

Title: Social Processes and Connectivity in Irish Volunteering

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Abstract

Voluntary and community are fundamental to the modern democratic state of Ireland, in their role as service providers for community and individual welfare and wellbeing, most especially those vulnerable or disadvantaged (Harvey, 2012). The voluntary and community sectors have a long and well established history in Ireland, and originate in medical and welfare charities in the 18th century. In addition to providing social and allied services, voluntary and community organisations play an important civic role in society, where opportunities to volunteer have personal and altruistic benefits. This level of active civic engagement and social inclusion forms the basis of the chosen theoretical framework for the study, which utilised social capital theory to investigate volunteering processes, social situatedness and civic outcomes amongst Irish volunteers and host organisation representatives in South Tipperary, Ireland. Research underscores that all forms of social, human and cultural capital have positive associations with volunteering in the form of social connectivity, trust and reciprocity between individuals, groups and wider social networks, community embeddedness and sense of belonging, well-being and mutual resource acquisition relating to friendships, knowledge, skills and education.

A mixed method research design which employed a sequential approach where qualitative interviews were undertaken with a convenience sample of volunteers (17 volunteers and 11 organisation representatives), with phenomenological findings used to inform the design of a social capital questionnaire, which could be used to measure the extent to which volunteering added to social capital by Volunteer Centres in Ireland. The questionnaire was administered via survey monkey to the Sales Force dashboard quota of the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre, with a usable sample of 71 volunteers obtained. The final summated scale of 16 indicators had a Cronbachs alpha of 0.86.

A shift in personal and social definitions of volunteering were described in qualitative narratives, with informal volunteering increasingly replaced by structured, formalised and regulated volunteer placements. Volunteer experiences contributed to increased personal well-being and sense of purpose, development of friendships and meeting new people, identification with the volunteer activity and ethos of the relevant group or organisation, sense of *'giving something back'* and serving a specified community need, providing work related experiences, justification of productivity in free time and opportunity for up-skilling. Integration of volunteers into the organisation's workforce was dependent on length of time, intensity of interaction and scope of volunteer contributions. Power differentials and lack of trust between volunteers and staff, alongside lack of volunteer recognition were described. Some volunteers sought additional security and identification within the wider social volunteer network. Survey results indicated that enjoyment of volunteer participation and impact of volunteering in the community were important factors, with contribution to social capital were not influenced by age, gender, employment or relationship status. Contribution to social capital was influenced by educational status. The research reflected an emergent consumerist approach to volunteering and underscores the need to preserve existing informal social networks of community volunteers, alongside the development of more formalised work specific routes for volunteering in post economic boom Ireland. Further research is required to validate the social capital survey scale and to evaluate both the internal structure

validity and dimensionality. However, the scale can be used by Volunteer Centres in Ireland and elsewhere in development planning, placement and administration of volunteering in communities and organisation.

Dissemination of Work

The research was undertaken with financial support from the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre and disseminated at recent conference and in two peer reviewed journals.

Conference

The results of the study were presented by the author at a Local Conference “*Celebrating volunteering E.Y.V. (European Year of the Volunteer) 2011*” held on the 25th of November 2011 in the Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.

Journal Publications

Two journal papers were accepted for publication, namely the qualitative results and survey design.

Paper 1 presents the qualitative study - The title: *‘Mé féin nó an Pobal: Social Processes and Connectivity in Irish Volunteering’*; accepted for publication in The Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies (see Appendix 2).

Paper 2 presents the validation of a social capital survey tool derived from the qualitative findings - The title: *‘Development of a user friendly social capital scale in Volunteering’*; accepted for publication in The International Journal of Volunteer Administration (see Appendix 3).

Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the volunteers in South Tipperary who make my community a better place.

I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Marie Claire Van Hout, Dr Niamh Murphy, Michelle Foley, Shane O' Dwyer and Petra Eltrop, the board of South Tipperary Volunteer Centre and staff (Amanda Quigley and Derek Fanning) for their contribution to this research and for believing in me.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the support from my family.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this research to a person who has stood by me and motivated me over the past three years; she is a wonderful person and a dear friend, Mrs Claire English (1976-2012) R.I.P.

Declaration



**Waterford Institute of Technology
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I hereby certify that the above-named thesis represents my own work.

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Date 8/5/2012

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Dissemination of Work.....	4
Conference	4
Journal Publications.....	4
Acknowledgement	5
Dedication.....	6
Declaration.....	7
Chapter 1 – Introduction	13
Chapter 2 - Review of Literature	19
Introduction.....	19
Volunteering	19
Table 1 - Snyder and Omoto 2002 Stages of Volunteering Process.....	25
Conclusion	29
Social Capital Theory	30
Figure 1 - The Social Capital Framework (Boeck et al., 2006:1).....	33
Volunteering Processes and Social Capital	33
Conclusion	37
Chapter 3 – Methodology.....	39
Research Design	39
Recruitment.....	40
Table 2 - Participants Profile	40
Administration of the Research	40
Table 3 - Social Capital Tenets.....	41
Data Analysis.....	41
Table 4 - Calculation of Total Capital Score (TCS).....	44
Face and Content Validity	45
Ethical Considerations	47
Chapter 4 - Research Setting and Current Volunteer Profiling	49
Introduction.....	49
Research Setting	49
Figure 2 - Map of South Tipperary.....	50

Transport Links.....	50
Levels of Unemployment	51
Table 5 - Unemployment Levels in South Tipperary 2008-2011.....	51
Economic Indicators/Social Class	51
Other Factors	51
Rates of Volunteering	51
Categories and Themes for Volunteers and Organisations.....	52
Categories Table	53
Table 6 - Volunteer Categories.....	53
Salesforce™.....	53
Figure 3 – Showing frequency of volunteers by Gender for years 2008-2011	54
Volunteer Gender.....	55
Figure 4 - Volunteer Gender by Year	55
Age.....	56
Figure 3 – Frequency of volunteer by Age Profile.....	56
Volunteers by Nationality	57
Figure 4- Frequency of volunteers by Nationality.....	57
Volunteer registrations.....	58
Figure 7 – Number of registered volunteers	58
Figure 5 – Number of Registered Organisations 2008-2011	59
Recruitment Methods of Volunteering	60
Figure 6 - Volunteer Recruitment Method	60
Reasons for Volunteering	61
Figure 7 - Main Reasons for Volunteering.....	61
Volunteering Interest	62
Figure 8 - Volunteers Interest	62
Conclusion	63
Chapter 5 – Qualitative Results.....	64
Introduction.....	64
Table 7 - Demographic for Volunteer Participants.....	64
Table 8 - Demographic for Organisation Representatives	64
Themes.....	64
Volunteer Participation and Trajectories	65
Volunteering Motives, Socialising and Reciprocity.....	71

