a long way from the roots of volunteering in the 19th Century when genteel middle-class ladies visited prisoners and impoverished waifs in workhouses. In its early day volunteering was about the haves and have nots. Now volunteering has evolved into a much more egalitarian activity whereby everyone has something to contribute and something to gain”

(Margaret Curran MSP 2004 quoted in Scottish Executive 2005:0102)

Whilst the Ministers description reflects a more modern direction and diversity of volunteer activity in contemporary society it could be argued that for those most at risk of social exclusion through poverty, disability and disadvantage “access to volunteering and sustained involvement is cluttered with many economic, physical and psychological barriers”(Kearney, IVR 2004:6-9). Furthermore the SNHS survey 2008 asserts that those in the lowest socio economic scale are more likely to have the worst experience of volunteering to the point that “they will never go back to volunteering under any circumstances”. The latest SNHS survey suggests significant growth levels in volunteering up from 25 to 30 % (SNHS Report August 2008).

The Scottish Executive's Volunteer strategy recognised that the “traditional middle class, middle aged image as a barrier to volunteering and confirms a critical need to proactively address the barriers and inequalities pertinent to volunteering” (2004:12-13).

The main strands of its policy were:

1. Focussing on Project Scotland and young people
2. Dismantling the barriers to volunteering and closing the opportunity gap
3. Improving the volunteer experience

4. Monitoring and evaluation and ongoing policy development to demonstrate the volunteering landscape in Scotland

These four strands became the principle activities of Volunteer Centres in 2004. Key to these expressed strands are the contentious challenges of volunteering and that they were perhaps off centre from the international agreed definition of volunteering 'as without concern for financial gain' especially in strand one to the very ethos of unpaid volunteering. Project Scotland adopted the ideology of Americorps, based in the USA. This scheme was designed to offer young people £55 a week for a minimum of 30 hours volunteering. In addition to this £55 they were given expenses. This development could be viewed as a movement towards mandatory volunteering (IVR 2008:60-73) and off centre with the value base of volunteering in regards to 'being without concern for financial gain' (UN 2002).

Other commentators on this issue questioned the risk of adopting an American model of volunteering which could be further developed into non voluntary activity, especially when linked to welfare and benefits system. Kearney (2001 :8-12) suggests " in some countries although not yet in the UK, we find evidence of mandated volunteering in pursuance of policy goals such as Americorps to serve America through mandatory service requirements".

It is clear from the Volunteering Strategy that there is a notable shift away from volunteering as conceptualised with a heavy focus on the language of the marketplace. The Scottish Executive had a major impact on the volunteer market we are told, (2004:8) and interventions into the sector should be focused on facilitating conditions of a healthy volunteering market in terms of supply and demand of volunteering and on maximising market opportunities.

The Scottish Executive statement identifies their approach to being a labour market model arguing "Scottish Executive interventions into volunteering should be based on analysis of gaps, failures and opportunities and the relationship between those who engage in volunteering, the demand side, and those who could potentially give their time, efforts and skills to volunteering, the supply side." (Scottish Executive 2004)

A critical challenge to this, is the 2nd strand of the Volunteering Strategy about dismantling the barriers to volunteering. Consistently within equalities and life long learning volunteering is clearly an activity which is enjoyed more by people at the higher end of the socio economic ladder and less likely by those who have disadvantage, social exclusion and poverty and attainment issues in their life. Indeed, the Scottish National Household Survey, 2006, suggests that those having the poorest experience in volunteering vowing never to go back into volunteering ever again are from those in the lowest socio economic ladder and people who have had the poorest attainment levels.

The key critical challenge to the 2nd strand of the Scottish Executive Volunteer Strategy therefore, is to set about making resources available and taking forward actions to address this form of inequality connects to a wider economic agenda including employability. Removing the barriers to volunteering, investing in equalities also provided a vast opportunity to locate volunteering within the employability agenda. Volunteering as a route back to employment is a key consideration of the evolving Welfare to Work and Working for Families programmes in the UK (Tribal report 2007:26) and is a key feature of debate across Europe including the General Assembly European Commission, Paris, March 2007.

“This assembly suggests the positive benefits in volunteering seen to be more and more taken into account, the social and economic policies as a means to support people to find their way back to employment. This will also lead to co-operation between employment agencies and volunteer involving organisations and suggests there’s indeed a potential for raising employability and the personal potential of job seekers through volunteering opportunities which may add to the value of their efforts and experiences to gaining employment” (European Volunteer Centre General assembly 2007:12).

A growing body of evidence on volunteering and inequalities suggests that urgent action is needed to ensure that volunteering is a right everyone can enjoy.(SNHS, the Scottish Government 2008:28-37) This suggests both a broadening out of volunteering opportunities that are more inclusive for people and better support for volunteer management requiring government action as highlighted in the Commission on the future of volunteering (IVR 2008) and in the National Survey of Volunteer Management Capacity, Machan & Payne which suggests that a significant proportion of volunteering activity does not have the capacity for building the support that people need to overcome particularly complex issues in their lives.

Strand 3 of the Scottish Executives Volunteering Strategy argues for an improvement in the volunteering experience. Again, this locates to the Scottish National Household Survey (2008) that to improve the experience of volunteering will achieve greater contentment and a more positive promotion of volunteering.

Much of the volunteering management activity which is crucial to this dimension is relatively poorly funded and the infrastructure and capacity issues within volunteer involving organisations suggests that many organisations don’t have trained volunteer managers available to meet the demands of human resource management, are relatively under funded, or have no training budget. (Machan & Ellis Paine, A 2008)

It is arguable that economic recession facing the UK and the un-ring-fencing and redistribution of financial resource from central to local government will place additional “budgetary pressures on Volunteer involving organisations at a time when greater demands will be made on volunteering effort”. (McCurry,P 2008:13)

The Volunteer Strategy had a notable focus on negative characteristics ie, gaps, the failures and areas in which the current situation is lacking. This also refers to the reference, Gathering Data on Volunteering and its Impacts to Make Effective Resource Decisions, 2004, page 18, and a clear need to improve basic volunteer practice, 2004, page 13. The Scottish Executive Volunteer Strategy, 2004 - 2007 has not to date been replaced by the new administration. The actions of the Scottish Government, led by an SNP administration suggest that Government wishes to shape rather than simply support volunteering and this could be considered evidence of the drive to professionalize volunteering and make it more business like in its approach located in a social enterprise and third sector model .