Volunteers and Sense of Belonging.....	75
Well-being and Productivity in Volunteer Associational Networks	81
Volunteering and the Contemporary Economic Climate.....	84
Interplay between Volunteering, Training and Employment	86
Conclusion	95
Chapter 6 – Quantitative Results	96
Demographic Information	96
Figure 9 - Participants by Gender (total n=82).....	96
Figure 10 - Participants by Age Category (total n=82)	97
Figure 11 - Participants’ by their Area of Residence (total n=82)	97
Figure 12 - Relationship Status of Participants by Percentage (total n=82).....	98
Figure 13 - Employment Status of the Participants (total n=82).....	99
Figure 14 - Educational Status of Participants (total n=82)	100
Volunteering Status	100
Figure 15 - Activity Data for Participating Volunteers	101
Figure 16 - Region of Participation for the Active Volunteers	101
Figure 20 – Showing the participants’ participation in volunteering	102
Figure 21 – which best describes your participation in volunteering	103
Figure 17 - Time these Volunteers Participate in Activities.....	104
Volunteering in the Community	105
Figure 23 shows the responses for the participating volunteers for statement 1.	105
Figure 24 showing the response rate in percentage for statement 2	106
Level of Impact.....	106
Table 9 – Showing mean score for level of Impact	106
Table 10 – Level of impact score of volunteering by frequency and percentage	107
Social Capital.....	108
Table 11 - Social Capital Responses	108
Social Capital Contribution	109
Figure 25 – showing the distribution of combined T.C.S. by frequency.....	110
Table 12 – Show the frequency distribution table for T.C.S.	110
Relationship between Participants Variables and T.C.S. Score	111
Table 12 - Gender Contribution to Social Capital	111
Table 14 – showing the age profile by contribution to social capital status.....	112
Table 15 – showing the frequency and percentage of social capital status by the	
relationship status of the participants	113
Table 13 - Social Capital by Relationship Status	114
Table 17 – Contributors to social capital by educational status.	116
Table 18 – Showing the participation of volunteering by the type and the	
contribution to social capital status	117

Table 19 – Showing the correlation coefficient for T.C.S. and level of impact. .	118
Chapter 7 - Discussion.....	119
Chapter 8 - Conclusion.....	129
References.....	132
Appendices	149
Appendix 1 - Policy to Support Volunteer Centres.....	150
Appendix 2 Publication 1.....	157
Current levels of Volunteering in Ireland.....	159
Appendix 3 - Publication 2: International Journal of Volunteer Administration.	194
Appendix 4 - Data Analysis.....	204
Appendix 5 - Pilot Survey	206
Appendix 6 - The Final Survey	209
Appendix 7 - Interview Questions.....	212
Appendix 8 - Dashboards	213
Appendix 9 - Quality Standards	216
Appendix 10 – Generic Skills Schedule.....	242
The end	243

Table of Tables

Table 1 - Snyder and Omoto 2002 Stages of Volunteering Process.....	25
Table 2 - Participants Profile	40
Table 3 - Social Capital Tenets.....	41
Table 4 - Calculation of Total Capital Score (T.C.S.).....	44
Table 5 - Unemployment Levels in South Tipperary 2008-2011.....	51
Table 6 - Volunteer Categories.....	53
Table 7 - Demographic for Volunteer Participants.....	64
Table 8 - Demographic for Organisation Representatives	64
Table 9 - Level of Impact	106
Table 10 - Impact of Volunteering	107
Table 11 - Social Capital Responses	108
Table 12 – Show the frequency distribution table for T.C.S.....	110
Table 13 - Gender Contribution to Social Capital.....	111
Table 14 – showing the age profile by contribution to social capital status.....	112
Table 15 – showing the frequency and percentage of social capital status by the relationship status of the participants	113
Table 16 - Social Capital by Relationship Status	114
Table 17 – Contributors to social capital by educational status.	116

Table 18 – Showing the participation of volunteering by the type and the contribution to social capital status	117
Table 19 – Showing the correlation coefficient for T.C.S. and level of impact. .	118

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - The Social Capital Framework (Boeck et al., 2006:1).....	33
Figure 2 - Map of South Tipperary	49
Figure 3 – Frequency of volunteer by Age Profile	56
Volunteers by Nationality	57
Figure 4 – Volunteer by Gender	54
Figure 5 - Volunteer by Age Profile	56
Figure 6- Volunteers by Nationality	57
Figure 7 - Main Reasons for Volunteering	61
Volunteering Interest	62
Figure 8 – Number of Registered Organisations 2008-2011	59
Figure 9 - Volunteer Recruitment Method	60
Figure 10 - Main Reasons for Volunteering	61
Figure 11 - Volunteers Interest	62
Figure 12 - Participants by Gender (total n=82).....	96
Figure 13 - Participants by Age Category (total n=82)	97
Figure 14 - Participants’ by their Area of Residence (total n=82)	97
Figure 15 - Relationship Status of Participants by Percentage (total n=82).....	98
Figure 16 - Employment Status of the Participants (total n=82).....	99
Figure 17 - Educational Status of Participants (total n=82)	100
Figure 19 - Region of Participation for the Active Volunteers	101
Figure 20 – Showing the participants’ participation in volunteering	102
Figure 21 – which best describes your participation in volunteering	103
Figure 22 - Time these Volunteers Participate in Activities.....	104
Figure 23 shows the responses for the participating volunteers for statement 1.	105
Figure 24 showing the response rate in percentage for statement 2	106
Level of Impact.....	106

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The first chapter provides an introduction to this thesis; it contextualises the study by presenting a brief historical overview of volunteering along with the current situation of volunteering in Ireland.

Ireland has a longstanding history of diverse volunteer action (Donoghue, 1998; Volunteering across Europe Country Report, 2010). Literature written on the Irish peasant society looks at the practice of volunteering through ‘*cooring*’ and the organisation of a ‘*meithe*’, with ‘*cooring*’ deemed essential to the maintenance of the social fabric of Irish peasant society up until the 1960s (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968). Indeed, voluntary and community civic engagement have played a fundamental role in medical and welfare charity provision in the 18th century and contributed to the foundations of modern independent Ireland in the 20th century (Harvey, 2012). There was a strong surge of voluntary activity grounded in social solidarity and cultural nationalism in the late nineteenth century (i.e. ‘*Conradh na Gaeilge*’, ‘*Muintir na Tíre*’ and the Gaelic Athletic Associations), and also within rural and parish based communities (i.e. ‘*cooring*’ or ‘*comhair*’ meaning ‘*to cooperate*’) (National Committee on Volunteering, 2002). The presence of such civic action is essential elements of modern, democratic society, with specific focus on wellbeing and welfare of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals (Harvey, 2012).