Developing Infrastructure and leadership

The main players in the volunteering infrastructure are suggested as national bodies and local Volunteer Centres. A particular driver lies in the Volunteering Partnership in Scotland which comprises the network of 32 Volunteer Centres and the National body, Volunteer Development Scotland. Volunteer Development Scotland which administrates the grant to local Volunteer Centres is promoted as the Centre of Excellence for Volunteering. Other national bodies including the Community Service Volunteers, Voluntary Action Fund, Project Scotland, Sports Scotland also play a role in developing and extending volunteering across Scotland.

A clear commitment by both the United Nations general assembly ‘asking all nations to develop Volunteer Centres as leadership organisation (United Nations Circular 56/38 1996)) and the Scottish Executives Volunteer Strategy’ to embed a robust culture of volunteering in Scotland through Volunteer Centres highlights where government action provides both a value based and resource approach on Volunteer development (Scottish Executive 2004:31-32).

Scottish National Party

The election of the SNP administration in 2007 radically changed the relationship between local authorities and Government through a new concordat arrangement based on Single Outcome Agreements which underpin their quest for a ‘Wealthier & Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer & Stronger and Greener Scotland. (The Scottish Governments programme for Scotland September 2007). Within this commitment the Scottish Government

has set out with the key driver being economic development. This could potentially create massive change in the funding relationships and arrangements for volunteering infrastructure bodies in Scotland, moving away from central government support through Volunteer Development Scotland into a local funding agenda where distribution comes through non ring fenced funding arrangements with local Community Planning Partnerships.

A critical challenge to the contemporary situation in Government is the persuasion that Volunteer Centres work as linked with co-joining of other arrangements within the third sector. However, there is a clear argument that volunteering operates outwith the third sector. Of critical challenge to this, goes back to the United Nations General Assembly, that if favourable conditions are not delivered for volunteering it will negate its impact to across a wider policy and government directorate. In an argument contesting the Scottish Government's position, may be that volunteering is less visible in different policy directorates, which is inconsistent with the suggestion of Scotland being a greener, smarter and fairer society given the inequalities in volunteering and the potential for these to be addressed through the different investments across justice, education, social inclusion etc.

Whilst it can be argued that this may be facilitated through the positioning of the Third Sector within the Scottish Government Public Sector Reform Department, the challenge to ensure that volunteering is properly quantitatively recognised is immense. The major plank of the Scottish Government administration is Economic Development, of which Volunteering is increasingly located on and increasingly a key focus of the SNP agenda. Although there is no current national policy on volunteering there is evidence of determination to embed volunteering in the Fairer and Safer Scotland and wider directorates of the Government. This is especially relevant to developing Volunteering as a major strand of the Third Sector Interface with Community Planning

Infrastructure

The Scottish Government's approach to developing volunteering within the third sector is very much evolving but is nevertheless integral to their ambitions for Scotland. The most profound radical shake up of Leadership and Infrastructure bodies is evident in communications from the third sector team announcing the end of Volunteer Centres and Council of Voluntary Sectors in their current form by 2011. The discussion around future arrangements include a localism agenda connecting third sector infrastructure agencies with local authorities and a suggestion a realignment of agencies between Council of Voluntary Services and Volunteer Centres as experienced in some areas of England.

It is notable that the National Dialogue on volunteering, carried out by the Volunteer centres network will go some way to provide evidence from a local perspective on what needs to change for a more coherent and sustainable infrastructure for volunteering in the 21st Century.

Conclusion

The review of literature suggests that volunteering is of importance across all mainstream political parties and that the ideologies inherent in those parties whilst varied bears a recognition of the importance of volunteering in meeting government priorities. From the earlier years of the Thatcher Government's roll back of the state in delivering public service through John Major's Make a Difference campaign to the Scottish Executive's volunteering strategy the literature suggests volunteering is at the top table of discussion and is seen as crucial to complementing social care, enhancing democracy, addressing inequalities and the development of active involved citizenship.

What remains unclear is how effective and what impact Government has directly on volunteering, how its efforts connect to the very motivation of people to engage in volunteering, what Government's role should be and what arrangements it needs to develop infrastructure. These are key questions informing the pursuit of research as laid out in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH

Restated research questions

The research composition was designed to attain a comparative analysis on key issues relating to Government and volunteering. Although the questions put to the three respondent groups varied they were close enough to provide qualitative data informing the subject area.

1. Volunteering is perceived as a commodity of economic and social policy development. Is this based on the needs of Government and business? How does that connect to the motivation and value base of volunteering by the individual and is it sustainable?
2. Is there a mismatch between volunteer opportunities and the aspirations of people seeking volunteering, especially for individuals facing social exclusion? Therefore how can volunteering become a stepping stone to employability? Focussing on inequalities and the implications for workplace learning and broadening the range of opportunities both in the paid and non paid workplace settings.
3. The effect to which Government actions engender volunteer development leading to increased motivation and to how volunteering is embedded in key Government priorities including active Citizenship and Social inclusion.

Methodology

Due to the exploratory and inductive nature of the subject of this dissertation, a strong qualitative research methodology has been adopted. This dissertation seeks to investigate the relationship which exists between Government and the Volunteering agenda in society today and the opportunities for future development; a topic requiring an in-depth understanding of both underlying behaviors and decision making reasoning.

“Qualitative research uses methodologies that celebrate richness, depth nuance, context multi-dimensionality and complexity rather than being embarrassed or inconvenienced. It means that it has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular context” (Puchter and Potter 2001:1)

This qualitative research process has relied on the four traditional methods of information gathering, being:

- An active participation in the research setting, direct observation of the circumstances and climate underlying the research topic
- The use of direct interviews with selected participants, identified by the researcher as key and representative protagonists
- The analysis of relevant documentation and materials

The subject matter of the research necessitated that the approach taken to the enquiry sought to maximize the informational value of the knowledge base, understanding, interpretation and perspectives available from a focused complement of chosen contributors rather than acquiring and interpreting the views of a large random sample population. In designing the research, participants were chosen by the author based on their level of involvement and knowledge in the subject area, namely the relationship between Government and volunteering.