In the 1960’s community development in predominantly urban areas emerged in Ireland with support from the state and European Commission. The Irish

'volunteering infrastructure' began to gain ground in the late 1990s, with the formation of the Volunteer Resource Centre (later known as Volunteer Ireland) in 1997, which aimed to improve active citizenship, social capital and social entrepreneurship. The voluntary and community sector became a field of research, study and analysis in the 1990's, with early studies focusing on volunteering and the role of the volunteer (Donoghue, 1998). The *'White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector'* was published by the Irish Government in 2000 and its successor *'Towards 2016'* proposed relations between the state and the community/voluntary sector to include formal recognition of volunteer contribution to civic engagement and participative democracy; the designation of voluntary activity units in relevant government departments, development of consultative mechanisms, allocation of funding, regular policy for a and government commitment to implement key actions. These roles in the form of voluntary social activities are also portrayed in the Irish Constitution §18.7, and referred to in title II.8B of the Treaty of Lisbon as the need for *'open, transparent and regular dialogue'* within civic institutions.

The *'Professional Association of Volunteer Managers Ireland'* (PAVMI) was founded in 2000 to develop the profession of volunteer management, strengthen existing networks of volunteer managers, assist in access of resources, organise national conferences, develop a code of ethics and shape volunteer policy guidelines. In 2005, the Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs report entitled *'Volunteers*

and Volunteering in Ireland', made further recommendations concerning the country's volunteering policy, volunteering infrastructure and funding issues. The Taoiseach established the Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2006, which aimed to promote active citizenship (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007). Currently, Volunteering Ireland as national volunteer development agency works to address key volunteer policy areas (social inclusion, inclusive volunteering, unemployment and welfare, youth and senior volunteering, child and vulnerable adult protection, and volunteering in Europe) through advocacy, research, organisational development, volunteer promotion and infrastructure development. These include the *'Ireland Involved Awards'*; *'Safeguard Programme'*, *'Ireland Involved Online'*; PAVMI, and the *'Dublin City Volunteer Week'* (Volunteering Ireland, 2010). It is also the National Co-ordinating Body for the *'European Year of Volunteering 2011'*, which marks the tenth anniversary of the U.N. *'International Year of the Volunteer 2001'* initiated to recognise the valuable contribution of volunteers in Europe, and to promote social and political mechanisms for volunteer promotion (Cattana *et al.*, 2011). Ireland will also host the *'International Association for Volunteer Effort'* (IAVE) 2012 World Summit on Volunteering in Dublin.

Estimations of current volunteer levels in Ireland remain cloudy. The Irish National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in their report entitled *'Policy Implications of Social Capital'* stated that volunteering levels in previous timeframes were approximately 20% of the general population, with participation in volunteering higher among older individuals (40-64 years), those with higher education attainment and among higher socio-economic

status (NESF, 2003). The report also mentioned that those performing house duties, disabled or ill were less likely to volunteer. Later statistics, with the inclusion of volunteer questioning in the 2006 Census, showed that social or charitable work was most common, with volunteer participation reported in 16.4% of the adult population, and more common amongst 45-54 age groups (CSO, 2006). Indeed, research shows that educational level, religiosity, age and gender are significantly associated with levels of participation in volunteer activities (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2004; Bekkers, 2005; Hill and Russell, 2009; Drever, 2010). Of note is that the Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2007 also reported an increase in national volunteering rates. However, a recent report has indicated that Ireland's recession has become a contributor of uncertainty within the community and voluntary sector, with significant contraction in staff numbers and incomes, and increasing reliance on volunteer participation (Harvey, 2012).

Volunteer Centres Ireland (VCI) commenced operation in 2001. Volunteer centres act as '*brokers*' between individuals who want to undertake voluntary activity and organisations that seek to involve volunteers. Their primary function is to match individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate volunteering opportunities, and to offer information and support to volunteers and organisations through a range of services. Local volunteer centres provide an invaluable link between volunteer-involving organisations and individual volunteers and are a vital element of the volunteering infrastructure of any country. Since its inception, the membership of VCI have lobbied Government departments to support a national infrastructure of

volunteer centres, central to the recommendations of a Governmental report on active citizenship entitled *'Tipping the Balance'* (2002) and *'Volunteers and Volunteering in Ireland'* (2005). Volunteer Centres Ireland currently consists of 23 member volunteer centres. The year 2011 will be remembered in Ireland as a year of dramatic changes as the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs merged *'Volunteer Centres Ireland'* and *'Volunteer Ireland'*. The cohesion of these national organisations also coincided with the department itself being changed to the Department of Environment Community and Local Government. The research was funded and support by the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre, Cahir, Co. Tipperary, Ireland, where the researcher works as centre manager.

Research has underscored the contribution of volunteering to civic engagement and active citizenship, and thereby to individual and community forms of social capital in the form of social inclusion, social connectivity, well-being, trust, relations in associational life and democratic participation (Whiteley, 1999; Claibourn and Martin, 2000; Wollebaeck and Selle, 2002; Wollebaeck and Selle, 2003; Freitag, 2003; Mayer 2003; Meier and Stutzer, 2004; Mayer, 2003; Freitag, 2003; Prouteau and Wolff, 2004; Yeung, 2004; Parboteeah *et al.*, 2004; Bekkers, 2005; Carlo *et al.*, 2005; Okun and Michel, 2006; Okun *et al.*, 2007; Brunie, 2009). This concept forms the basis for the study rationale which utilises a sequential mixed method approach to investigate the contribution of volunteer processes, experiences, social situatedness and outcomes to individual and group social capital amongst volunteers in South Tipperary, Ireland.

This first chapter provided an introduction to volunteering and how it has evolved and developed over the past three decades in Ireland. The next chapter of this thesis will present a review of the literature on volunteering and furthermore its connection with Social Capital theory.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in their Human Development Report (2002:7) underscored that volunteerism represents *“enormous scope for broadening participation in governance and promoting more equitable outcomes for people.”* Volunteer processes remain a fundamental part of today’s life courses (Primavera, 1999), with all forms of social, human and cultural capital having positive associations with volunteering (Parboteeah *et al* 2004). At international level, volunteering has also been recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 and 2003, which passed resolutions to give clear guidance on how to actively promote volunteering (Pansieri, 2003). The World Bank in 2003 emphasised the interplay between volunteer opportunities, participation and community spirit to levels of country, community and individual social capital (Pansieri, 2003). The United Nations Volunteer Co-ordinator Flavia Pansieri addressed the opening of the 2nd International conference in 2003 titled *“Volunteerism, the heart of social capital”* in which she focused the audience attention on volunteering as a much needed resource in today’s world, and said:

“When I speak of social capital in that context, I am referring to traditions of engagement, trust, solidarity and reciprocity that exists in every society...When we talk about mobilising social capital, some of the important elements that come to mind is the need for recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion” (Pansieri, 2003:1).

Volunteering

The definition of volunteering remains contested (Harris, 2000; Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003), and is essentially an activity

engaged in with free choice, which does not involve remuneration and benefits those beyond an individual's immediate family network (Zappala, 2000; Brooks, 2005). Definitions of volunteering vary culturally in terms of level of participatory activity and dimensions of '*net cost*' to the volunteer (Handy *et al.*, 2000; Meijis *et al.*, 2003). Research has explored a continuum of volunteering ranging from participation in service delivery in '*liberal or welfare partnership models*' toward '*advocacy or leisure*' type activity in social democratic models (Lester *et al.*, 2004, Stevens, 2011). It can occur within statutory, voluntary and community sectors (Low *et al.*, 2007; Rochester *et al.*, 2010) and be categorised as mutual aid or self-help, philanthropy or service to others, civic participation and advocacy or campaigning (United Nations Volunteers (U.N.V.), 1999). Of interest is that the '*Volunteering across Europe Country Report*' in 2010 observed that Irish community and voluntary sectors have developed historically to deliver activities and services which in other European countries are sole responsibility of the state.