According to Pucher & Potter Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position that is broadly interpretative in the sense that it is concerned with how the “social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and constituted and should produce explanation or arguments rather than claiming to offer mere descriptions (2001:3-7) The interpretation of data provided a particular challenge in ensuring objectivity and reflection of pure data response. Silverman suggests that interpreting qualitative data “highlights the dilemmas facing interview researchers concerning what to make of their data”. (Silverman1993:99)

On the other hand, interviewers have as a goal the creation of the ‘pure interview’ - enacted in a stabilized context in such a way that it comes as close as possible to provide a ‘mirror reflection’ of the reality which exists in the social world.

On the other hand, radical social constructionists support that no knowledge about a reality that is out there is the social world.

Particular emphasis was placed on identifying respondents who could provide a comprehensive insight into the social impact of direct Government policy initiatives in the field, alongside a corresponding understanding of the influence volunteering can, has and should seek to exert on policy development in the future.

In taking forward this study, it has been vital to understand how a selection of key players both derive meaning from their interactions with the environment and how that meaning impacts on their behaviors, actions and decision making in relation to influencing the changing policy agenda. Qualitative investigation has allowed for the individual perspectives likely to arise from this topic to be properly determined and ascribed.

In planning the research process, an analysis of the inquiry methods available to the researcher was undertaken. This review suggested that a combination approach of traditional methods, namely structured intensive one-to-one interviews augmented by facilitated focus group activity, was likely to elicit the most appropriate nature and level of information. Issues around informed consent and confidentiality were carefully considered and discussed with all participants throughout the study. In adopting an analytical strategy in decoding the data the relationships between the responses given by Strategist

and volunteers considered “ how something has developed to explain a social phenomenon, social relationships, social processes and so have developed to provide logic of explanation centred on the idea that a meaningful process of development, story narrative or archaeology can be evoked”.(Pucher & Potter 2001:175)

As with all qualitative research the role of the researcher is integral. Given the underlying knowledge and current involvement of the author in the subject heading, a qualitative methodology has allowed flexibility in approach, facilitating a circumstance where the design of the research has been allowed to fully evolve through the research process. The setting of the research, within the natural environment of volunteering, has also been pursued by the author, allowing the theory delivered by the research to evolve as the data collection process was undertaken.

From an ontological perspective this research engaged a great deal of “intellectual effort than simply identifying a research topic,. which fundamentally takes place earlier in the thinking process than the identification of a topic”. (Pucher & Potter 2001:14)

A process of intensive interviews facilitated the acquisition of detailed information from a sample of 8 respondents, each of whom had been determined to hold particular insight into the nature of the volunteering and Government relationship under inquiry. In order to attempt to minimise the impact of interviewer bias and data analysis problems which can arise from interviews, the use of a pre-determined topic guide was applied.

“Sometimes the researcher will be encouraged to become an active participant in the social milieu that he or she has elected to study. based on the discussion is predicated on the presence of what we might call a knowing subject “(Silverman :163)

Whilst the focus group method can be limited, it has been integrated into this research study to ensure that a depth of information could be achieved. Focus group activity is recognised as a key tool in understanding audience attitudes and behaviors. It is acknowledged that this method must not be considered in isolation, but seen as complementary to the interviewing process as it does not ascertain any quantitative data.

It is further acknowledged that the weakness of the focus group method lies in reliance on the skill of the session moderator. However, as in the case of the intensive interviews, the use of a generalized topic guide has helped to minimise any potential issues. A focus group interview session was undertaken, involving 12 participants. It is recognised by the author that focus groups do not necessarily represent all of the interests of the populations from whom the participants were drawn. The author is however satisfied that the effect of this has been minimised through both the preparation of the mechanics of the focus group process specifically and the overall research design in general.

“Focus groups are used in the context of participation and action research with the intent to empower and to foster social change. They usually contain core elements whereby “ trained moderator who sets the style with prepared questions and interview guidance to achieve the goal of eliciting participants feelings, attitudes and perceptions” (Puchta & Potter 2001:6-8).

Both methods used provided a saturation of data which has necessitated an intensive and carefully structured approach to data analysis.

“Reliability and validating are important to objectivity. There is no single, coherent set of ‘qualitative methods’ applicable in all analysis of text, talk and interaction. There are a number of different sets of methods; different ways of recording and analysing human activity. Insofar, these methods claim an epistemic status different from mere common sense” (Silverman 1993:102).

For the purposes of this report those participating in the one to one interviews are referred to as interviewees and volunteers involved in the focus group discussion and participants.

Questions put to strategists

1. What would you describe to be the key impact of volunteering on government priorities?
2. Why is volunteering important?
3. What do you think the role of government should or shouldn't be in volunteer development?
4. 21st century volunteering - What do you think are the main challenges and opportunities and how can these be addressed?
5. Infrastructure – It is suggested Scotland has a world class infrastructure for volunteering. do you agree with this and /or can you suggest what needs to change?

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group consisted of a set of propositions on volunteering aimed at building a dialogue amongst participants. The propositions were extracts of key statements on volunteering in relation to policy making. Participants were asked to complete proformas designed to identify participants views on how their volunteering relates to Government priorities , discuss in small group settings and engage in dialogue in the wider group.

1. Participants details – information relating to the type of volunteering activity, how long they had volunteered and in which context
2. Vision template – seeking volunteer's views on agreed vision for volunteering in Scotland
3. 15 National outcomes – Using a proforma asking volunteers to identify their top 5 priorities

4. 15 national outcomes – Using proforma and discussion around where participants felt their volunteering was relevant to delivering on national priorities
5. Infrastructure discussion around the effectiveness of infrastructure and leadership organisations
6. Discussion around the role of Government both local and national

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FINDINGS.

The research involved a series of one-to-one interviews with senior figures working at strategic policy setting in the heart of both the UK and Scottish Governments. Other interviewees were drawn from national organisations delivering on volunteer policy and researchers who had worked for Prime Ministers as far back as the Callaghan Government to the more recent Blair and Brown administrations. Collectively the experience of the 8 interviewees amounts to over 150 years of practice, providing a broad range of insight into the subject issue.

In addition to the above method a focus group discussion involving 12 volunteers, engaged in a diverse range of volunteering activities and from diverse backgrounds engaged in dialogue as to their involvement in volunteering including motivation, learning and personal development outcomes and provided a level of consciousness on the connection between policy and practice.

1 What would you describe to be the key impact of volunteering on government priorities

All eight Participants supported the view that volunteering had a fundamental role in delivering on key Government priorities but action was needed to ensure that volunteering was more strongly embedded in Government policy across all directorates. Volunteers in the Focus Group supported the view that their volunteering impacts on Government priorities across the 15 national outcomes of the Scottish Government with their impact being more prevalent on outcomes relating to children families and young people, crime and community safety rather than in an economic context.

- *“Volunteering makes a significant impact on government priorities but can do so much more for example take the NHS it has a clear leadership role to play in volunteering and needs to address some of the rigid structural arrangements which may not be helpful to enabling volunteering. They need to be less abstract and more specific about better opportunities for people to engage”.*

The interviewees suggested five powerful examples of how volunteering can make a difference and the gaps to where volunteering could do more to provide concrete examples, providing the interest and enthusiasm for volunteering.

1. *“Although there is valuable work undertaken by WRVS, a strong case for properly staffed 24 hour provision helped develop through volunteering. There is so much opportunity in the NHS to develop volunteering and some of this was about developing space for*

children's' activities, to make hospitals less scary. And why not develop a pilot project and diversify and develop the role of volunteering”.

2. *“GP Practices could provide small, 20 minute crèches so that it improves the quality of services for adults and enjoy ways in which volunteering can change the face of public sector. He was clear that people respect and admire the service given by volunteers as they chose to be there instead of have to be there because of a wage and remit”.*
3. *There is evidence parents need through the Social Inclusion Partnership's evaluation, the focus group discussions on expecting mums wanting to experience better support and they talked about crèche facilities run through volunteering and improvements to care.*
4. *“Adults had a too narrow history of community and needed a greater and better understanding of appropriate places for volunteering within the school curriculum that even if 10% of the school curriculum was freed up so that children and young people could develop their own volunteering, could get engaged in positive, enthusiastic volunteering opportunities, then this would help develop more positive volunteering aspirations throughout their lives, and throughout the 21st Century”.*
5. *“Need to address the under- representation of people from the lowest socio economic groups, especially within a school setting - it had to be about volunteering which was based around the needs of the individual young person who volunteers and indeed in the wider society, there had to be a commitment made to addressing the inequalities so that people could enjoy the right to volunteer”.*

The suggestions further highlight the connection between the need to connect the wider agenda of social inclusion and equalities with volunteer policy clearly suggesting where volunteering is more inclusive then the beneficiaries are people experiencing social exclusion as well as an extension of provision. This also suggests a need to further embed volunteering in planning for key national priorities in Health and Education. Of note is in the Focus group discussions with volunteers active in health and education they suggested they were never asked to comment on policy development and seldom asked their views.

Although participants felt relatively unaware of the existence of key policy documents, they connected their experience of volunteering as achieving on national priorities, their comments included;

“If they had to replace volunteering with paid employment, it would cost £ millions”.

“Without volunteering peoples health would suffer, others would be more isolated and vulnerable, especially the poor, the sick and the elderly”

“Some people use volunteering which helps them find work. This is often forgotten about but very valuable”.

2 Why is volunteering important ?

Participants placed a strong focus on the importance of volunteering on societal issues. This was a view shared by Volunteers in the Focus group connecting the vision of volunteering to making Scotland a better place to live.

“A marketplace approach to volunteering was crucial and left to its own devices, the markets would dominate volunteering which was easier to access by richer people and people who were more confident about engaging in the first place. It was critical, this has to be addressed and a balance between aspirations and opportunities be considered in the planning for volunteer management”.

There’s no such thing as a society –“ You know Thatcher’s comment, which was patently untrue but I think it was a sort of reflection of that very materialistic, individualistic era of the Eighties which cut across a whole swathe of community action and community engagement and I do think part of the reason for the uptake in interest in volunteering is a reaction to that and I believe in the importance of trying to rebuild communities and recognition that the fracture of communities that took place in the Eighties was not healthy for society”.

“The Governments can no longer afford to nor do they have the legitimacy of trying to solve all of society’s problems on their own and therefore they are looking for the role of volunteers as part of that. There is, from public policy makers, a real belief, within government that volunteering does have a very important and valuable role to play in terms of contributing to dealing with some of the big problems in society like disaffection amongst some parts of our young population, like mass unemployment, like concerns about a lack of social cohesion and issues to do with suspicion amongst different communities and different communities of faith”.

Volunteers describes areas where they felt their volunteering made a significant contribution to Government priorities (table 3) and highlighted specific examples of where volunteering action delivered key services including Youth Work, Advice and Guidance, environmental and education projects and in social and health care settings.

On a more critical note the volunteers felt there was little opportunity for them to assist in the policy formulation within community planning in a local context but also raised the issue of a lack of dialogue involving volunteers on Volunteer and Social Policy setting.

3 What do you think the role of government should or shouldn't be in volunteer development

The participants presented evidence of their work in relation to Government priorities and through dialogue raised a number of issues on what government can do to influence positive change. The 3 key points from volunteers were that;

- a. *Government should be 'on tap but not on top' enabling volunteering to happen through providing funding and removing unnecessary red tape*
- b. *It should recognise the diversity of volunteering promoting champions from all background removing the stigma attached to volunteering*
- c. *Fund interventions for people who find it harder to volunteer and invest in volunteer management*

'Having a baroness as the UK champion may be good in Government circles but won't inspire working class people to volunteer' (Volunteer Focus group)

Views given by interviewees suggested a more critical role for Government in developing a more coherent sustainable and socially just volunteering culture where the voice of volunteers is at the heart of policy. Interviewees and participants felt the Government had to do more to take volunteering more seriously, increase investment and embed volunteering across policy making on its priorities.

'There are positive things that government can do to promote volunteering, not least within the public services which are huge involvers of volunteers and the Government clearly has a key responsibility there in terms of promoting volunteering'.