Volunteering can be classified as '*formal*' taking place within identified groups or organisations, or '*informal*' taking place between individuals (Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003; Volunteering across Europe Country Report, 2010; Hill, 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, the '*Volunteering across Europe Country Report*' (2010) underscored the diversity of volunteer action in Ireland, and recognised the contribution of '*informal*' and '*formal*' volunteerism within associational life (Donoghue *et al.*, 2006). However, several Irish reports dedicated to active

citizenship restricted their volunteering focus to civic participation and formal volunteering/community involvement, and have observed that the valuation of volunteering participation in recent times has changed from philanthropy to reciprocity and mutual resource acquisition, with the *'giving'* element of volunteering giving way to the existence of a mutually beneficial relationship (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007). Given the shift in Ireland to allocate greater amounts to funding to fewer organisations and the emergent drive to formalise and *'professionalise'* volunteering, the traditional altruistic values of volunteering within localised settings are increasingly set aside by volunteer demands for recognition, choice and short terms assignments (Volunteering across Europe Country Report, 2010). This occurs in line with Ireland's recession contributing to further uncertainty within the community and voluntary sector, with reduction in staff numbers and incomes, and increasing organisational reliance on volunteer participation (Harvey, 2012). This is echoed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin in 2010 who said: *"in times of unemployment and economic difficulty, volunteering has a more significant role to play than ever"* (Volunteering Ireland, 2010:19).

Despite these shifts in volunteer motives and reasoning behind involvement in contemporary Ireland, research shows that participation in volunteer activities reduces as the cost of the participation increases, with the participation rates increasing as individuals become entrenched within communities and perceive increased levels of trust within these reciprocal arrangements (Lee *et al* 2009). Participation levels also reduce in response to work related time constraints with increased rates of retirees, corporate sponsored volunteering and enforced

volunteerism changing the civic nature of volunteering (Price, 2002). Unemployment affords individuals more time to partake in volunteering and reflects greater demand for volunteers within voluntary and statutory sectors. However, research shows that those unemployed are least likely to volunteer, and funding restrictions in times of recession impose barriers to effectively managing volunteers (Hill 2011).

From an organisational perspective, volunteer activity within organisations can assist in recruitment and motivation of *'top talent'*, improve employee retention and job satisfaction, and stimulate employee productivity (Kirchmeyer, 1992; Smith, 1994; Parboteeah *et al.*, 2004). It is important to discuss the interplay between individual and organisational benefit. According to Wollebeak (2000) young volunteers are more interested in the action than the committee, with individuals wanting to spend their time completing appealing and significant activities, rather than being a part of a specific organisation. According to Dekker and Hallman (2003) the new organisational society will be more concerned with activities, short-term commitment, and quicker turnover and will be weaker on values. This change would create less loyalty to the organisation. However, Wollebeak & Selle (2002) have suggested that this approach can be successful, and have outlined three examples, the half public, half not-for-profit volunteer centres, where individuals carry out social work, while others take care of the paper work; and the third is people still gladly volunteer in order to organise their own cultural and recreational interests. Gaskin and Smith (1995) found that having volunteer staff helped to reduce the work load of the paid staff and contributed

to new skills, spirit and ideas. Gealatt (1992) also found volunteering brought people towards the organisation and achieved commitment. Volunteers may also promote and advertise the organisation that they are working with (Hamburger, 2008).

Volunteers are valued in the sense that without them community development, environment, education and health organisations could not continue to do the work that they do (Ruddle and Donoghue, 1999). Volunteers also bring diversity in their skills and abilities and an increased commitment, which have a positive impact on the non-profit-organisation. Just as employees' loyalty increases over time, volunteers also tend to be more committed to service organisations over time (Piliavin & Callero, 1991; Grube & Piliavin, 1996; Penner & Finkelstein, 1998). In terms of organisational factors, volunteers often choose their own working hours, which is of huge benefit to both the organisation and the volunteer (Kellogg and Chase, 1995). When the relationship is built and trust is established, satisfaction is obtained by both parties, with the volunteer process contributing to a sense of fulfilment, achievement and purpose for volunteers (Chase, 1978, 1981; Kellogg, 1995). Organisations also benefit by reducing their own levels of stress and delegating tasks to experienced volunteers. It is now widely believed that volunteering can be a stepping stone to employment and for those in employment volunteering can offer routes for career progression, in 1995, volunteering was described as an excellent way of making new contacts and helping business and career (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1996). Without perceived social capital, funding and the willingness of volunteers it would be

impossible to improve and maintain organisations (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Pfeffer & DeVoe, 2009).

It remains evident that volunteering participation is personal, voluntary and does not respond positively with externally dictated agendas, with volunteers needing to sense a common collective or connective purpose, opportunity to align themselves with the host agency and requiring on-going support and encouragement (Pathways through Participation, 2009; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). External environmental factors such as upbringing, family and social networks shape the volunteers choice of and level of participation, with individual motivation ranging from altruism to self-interest, and with access to resources dictating individual expectations, perceptions of perceived value of contribution and situational; factors relating to quality of volunteers experiences (Piliavin & Charng, 1990; Curtis *et al.*, 1992; McEwin & Jacobsen-D'Arcy, 1992; Palmer and Hoe, 1997; Wilson & Musick, 1997; Ellis, 1998; Newman, 2001; Ellis and O' Brien, 2001; Batson *et al.*, 2002; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003; Klandermans, 2004; Low *et al.*, 2007; Okun *et al.*, 2007; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). However, research also shows that social incentives for '*giving*' strongly stimulate intentions to give time and money (Bekkers, 2010). It is important also to consider the "*Stages of the Volunteer Process*" (Snyder and Omoto, 2002) which is a conceptual model of the volunteer process and presents detail on three stages and four defining levels of volunteering.

Table 1 - Snyder and Omoto 2002 Stages of Volunteering Process

Levels of Analysis	Antecedents	Experiences	Consequences
Individual	Personality, motivation, life circumstances	Satisfaction, stigma, organisational integration	Knowledge and attitude change, health
Interpersonal/Social Group	Group memberships, Norms	Helping relationship, collective esteem	Composition of social network, relationship development
Agency/Organisation	Recruitment strategies, training	Organisational culture, volunteer placement	Volunteer retention, work evaluation
Societal/Cultural Context	Ideology, service programs and institutions	Service provision, program development	Social capital, economic savings

Snyder & Omoto (2008) used the above model as a guide to their research on volunteering. The first *antecedents* stage was used to identify personality, motivational, and circumstantial characteristics of individuals who become involved in volunteering. Snyder and Omoto suggest that research focused on this stage would examine personality characteristics, motivational tendencies, peoples life circumstances and would predict who becomes more effective and satisfied in their work (Omoto & Snyder, 1990,1993,1995). Omoto, Snyder & Martino, 2000; Snyder & Omoto, 1992a, b; Snyder, Omoto, & Smith, in press).