'Public service needs to take a more meaningful and passionate approach to volunteering looking at a reciprocal view of volunteering and motivations, rather than purely policy and target driven approaches'.

'Government needs to engender a relationship of equals. Government seems to have all the power, not least because it has control over the resources or a large part of the resources. But a government that loses its citizens, in the end suffers. They need to do more to ensure their actions are based on evidence. There is a real danger that this Scottish Government are forcing an agenda for change in the third sector where the voice of volunteers is notably absent'.

This point was further supported by another interviewee who commented:

'There are risks in the agenda of Government. In the last ten years they have become so focused on micro management outputs ie. Welfare to Work and failing schools in England it had a treasury mindset of central government - people had to be moved from X to Y and they had no recognition of the autonomous and motivation incentives which engender volunteering. This is not a rational, economic surprise because like welfare reform, where Government have an impatient mindset, it does not spill onto who in Government can set targets, in other words, that a lot of the planning and suggestions were around volunteering, government were relatively unaware that there was a lack of dialogue or evidence based taking forward of some of the decisions'.

On the immediate things Government can do the following point was made:

'Government can do more to promote volunteering generically across all sectors, across all service areas, across all types of people. I don't think they should distinguish at all – they should just get out of the business of segmented funding, they should spend their money on enabling opportunities, through additional support to Volunteer Centres'.

Volunteers felt government could do more to recognise their contribution arguing without volunteering many of the services provided in all sectors would grind to a halt.

Volunteers presented their view on their position in relation to the vision statements on volunteering as expressed in both the Volunteering strategy and in the Government's national outcome of making Scotland a better place to live. After completing the proformas individually, the group discussion teased out why people had arrived at their responses. They suggested Government needs to do more to take volunteering more serious and appreciate the contribution they make.

4 21st century volunteering. What do you think are the main challenges and opportunities and how can these be addressed ?

Notable from both respondent groups was appreciation of the complex issues facing volunteering and societal issues asserting the need for further consideration on how volunteering needs to be developed in the 21st century

addressing the barriers whilst taking advantage of new innovative concepts for development including the notion of co-production.

Key to the recommendations made was a move from a traditional focus on volunteering as aligned solely with voluntary sector activity raising the notion of a more co-production model whereby volunteers as citizens. Consumers and clients could take action on the furtherance of complimentary service delivery, addressing local and social issues and by their very participation maintain active healthy lives ultimately less dependent on services.

This was especially relevant in Health and Demography where an aging but active population could make a fundamental commitment to their own longevity building on evidence suggesting volunteering improves mental and physical health of those who volunteer. This may suggest a more modern concentration of building volunteering opportunities through partnership between people, agencies and services which can be delivered out with a volunteer involving organisation as the manager of volunteers and where people can become more involved in short term volunteering responding to local challenges. This point was further supported by another interviewee who suggested:

'By co-production I mean the involvement by local people as volunteers in developing a response to many of the unmet challenges of modern society , where people can work together building the capacity of services, bonding volunteering effort to compliment the needs of people which cannot be addressed by mainstream service delivery and where volunteers work together with services and communities to broaden the range of services meeting community and individual need'.

'Challenges for the 21st Century are about people not being asked and the most effective way for people to engage in volunteering is through a positive experience, through credible people, supporting the development of volunteering. There is a case for resourcing a stronger infrastructure, whether or not they have the right infrastructure now, I'm not convinced'.

'There are massive opportunities at either end of the age spectrum - people are living longer and young people are being supported into volunteering. There is a fantastic opportunity to develop a culture of diversity around school age and the understanding of the curriculum being used as a buffer for volunteering. Older people live longer, they are in better health and they could make more meaningful contribution'.

All Interviewees raised concerns about mandatory volunteering suggesting a more aggressive direction of Government on the welfare to work agenda could offset the concept of choice.

'The key critical issues for volunteering are about freedom and choice and not about compulsion. And the balance between volunteering and learning outcomes and the choice of volunteering had to be appropriate'.

Participants in the Focus Group suggested the top three barriers to volunteering in the 21st century as

- Expenses – Volunteer drivers were being paid the same low mileage rate for the last 10 years despite the increased cost of fuel. People on low incomes were therefore being marginalised
- Perceptions about litigation - that there was a fear of being sued if something went wrong especially in terms of working with children and Health and Safety issues
- That people were either too busy or were less likely to do things together as they are more individualistic

5 Infrastructure – It is suggested Scotland has a world class infrastructure for volunteering do you agree with this and /or can you suggest what needs to change?

There were different views expressed concerning the effectiveness of infrastructure arrangements in both the interviewees and participants. As this issue is relevant to the evolving considerations for infrastructure arrangements by the Scottish Government the research was complemented by additional enquiry testing infrastructure with 6 volunteer centres providing feedback on organisation growth, capacity and outcome delivery.

Interviewees suggested the work of Volunteer Centres was held in high regard but felt more can be done by Government to resource their capacity to work across Government and Community planning.

It was suggested that the provision of service varied across local authority areas where some volunteer centres were active at the heart of community planning whilst others were unable to 'get a seat around the table'.

Interviewees felt Volunteer Centres performed better when they were independent and not run by another organisation however where the local environment meant it was more appropriate to be hosted as part of another agency than a co joined service was more suitable.

Interviewees raised concern about the possible changes to infrastructure.

'Centralising volunteering around the third sector fails to recognise the growth of volunteering in all sectors especially in Health and Local authorities the moves to redistribute funding through local arrangements will put further pressure on volunteer resources where other spending priorities will be more dominant with local government considerations. There needs to be a national network and funding for volunteering distributed accordingly'.

Volunteers suggested Volunteer Centres had a valuable role in connecting people to volunteering delivering training and good practice and making the links between volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and Local Government.

On the use of the internet as a tool for accessing volunteering volunteers suggested the Volunteer Centre website

'It's very good but it's better to meet someone face to face get support and get a real understanding of what's involved... anyway a computer can't have a chat with you and share a cup of tea'

This point was also raised by an interviewee who commented:

'It is clear from research that of people who access volunteering through Volunteer Centres, through face to face contact, are twice as more likely to sustain their involvement in volunteering'.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION ON LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH

This chapter broadens out the literature review and research findings by discussing the key emergent themes specifically in relation to; motivation, the economic argument pertaining to volunteering, government policy and impact, and inequalities.

Multiple motives of volunteering

The volunteers involved in the focus group discussion described motivation as a key factor in accessing and sustaining volunteering. Of particular significance is that they felt that Government policy, planning or interventions had little bearing on motivation. Volunteers went on to describe motivation deriving from a variety of reasons including reaction to threat or being wooed by opportunity or in relation to age and changes in life including;

- At School - increasingly young people seek volunteering to advance their chances of accessing further and higher education or employment (Morgan Enquiry)
- At college/university – in gaining practical experience which complements their academic attainment
- On moving to a new community – being accepted and accessing social networks
- On retirement – using skills learned through the experience of work and to retain good physical and mental health
- On the death of a partner – on meeting needs of affiliation

Hudson (2004:20) suggests people volunteer for ‘altruistic reasons through joining Boards of managements, giving money or through an affinity with the value base of a Voluntary Sector where they would not feel comfortable working within the ideology of the private sector or constraints of the public sector’.

Altruism

‘Scratch an altruist and watch the hypocrite bleed’ (Anon)

Responses given in the Focus group interviews on motivation assert that the circumstances which develop volunteering may be local national or international but mostly in response to a threat or opportunity.

According to the Volunteer Centre Angus data base, of 1982 volunteers approximately 40% of volunteers engaged through a desire to access Further Education leading to employment or directly into employment. This is consistent with approximately 40 % of volunteers on the data base reporting their main form of income was benefits. This suggests a clear link between the

reasons why people volunteer seeking outcomes relating to employment and career advancement. In essence this may suggest the motivation factors are diverse and specific according to the individual's need, a factor which could contest that volunteering is entirely driven by altruistic reasons.

'I first became involved in volunteering in campaigning against a school closure there I met people involved in all sorts of things. Having saved the school I realised the power people have by working together to change things'

'What motivates me to volunteer is that I have something to look forward to, good things to do with my spare time, helping others etc but mostly that it helps me feel confident and stay drug free.'

'I want to make sure my experience of drugs misuse, despite how bad it was, is put to good use so I can be a youth worker supporting young people to be more aware of the misery of drug abuse'

Young Adults "are increasingly geographically mobile" (Morgan Enquiry) in both their academic studies and employment leading to difficulties to find the time to volunteer. Volunteering can however "instil a pattern of life leading to positive outcomes in academic attainment and employment however for more young adults to enjoy the benefits of volunteering it requires better practice, higher recognition and resources across all sectors"(Morgan Enquiry).

Over the past 20 years workplace learning, training and accreditation have been championed in the ways to improve skills and increase the involvement of employers in education and extend participation in education and training in the UK. This recognises the value of vocational training qualifications and skills and competencies to have been gained outside compulsory education, including volunteering.

Where volunteer motivations may not directly manifest from direct state intervention. Participants in the focus group highlighted where government investment in infrastructure enabled their involvement in volunteering. "I had moved into the area about 3 years ago, I wanted to volunteer but didn't know what in. I went to the Volunteer Centre who gave me guidance on the range of opportunities and supported me in getting started. Without the help of the Volunteer Centre I probably would not have got involved".

Theoretical models

The issue of motivation is described from three varying theoretical perspective by Maslow, Alderfer and Vroom.

- Maslow's theory focuses on a hierarchy which suggest people have five needs: survival; security, social recourse, self esteem and fulfilment of potential to the point where a certain level of income is not an important factor.
- Alderfer's theory suggests there are three core needs – existence, relatedness and growth, whereas
- Vroom's theory suggests acting a certain way depends upon the strength of expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome, but the outcome must be attractive enough to warrant the effort. (Volunteer Solutions 2006 training pack)

The above theory explain the needs people may have which can be fulfilled through volunteering which can be attributed to meeting social relationship development needs as well as achievement. Vroom's theory may be especially relevant to volunteering by young people where they express motivation factors predominated by gaining access to employment and further academic attainment. Armstrong (2006:252) suggests three components of motivation as:

- Direction - what a person is trying to do;
- Effort - how hard a person is trying;
- Persistence – how long a person keeps trying

These three components could be described as consistent with key stages of volunteering from wanting to volunteer in the first place, making a difference and retention through being recognised and rewarded for effort leading to continued motivation which is crucial in avoiding 'volunteer burn-out'. Motivation can be described as a key factor in volunteering and although Government action can impact through resourcing infrastructure the evidence form this research suggests many do so out with the shadow of the state.

Government and volunteering

The Government role in fostering volunteering is described throughout this dissertation in terms of diverse politic ideologies and advancement of policy leading to infrastructure development. In a wider role volunteering can be linked to the major policy initiatives and Government directorates and significant to active citizenship, social inclusion, economic development and the very essence of democracy itself.

This message featured strongly in the one to one interviews where interviewees felt the government could do so much more to further embed volunteering in policy making whilst suggesting action by Government through resourcing to address inequalities and enhance the capacity for volunteering.

The growing interest in volunteering is indeed spread across local, national and international aspirations seeking a range of positive outcomes including civic and citizen participation, higher level of engagement through expressed and participatory democracy, green issues and the eradication of poverty and inequalities. Smith, J (1996:6) further highlights the importance of volunteering in Government “ since one in ten volunteers in the UK volunteer in the statutory sector there is potential for growth in the relatively unexplored political love affair with volunteering”. The contemporary national context seeks volunteering as a catalyst from welfare to work, volunteering as a learning activity and in the advancement of active citizenship. In a local geographic demographic forecasts suggest volunteering will be increasingly important to both complement the service delivery of care needs for an ageing population (Anderson 2006).

In the UK, New Labour had significantly repositioned the role of the third sector within national policy discourse as part of its programme of welfare reforms (Powell, 1999), moving it to a more central position in policy (Clarke et al., 2000). By 2004 Gordon Brown declared there had been 'a quiet revolution in how voluntary action and charitable work serves the community' (Brown, 2004: n.p.). Associated with this has been increased interest in social capital and norms of trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 1995) The appointment of a UK volunteer champion by Gordon Brown did not impress the focus group where participants felt champions should reflect the diversity of volunteers whereas the appointment of a Baroness may help in terms of political muscle but would not connect to 'ordinary people volunteering'. As volunteering is a devolved issue it could be argued that this appointment does not cover Scotland.