The *experiences* second stage explores the psychological and behavioural aspects of the inter-personal relationships that develop among volunteers. At this stage, Snyder and Omoto (2008) examine correlates of satisfaction for volunteers and recipients of service, as well as factors that make for more

pleasant and rewarding experiences and those that detract from enjoyment (Kiviniemi et al, 2002; Snyder et al, 1990).

The *consequences* third stage explores the impact of volunteer service at different levels, the “*bottom line*” behaviours, involvement, willingness to recruit others and the consequences of giving and receiving volunteer assistance (Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Snyder et al., 1999). In addition to these sequential stages, the process characterises volunteering as a phenomenon and bridges between several levels.

The *individual* level calls attention to activities and psychological processes as the volunteer is in control of the involvement. The *interpersonal* level looks at the relationships the social networks and the helping relationship. The *organisational* level focuses on recruitment, managing and retention of volunteers. Volunteering typically takes place with or in a not-for-profit organisation and is not considering informal helping at this level. The *societal* level provides the links between the individual and the broader society (Snyder & Omoto, 2008).

The research study is cognisant of these aforementioned stages of volunteering and levels of influence, with these identified tenets contained in the qualitative questioning in volunteer and organisational interviews.

Gusfield (1975) identified two types of community, namely geographical in nature and human relationships with regard to location. This is particularly important given the chosen social capital theory for this work. Gusfield’s research discovered that a sense of community as a whole was formulated through social relationships and communication among people in the area.

However, these relationships often brought about exclusion between the groups of people working on different projects from the same area. Etzioni carried out a study from 1996 to 2001 and went on to further highlight the importance of consecutiveness and inter-relationships as he described community as a web of relationships amongst groups of individuals who shared a commitment to norms, values, meaning, common history and identity (Etzioni, 2001). When communities begin to grow and expand, Omoto and Synder (2008) observed a direct relationship with the increase in volunteerism. Omoto and Synder (2008) also discovered that the more developed communities had better participation levels within the communities; and the community as a whole benefits when individuals decided to participate in organisations like neighbourhood watch programmes. Brisson and Usher (2007) commented on those that owned their own homes were more civically active due to staying in their neighbourhood longer than those who were living in non-owner homes. According to Boeck, home owners may have a “*sense of belonging*” (Boeck, 2006). Families with high social capital are more likely to produce children who are positive in areas of general wellbeing, including mental and physical health, educational attainment and formal labour-market participation, concluding that ‘*social capital after poverty – is found to be the best predictor of children’s welfare*’ (Ferguson, 2006:8). In terms of socio-economic grouping, studies have shown that volunteering is positively associated with higher household income, educational status and social class (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999). There is no consensus in the literature on the effect of gender and volunteering; several studies emphasis the higher rate of volunteering among women (Wilson and Musick, 1997). Wilson shows that

women are more involved in voluntary work. Women are less active on the labour market, therefore they are considered to have more free time than their male counterparts.

WolleBaek (2000) observed that volunteers consider membership as important, with findings showing that volunteers aged fifty-five and above thought it was important that the activity took place within the organisation, whereas only 23% aged twenty five and under felt the activity was more important than the organisation. They also found that the older members expressed a stronger attachment to the organisation. Therefore, the issue of membership arises over the longevity of the volunteering experience (Knoke, 1995; Wollebaek, 1998, 2000). It was found that the participation in the community was also predictive of involvement in total hours of volunteering (Matsuba, 2007). Etzioni (2001) also discussed the internet as a “*sense of place*” which now needs to be considered, in that communicating with people on the internet has similarity to the same sense of community found among a group of people. Social networking sites and the internet act as an essential tool in today’s society to communicate with others and assist volunteer centres in contacting volunteers and community organisations, and creating cyber volunteer communities. Indeed, Tapscott (2009) defined the community as being linked between technology and people (Tapscott, 2009).

Research has also suggested that individuals that volunteer benefit from the experience by feeling better (Aquino & Reid, 2002). It has been found that volunteering provides a sense of belief, commitment to an action, sense of

efficiency, sense of satisfaction and fulfilment (Yeats and Youinss, 1995). Volunteers generally wish to make an impact on the lives of others (Snyder and Omoto, 1995). In relation to anti-social behaviour, volunteering is believed to foster trust, respect, empathy and tolerance for the common good and reduce likelihood of engagement in vandalism or preying on vulnerable individuals (Wilson & Musick, 2000). Harte & Atkins (1998) proposed that volunteer work might actually help to prevent delinquency among younger people and concluded that those who had undertaken volunteer work were less likely to engage in risky behaviour. It is unclear as to why volunteering may reduce anti-social behaviour; it may simply be the case that volunteering teaches young people pro-social values and offers them a sense of trust, empathy, tolerance and respect (Wilson and Musick, 2000). Other research indicates that volunteering incurs a positive effect on depression (Musick and Marc, 2003). Volunteering relates to well-being in two ways; namely psychological resources and social resources with psychological resources involving enhanced self-esteem and self-efficacy; and from a health point of view, improvement of self-efficacy decreasing stress (Musick and Marc, 2003). Volunteering enhances the individual's perception of the self and heightens confidence (Musick and Marc, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature has defined volunteering as an activity engaged in with free choice, without monetary benefits and is operated principally as a formal or informal arrangement between individuals and groups. Volunteering is shown to be hugely advantageous, acting as a means in which individuals can increase their participation within a community, also helping

to develop relationships and trust. Furthermore, it has shown to assist individuals to gain paid employment opportunities. Equally, volunteering participation and activity is shown to decrease deviant behaviour in society. The next section of the literature review will discuss volunteering and its relationship to social capital.

Social Capital Theory

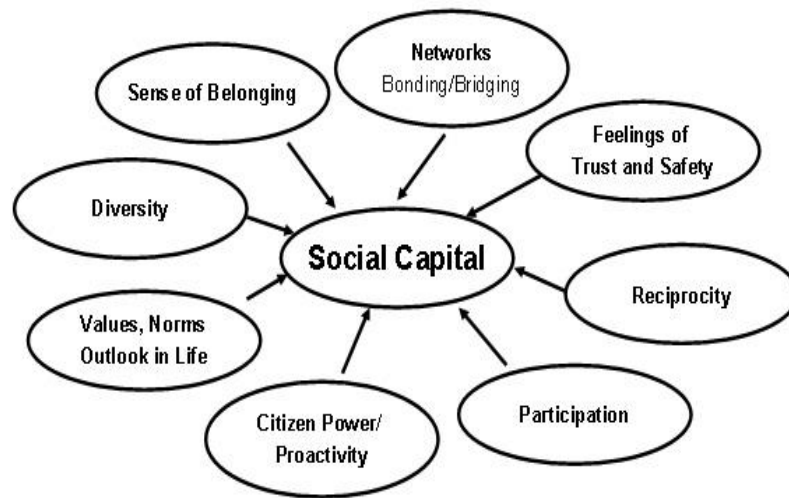
The concept of social capital was first discussed in 1916 by a social reformer Judson Hanifin who looked at rural school communities. He referred to the term as “*those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people*” (Hanifin, 1916:130). He was concerned with non-material good and measured good will, fellowship, sympathy and social action among the rural school community as indicators for social capital. As rural areas are without close neighbours it was the contact and relationship that satisfy the social needs and benefit of the community (Hanifin, 1999). Jacobs developed the value of networks and described this as “*networks are cities*” (Woolcock, 1998:192). Other scholarly contribution since that time have been made Pierre Bourdieu (1983) who looked at the contrast of social capital to cultural economic and symbolic capital, James S. Coleman (1988) moved the idea into academic debates and discussed human capital. However, it was Robert D. Putnam (1993; 2000) who launched the notion of social capital onto the stage of research and policy development, with his study in America about the decline of community, with “*Blowing Alone*” 2000 becoming a leading proponent of social capital theory. In this book he explored connectedness among people, the norms of reciprocity and how trust arises from networks

and how they used those networks to bridge and bond (Putnam, 2000). He illustrates this as follows; “*A society of many virtues but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital*” (Putnam, 2000: 9). Social capital according to Putnam is important for communities as it allows them to come together to problem solve, share, cooperate, move forward and in communities where trust and trustworthiness are higher the everyday business and social connects are more positive (Putnam, 2000). When people lack these social connections they are unable to voice views or debate and this may lead to people forming negative impressions on themselves and society (Putnam, 2000).

Definitions and interpretations of social capital vary (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002; Brunie, 2009) and include relational capital in the acquisition of network resources or structures in the form of social supports or social leverage between accessed or mobilised networks of individuals, groups or organisations, within a greater situation of bonding and bridging social capital; in the form of strong ties and dense networks between individuals with similar characteristics and resources (Lin 2001; Hulbert *et al.*, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000; Van der Gaag *et al.*, 2004; Briggs 2004; Lin 2008; Brunie, 2009). Networks are vital for the flow of information and are used to make our lives easier and assist us in achieving our ambitions (Putnam, 2000). Putnam’s (1993; 1995a; 1995b; 2000) understanding of social capital is that through face to face interaction individuals from different backgrounds learn to trust each other. Putnam, throughout his work looked at associations creating networks to allow for social trust, generate civic

engagement, and influence public affairs. Putnam distinguished between internal and external effects on participation. He considered the internal effects on participation as more closely related to the formation of social capital at the micro level and the external effects influencing the political system. At the micro level it was found that “*associations instil in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spiritedness*” (Putnam, 1993, 89-90). Bonding capital in particular relates to friends and family, with bridging capital relating to a group that is outside the individual’s immediate circle, e.g. workmates and acquaintances (Putnam, 2000). Other components of networking exist in the form of “*Linking Social Capital*” which relates to the links outside of the community and are often the more powerful or influential leverages for gaining resources (Woolcock, 2001). Despite these distinct levels of networking capital, social networks consist of different norms, trust and reciprocity, and are important in providing people with different opportunities, choices and power (Boeck et al, 2006), and the individuals’ sense of belonging (Marrow, 2004; Boeck, 2007). For the purposes of this research, the following figure will illustrate the social capital framework used to guide the design of research instruments.

Figure 1 - The Social Capital Framework (Boeck et al., 2006:1)



Volunteering Processes and Social Capital

The concept of volunteering appears grounded in social capital defined as “features of social organisation, such as network, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995:67) and “features of social life networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more objectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995b; 665), with its tenets relating to mutual extraction of resources, communication and cooperation, reciprocity, trust, sense of belonging, shared norms and values, and social networking (Putnam, 1993). Social capital research has underscored the outcomes of volunteering on civic engagement and well-being (Wollebaeck and Selle, 2002; Wollebaeck and Selle, 2003; Mayer 2003; Meier and Stutzer, 2004), trust (Whiteley, 1999; Claibourn and Martin, 2000; Mayer, 2003, Wollebaeck and Selle, 2003; Freitag, 2003), and formative networks in associational life (Wollebaeck and Selle, 2002; Prouteau and Wolff 2004; Yeung, 2004). The volunteer ethic is

grounded in trust, reciprocity, sense of belonging, shared norms and values, and social embeddedness, all of which are tenets of social capital theory (Putnam, 1995; Claibourn and Martin, 2000, Putnam, 2000; Mayer 2003, Wollebæk and Selle, 2003; Eurodiaconia, 2010). According to Article 29, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “*everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible*” (cited in Volunteering Ireland 2010:9). Social capital research has underscored how volunteering impacts positively on community engagement and well-being, trust and normative networks in associational life (Claibourn and Martin, 2000; Wollebæk and Selle, 2002; Wollebæk and Selle, 2003; Freitag, 2003; Mayer, 2003; Meier and Stutzer, 2004; Prouteau and Wolff, 2004; Yeung 2004; Parboteeah *et al.*, 2004).

Research on the generation of social capital in volunteering has described the contribution to social capital as arising from high levels of associational contact; in conjunction with the presence of dense networks of cross cutting inter-group ties within social governance (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Hurlbert *et al.*, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Lin, 2001a; 2001b; Stone and Hughes, 2002; Van der Gaag *et al.*, 2004; Briggs, 2004; Son and Lin, 2008; Brunie, 2009). Micro level research illustrates how the creation and maintenance of social capital occurs in the form of informal social volunteer networks are grounded in active, passive and multiple familiarities within groups (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002; Wollebæk and Selle, 2002; Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2004; Antoni, 2009). Indeed, the Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2006 commented on Ireland’s richness in informal social

networks, with the National Committee on Volunteering (2002) stating that volunteering in Ireland contributed to a key source of Irish ‘*social capital*’. Irish research has also commented on how volunteering can strengthen social capital and social connectiveness, with the volunteer participant immersing him/herself into a relational engagement which contributes to the building of social units, community or group cohesiveness, shared social values and norms, community sustainability, and ultimately economic and social development (Healy & Cote, 2001; Donoghue et al., 2006).