The value of the appointment of a UK champion by Prime Minister Brown can be contested given that post devolution volunteering is a devolved issue negating the Champion remit extending to Scotland.

An identifiable mixed message is given in pursuing a multi cultural and inclusive image of volunteering; a key priority in the commission on the future of volunteering (2008:3). “In the face of growing sectarianism where communities turn inwards in the face of rapid change volunteering can bring people from all backgrounds together”. It may be seen as ironic that the commission report, on one hand, seeks a more multi cultural and more socially just volunteering and on the other a volunteering culture which makes us proud to be British” (IVR 2008:3).

The perception of volunteering amongst black and ethnic minority communities is highlighted by Reilly 2004:8 “There are a variety of reasons why black and ethnic minority communities are reluctant to volunteer in the mainstream, ranging from a intrinsic cultural focus on family interventions and support rather than external inputs to more recognised perceptions of

institutional racism, by being put off by their own experiences in white dominated voluntary sector organisations. As one respondent put it “I was treated badly in volunteering as the only black person doing mundane tasks like making tea and cleaning”.

(Reilly, C 2008:4)

In an international context and reinforcing the role and value based approach to by the United Nations Salamon (1999: 5) suggests volunteering is nothing less than 'a global associational revolution'. In advanced capitalist states, against a background of concern at declining political participation, anxieties about welfare provision, and worries about the meaning of citizenship.

There is beyond doubt a clear connection between the development of public policy and its impact on volunteering. On a positive end of the spectrum, it could be suggested that the development of the Active Communities Strategy and the Volunteering Strategy had a remarkable impact on volunteering levels and on tackling inequalities in volunteering through establishment of Volunteer Centres and other actions. There is a contradiction that ongoing issues relating to volunteering where unemployed people are a cause for concern. Howlett & Lock state clearly “It is of little use aiming to promote volunteering if other policies could contradict its aim” (1993 :73).

Whilst the mainstreaming of the third sector and the specific policy initiatives to develop volunteering may be very welcome, it's important to explore fully the assumptions that appear to lie behind these initiatives including the current policy framework which pays a lot of attention to the way in which national policies or strategies of volunteering may be experienced differently at local levels.

Infrastructure

A key consideration of the Scottish Government is infrastructure. The contemporary repositioning of volunteering around the third sector as a vehicle for the delivery of public services suggest radical change to both the and Volunteer Centre Networks. This move was in the main criticised by both volunteers attending the Focus Group and most of the interviewees in the one to one interviews. In England there has been an increase in the number of Volunteer Centres hosted by Council of Voluntary Services, a development which concerned interviewees. Their argument that volunteer centres function better where they are independent as demonstrated by both impact and outcome whereas Volunteer Centres run by a parent body suppresses the potential profile of volunteering amongst strategic partners.

The Scottish Government's position whilst not clearly expressed appears to embrace the notion of co-join ability between Council of Voluntary Services

and Volunteer Centres. However this appears to be based on aspiration rather than evidence. A counter argument suggests that in a survey of 6 Volunteer Centres in Scotland who became independent having been run by a Council of Voluntary Services on average their income rose by over 400%, volunteer outcomes by an average 650% and importantly clear evidence on where their services impacted on local authority, health and public sector outcomes. (McKenzie 2008)

Although volunteering is suggested as being high on the political policy agenda in an evaluation by Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations on one of the Government's main policy drivers – the Single Outcome Agreement relating to Concordat, suggests volunteering is either 'very lightweight or does not feature' in the agreements submitted to Government by local authorities. This reinforces the suggestion made by both volunteers and interviewees in this research that Government either local or central need to do more to take volunteering seriously making it more visible in policy and planning.

It could be suggested that the Government's understanding of volunteering appears vague; interchanging it within the voluntary sector and modern confines it within an activity in the third sector. However, it is more than this, the crucial emergent demands of the public sector and the growing informal context of social capital development such as Time Banks suggests that a wider consideration of volunteering within Government thinking needs to be developed to ensure 'all people enjoy the right to volunteer'.

An economic argument for volunteering

In an economic context, volunteering makes a staggering £2.25 Billion contribution to the Scottish economy (VDS 2007) However it could be argued that the real value of volunteering lies in building positive relationships, social and learning outcomes for volunteers, communities or the organisations that engage people in volunteering and explored through a Social Return on Investment model (SROI). In evaluating the cost factors of volunteering it is also possible that the equation can be calculated in two ways:

1. The value of volunteering + management costs
2. Value of volunteering + management and running costs

The first equation counter poses the value of volunteering to the costs to the organisation specifically associated with volunteer support and management. The second equation includes running costs and the rationale for including this is that the volunteers' work is enabled by the total functioning of the group or organisation, not just by its actual investment in volunteer management. It is also possible to adopt another approach to valuing volunteering involving summing up both the above equations in order to achieve the total costs of providing the service. This figure would include the actual costs combined with the inputted market value of the volunteers' work. It can be seen therefore, as the costs of replacing the service, for example if the local authority had to substitute it with paid staff.

The value of volunteering which arrives at the above stated figure of £2.25 Billion is based on hours volunteered x the mean average wage but would increase significantly if formulated using the equations suggested above.

Recent years have witnessed volunteering becoming more predominant in a Scottish social and economic policy context and are increasing located at the top table of decision making on the social justice and employability agenda.

Acknowledging the amount of volunteering contributed to community groups in terms of monetary equivalent will make apparent "their true significance to the local economy and may influence local authority policy makers in their support and funding strategies" (Gaskin K & Dobson, B 1996:5).

Volunteering can act as a route to employment for many people. In 2007, just under a quarter of volunteers reported the most important benefits that their volunteering gave them was a chance to improve their employment prospects. (Lowe & EtoI, 2007)

Using a basic economic market model it is suggested that despite perceptions that increased regulation and legislation has had a negative impact on volunteering (source) demand for volunteer placements outstrips the supply side. This is especially relevant given that people in the lowest socio-economic groups experience particular barriers to volunteering plus the professionalisation of the voluntary sector where many organisations don't use volunteers beyond the board (one to one, interview response) and capacity issues within the voluntary sector (Ellis Paine, A 2008 :33). Voluntary sector organisations have argued for some time that volunteering is not cost free and that costs associated with recruitment, retention, training and management need to be factored into government policy on volunteering (Gaskin, K and Dobson B 1996:6).