Research has underscored how social capital theory can improve health and well-being (Cobb, 1976; House *et al* 1988; Wheeler *et al* 1998; Kawachi and Berkman, 1999; Berkman 2000; Thoits and Hewitt, 2001; Krishna 2002; Musick and Wilson, 2003; Whiteley, 2004; Post, 2005; Perry *et al* 2008; Borgonovi 2008), education (Minstrom *et al* 1997; Field *et al* 2000) and work (to name but a few) (Lin 2001; Zhao, 2002) at a micro level and therefore be utilised as heuristic device to provide an understanding of volunteer processes, resources and outcomes (Herzog & Morgan 1993; Bekkers, 2005, Carlo *et al* 2005; Okun and Michel, 2006; Okun *et al* 2007; Brunie, 2009). However, the measurement of volunteering impact on social capital remains problematic in terms of the identification of causal mechanisms within a multiplicity of individual, micro and macro level factors. Volunteer contribution to social capital is dependent on individual embeddedness within such volunteer and group networks of relationships, synergies between individuals and groups or communities, and levels of expressive and instrumental civic actions (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; N.E.S.F., 2003; Son and Lin,

2008; Brunie, 2009). This is perhaps exemplified in the following quote:
“Sometimes volunteers change things in small places, sometimes they rock very large boats and sometimes they change the course of history. Tonight we salute their courage, fidelity and their investment in our communities.”
President of Ireland, Mary McAleese cited in Volunteering Ireland 2010:11).

Indeed, Parboteeah *et al* (2004) emphasise that individuals in collectivist societies are more likely to volunteer, with the collective social capital approach placing greater emphasis on the quality of relationships and levels of mutual trust and reciprocity between individuals (Schafft and Brown, 2000; Uphoff 2000; Ostrom, 2000; Ostrom and Ahn, 2001, 2003, 2008; McCleneghan 2000; Paxton 2002; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004; Claridge, 2007). Volunteers are considered an indicator of structural and cognitive social capital due to their levels of organisation, cooperation and mutual resource acquisition which is dependent on their embeddedness within such volunteer and group networks of relationships, synergies between individuals and groups or communities, and expressive and instrumental civic actions (Putnam 1993, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Son and Lin, 2008; Brunie, 2009). Motivations for volunteer participation vary, with intrinsic motivation boosting levels of familiarity and social relations, and assisting the development of thick and thin trust (Saguaro Seminar, 2000; Antoni, 2009). Of interest for this work is that social capital can be categorised into bonding and bridging capital, with *‘inclusive networks’* relating to the family, peer and friendship relations and contributing to a sense of belonging and inner affirmation; with *‘exclusive networks’* creating links between those outside of

the individuals immediate circle and aiding in the generation of new identities and reciprocal norms (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Warren *et al* 2001; Boeck *et al* 2009). Putnam (2000) illustrated this difference as per incurred consequences – “*Bonding social capital is...good for getting by but bridging social capital is crucial for getting ahead.*” Other research on the generation of social capital volunteering describes the contribution to social capital as arising from high levels of associational contact in conjunction with the presence of dense networks of cross cutting inter group ties within social governance (Varshney, 1998; Narayan, 1999; Smith 1999; Stone and Hughes, 2002).

Conclusion

Thereby, the current research aims to utilise social capital as heuristic device to illustrate inner and outer trust, social connectivity, associational relations and community engagement as situated within volunteer and host organisation experiences. Building on earlier work by John Wilson and Marc Musick, volunteer benefits derived from volunteer participation far outweigh and relinquish the volunteer act itself. The research intended to firstly explore volunteer experiences using social capital experiences and secondly devise a social capital questionnaire which could be used for the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre to assist future volunteer placements and administration processes. The centre is also responsible to implement the quality standards as set out by Volunteer Ireland (see Appendix 9). Quality standards are also implemented through the department’s policy to support volunteer centres (see Appendix 1).

The next Chapter shall present the research methods adopted to measure the principal aims of the study. It will describe how the research was conducted in both the qualitative and quantitative phases and provide an overview of the tools developed and utilised in the research.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Research Design

The aim of this study was to garner a greater understanding of the lived experience of volunteer participation and its contribution to social capital. The research involved a sequential mixed method study where qualitative research in the form of interviews was utilised to inform the development of a social capital survey tool to measure the extent to which volunteering added to social capital in the centre. Mixed method approaches within social research areas are generally justified on the basis of pragmatic grounds (O’Cathain *et al.*, 2007) and as the third research paradigm assisted in ‘*bridging the schism*’ between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005:375). Mixed methods research is defined as: “*the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research*” (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:212). It enriches research findings and optimises on research validity (Hartnoll, 1995; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; 2003; O’Cathain *et al.*, 2007). It may therefore be considered to represent a legitimate and ‘*stand-alone*’ research design (Creswell, 2002, 2003; Greene *et al.*, 1989; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, 2003; Hanson *et al.*, 2005:224). According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) the goal of mixed method research is not limited to achieving corroboration but rather to create depth of enquiry and subsequent understanding. In addition, mixed method research can be used not only to improve understanding of a research problem, but additionally to represent the needs of minority, at risk or under-represented

groups in society (Mertens, 2003, Hanson *et al.*, 2005) (see Appendix 7 for interview questions). An online survey was used to gather quantitative results (see Appendix 6 for the survey questions).

Recruitment

The South Tipperary Volunteer Centre assisted in the recruitment of volunteers willing to partake in in-depth interviews, with a convenience sample of 17 volunteers (nine females and eight males) and 11 organisation representatives (seven females and four males) achieved prior to data saturation. Snowball sampling for interview participants (Babbie, 1995) was limited to two referrals from each study participant, in order to reduce the bias effect of disproportionate membership of similar informal and formal volunteering social networks. The demographics for the volunteer participants and organisation representatives were as follows in Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Participants Profile

Age	Volunteer Participants n=17		Organisation Representatives n=11	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
26-35 years	3	1	0	2
36-49 years	2	4	1	4
50-59 years	2	2	2	2
60-70 years	1	2	0	0

Administration of the Research

A phenomenological approach (Hycner, 1999) was utilised in the participant interviewing to describe social phenomena within the volunteer experience from the perspectives of volunteers themselves and organisation representatives. Long and in-depth interviews (Boyd, 2001) were conducted

face to face in semi-public settings, and lasted between one and two hours. Interview questioning was conducted in conversational tone and without judgement, digitally audio recorded with permission and transcribed shortly after. The volunteer interview focused on questions relating to volunteer motives, experiences and reinforcers of continued participation, perceptions of trust and sense of belonging, and experiences of mutual resource acquisition and reciprocity in participation, with stakeholder interviews questioning with regard to volunteer placement, situation and roles within organisations.

The questions were guided by the following key social capital tenets:

Table 3 - Social Capital Tenets

Social Capital Tenets	Specific Categories
Community Attachment	Sense of Community Sense of Volunteer Group Sense of Belonging
Community Participation	Participation in Associations Participation in Local activities
Social Networks	Organisation Volunteers Organisation Staff Volunteer Networks
Trust	Trust between groups Trust between volunteers Trust between staff and volunteers
Reciprocity	Altruistic Motives for Volunteering Mutual resource acquisition Self- serving Motives for Volunteering

Data Analysis

Data analysis commenced during fieldwork via '*phenomenological bracketing*' which involved asking the volunteer and organisation representatives to describe and reflect on their experiences of both volunteering and volunteers (Davidson, 2000; Caelli, 2001). This phenomenological 'bracketing' or phenomenological reduction involved the

unpacking of phenomena (in this case volunteering experiences) by setting aside the question of the real existence of volunteering and peeling away its symbolic meanings until volunteering as experience remained (Zahavi, 2003). It was then possible to focus on volunteering as an experience which contributed to perceived individual and volunteer group social capital for the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007). Observational field notes and memos (Caelli, 2001) were incorporated into interview data analysis, which involved listening to and re reading transcripts, in order to reach a sense of '*gestalt*' (Hycner, 1999). Several briefing sessions were conducted between the researchers, in order to achieve inter-rater corroboration in the identification of initial units of meaning, placement within thematic categories and interpretation of data outliers or ambiguities (Moustakas, 1994; De Castro, 2003). The following themes emerged; 'Volunteer Profiles, Motivating Factors and Trajectories', 'Relationships, Trust and Sense of Belonging' and 'Informal and Formal Volunteering Processes in contemporary Ireland'.