The Scottish National Household Survey 2006 asserts inequalities in volunteering whereby people lower on the socio economic ladder are less likely to sustain volunteering and are more likely to have a negative experience .“ Furthermore Fyfe (2006) suggests “there remains a concern that levels of formal volunteering (through organisations) are consistently higher among people in more affluent socio-economic categories and in more affluent neighbourhoods”. This has resulted in policy initiatives to increase volunteering among groups normally less likely to volunteer (Fyfe et al., 2006). It is suggested by both interviewees and participants involved in this study that the value of volunteering needs to be factored into planning at both local and central government and the right of all people to volunteer upheld as a key value.

In supporting a co-production model, interviewees suggested that a more appropriate and considered analysis of opportunity against which could lead to a more flexible, community based volunteering concept, extending services beyond their traditional form and building the capacity of public service resources. One example suggested included where a local sport centre

closed at 8p.m. on a Friday evening volunteers could staff it as a youth facility thereafter to enhance positive relationships and lifestyles.

This notion also suggests volunteering fits around the life-styles of volunteers rather than the other way a round and a new form of volunteering which was relational between communities, public and voluntary organisations rather than through a single volunteer involving organisations. In essence the suggestion related to building community capacity and a community response to community issues through collaborative volunteering action.

The notion of co-production was further expressed as a move from a traditional focus on volunteering as aligned solely with voluntary sector activity whereby volunteers as citizens, consumers and clients could take action on the furtherance of complimentary service delivery, addressing local and social issues and by their very participation maintain active healthy lives ultimately less dependant on services.

This was especially relevant in health and demographic challenges where an aging but active population could make a fundamental commitment to their own longevity building on evidence suggesting volunteering improves mental and physical health of those who volunteer. This may suggest a more modern concentration of building volunteering opportunities through partnership between people, agencies and services which can be delivered out with a volunteer involving organisation as the manager of volunteers and where people can become more involved in short term volunteering responding to local challenges.

The relationship between volunteering and active citizenship

As highlighted in the literature review, the notion of active citizenship has political connotations ranging from the Conservative model of active citizenship being about people having the balance between rights and responsibilities to an active citizenship theory underpinned within the Active Communities Strategy about collectivism so, from a Conservative model of individualism to a Labour neo-consumerism model of collectivism, it can be suggested they have different discords in active citizenship.

The relationship between active citizenship and volunteering is an area of policy, academic and sector interest and at the heart of many government policies including better community engagement, the engagement of young people and life long learning and community learning and development philosophy.

Citizenship itself remains contested to meaning different things to different people according to Lister, 1998. Citizenship is a legal state where as active citizenship is not about where you are born - it's about what you do. This is especially relevant into volunteering by refugees and asylum seekers and it challenges the notion of active citizenship being parallel to volunteering expression.

As we saw in the earlier discussion around New Labour, this shifted to the emphasis on community and common good, (Jochum et al, 2005,:8) and active citizens one of the three strands of civil renewal programme. The other two were strengthen communities and partnership and the meeting of public need. Evidence of this shift - it is clear that this definition of active citizenship by the Active Citizen Centre "in simple terms, active citizenship is about taking part. Active citizenship can be defined as citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling problems within their community and improving their quality of life." (The Active Citizenship Centre, 2006.)

The distinction between active citizenship and volunteering - what people do as volunteering, owes its origin to something quite other than the motive of duty to the citizenship state according to Fielding. With the giving of service as a strict personal matter that has nothing to do with the state, (1991:103) an adoption of the principles of active citizenship by government and development of programmes to increase volunteering as part of this represented for Fielding a state of intrusion into what he considered private space and activities. Clearly here, the argument about volunteering being something of an alternative dichotomy from the active citizen government agenda resourced by Government.

Interesting to note then, how similar concerns continue to be raised after the New Labour rule and the apparently adjusted focus of active citizenship. Labour continues to make volunteering contributively to, but not a replica of the concept of citizenship. "What's important here, according to the Commission on Volunteering by Volunteering England is that it should not be a suggestion by being a volunteer makes you a good person. Neither does it mean by being an active citizen in an activity nor does an opportunity created by the state make you a good person. "People have the right to volunteer and people should have the right not to volunteer". IVR (2008)

CONCLUSION

The research including review of literature supporting this dissertation poses further questions on the role of Government, both in the UK and in a Scottish context requiring an appreciation of the challenges and opportunities for volunteering in the 21st Century. The history of political engagement and divergent ideologies assert that the key mainstream political parties intimate volunteering as fundamental to their policy imperative. Despite this, the evidence presented in this dissertation suggests that the visibility of volunteering is relatively lightweight or does not feature in key Government policy directorates.

In an ever changing global and technological world, the role of volunteering as suggested in both the focus group and one to one interviews requires a more modern philosophy equating lifestyles to challenges faced by communities as suggested in the notion of co-production.

Whilst the evidence also favours volunteering in terms of personal development and vocational experience leading to higher educational attainment and employability, those who may benefit from volunteering most in this context may be within the lowest socio economic groupings. The suggestion presented through this research is that key Government investment and resourcing in this respect needs to be balanced against the aspirations of the Welfare to Work programme.

The research also highlights the critical role of infrastructure and is of contemporary consideration by the Scottish Government in realigning the focus of volunteering around the Third Sector.

The reasons why people volunteer are suggested as deriving from a variety of factors and opportunities, whilst Government through its investment in infrastructure can connect the aspiration of volunteering by people to availability of volunteering opportunities, the evidence presented in this dissertation suggests those engaging in volunteering are either relatively unaware or disengaged in decision making. In an ever complicate global world our lives are impacted on by financial crisis, economic recession, global warming, new technologies and consumerism - in essence a new world order.

Volunteering as an act of humanity, collaboration and solidarity of all people has a major role in offsetting these challenges in pursuit of 'the greater tomorrow'.

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