Following interview data analysis, a sixteen item questionnaire was developed and used a computer administered survey with a group of volunteers working in South Tipperary (see Appendix 5 for pilot survey). With reference to the literature and the aforementioned qualitative study, 14 indicators of volunteering were developed from the social capital framework Boeck et al., (2007) which resulted in the construction of sixteen statements (see table 4 below and Appendix 6 for complete questionnaire). These included community spirit, trust in volunteering, sense of belonging, involvement, social relationships, participation, skill development, well-being, confidence,

awareness of others, awareness of diversity, and acceptance of other cultures, acceptance of disability or special needs, and rewards. The scale development consisted of a five point likert scale with participants' requested to indicate their level of agreement by ticking their preferred option for each of the listed statements. Each statement was scored using an arbitrary value, agree strongly = 4, agree =3, neutral=0, disagree=2, disagree strongly =1 and finally numerated to give a total capital score (TCS). This produced a scale of 0 to 64. Scores above thirty-two were deemed to indicate the contributory value of volunteering to social capital. Score less than thirty-two were considered not to contribute to volunteer based social capital.

Table 4 - Calculation of Total Capital Score (TCS)

Statement	Please circle your choice for each statement listed below;
1 Generally speaking there is a good community spirit in the area or areas I volunteer in;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
2 People that I volunteer with can be trusted;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
3 I feel a sense of belonging because I volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
4 The rewards of volunteering are greater than the input I give as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
5 Volunteering has increased my involvement in community life;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
6 Being a volunteer has improved my social relationships;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
7 I enjoy the feeling of participation when I volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
8 Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
9 I have learned new skills while participating as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
10 Volunteering has increase my sense of well-being;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
11 My confidence to try new things has been improved because of my work as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
12 Volunteering has increased my awareness of others;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
13 I have a greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures because of volunteering;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
14 Working as a volunteer has increased my understanding and acceptance of people with special needs or disability;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
15 Being a volunteer has raised my awareness of diversity in society;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
16 I have formed lasting relationships as a direct result of being a volunteer.	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly

Face and Content Validity

All sixteen statements were further assessed for face and content validity. These included an expert in social capital research, two faculty members of an academic institution, a manager of a volunteering centre, a statistician and two volunteering administration officers. Four volunteers were also asked to complete the pilot questionnaire and comment on the relevance, applicability, misunderstanding and instructions of the questionnaire. Time for completion was also measured, so as to increase the participation rate of the questionnaire. No major ambiguities were found in the contextual arrangement of the statements and through a process of discussion the final sixteen statements were agreed with the researchers.

Cronbachs alpha coefficient was used to calculate internal consistency and to check that the items in the scale were measuring the underlying construct, i.e. Social Capital in Volunteering. The impact of removing each item from the scale was examined by comparing each of the values to the final alpha value. On examination, all 16 items were above the recommended level of 0.7 for Cronbach alpha and therefore remained within the scale in the final calculation of the alpha value (Bland and Altman, 1997). The Total Capital Score (T.C.S.) had good internal consistency, with a Cronbachs alpha coefficient reported of 0.86.

Care was taken to develop a valid and reliable summated scale to measure for measuring social capital in volunteering. Using the social capital model from Boeck et al (2006) and the results of the qualitative study, sixteen statements

were constructed and tested for internal reliability. It appears that the scale developed is valid and reliable in measuring the extent that volunteering adds to social capital. This scale could be utilised as a dependant variable for a wide variety of research designs, including studies that attempt to measure social capital in volunteering based on demographic, organisational and individual attributes, and in causal comparative studies. The tool can also be used as an evaluation tool to assess volunteering development and assist in volunteer administration processes. Data can be obtained both formatively and summative. We also recognise that the small response rate is a problem in this study and it is feasible that this sample represent those who have stronger interest in volunteering activity. The research was confined to one geographical location and it may limit the extrapolation of results to Volunteers in general. However, it is possible to develop this scale further with the addition of indicator items to measure internal structure validity and assess dimensionality. Nonetheless, the main advantage of this scale is that it is short and can be easily administered and does not overburden the volunteer. Further research will determine if the scale is reliable in target populations. Data was collected over a four week period in 2011. At 90% confidence levels, a sample size of 84 was required to represent the population under investigation. Non- probability sampling was adopted for the study. All volunteers with a registered e-mail address at the volunteering centre were invited to take part in the questionnaire study. The sample consisted of all 613 individuals registered within the South Tipperary data base of volunteers in 2008-2011. Variables were collected on demographic characteristics to ensure the respondents were representative of the entire Volunteers' registered in the

region under investigation. Following the Dilman (1978) procedure for questionnaire administration, the survey was sent in three mailings (i.e. 1 week, 2 weeks and 4 weeks). A statement of purpose, including confidentiality and anonymity was prepared for the mailing to appeal to the respondents' altruistic sentiments. A return rate of 83(12%) and a useable rate of 71(10%) were obtained from the mailing. After the 6 week cut-off period the survey was terminated and the electronic data was imported into a standard software package, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (PASW 17). No information was available for the non-respondents so the demographic characteristics of the respondents were compared with Dashboard figures, a database used to record volunteering activity in the region. These were analysed and considered to be representative of the target population in relation to gender, age, level of education and employment status and deemed useable in the study

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was granted in 2010 at Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland. All participants gave informed written consent (Holloway, 1997) and were advised prior to participation with regard to research aims, confidentiality and ability to withdraw if and when they so wished. In order to eliminate potential bias, all questionnaires were emailed using Survey Monkey. As mentioned, in order to avoid conflict of interest and potential bias, an outside independent facilitator co-facilitated the qualitative fieldwork. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly ensured throughout the research process with all policies surrounding data protection maintained. The management of data and storage of hard copies were maintained in locked

filing cabinets under coded file. Passwords were used to open computer and to open data analysis software. The storage of all backed up information on a memory key as information gathered were backed up at the end of each session.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the methods used in both the qualitative and quantitative elements of the study. The next chapter shall present the information garnered from the current Volunteer Centre data systems, as profiling exercise for the study.

Chapter 4 - Research Setting and Current Volunteer Profiling

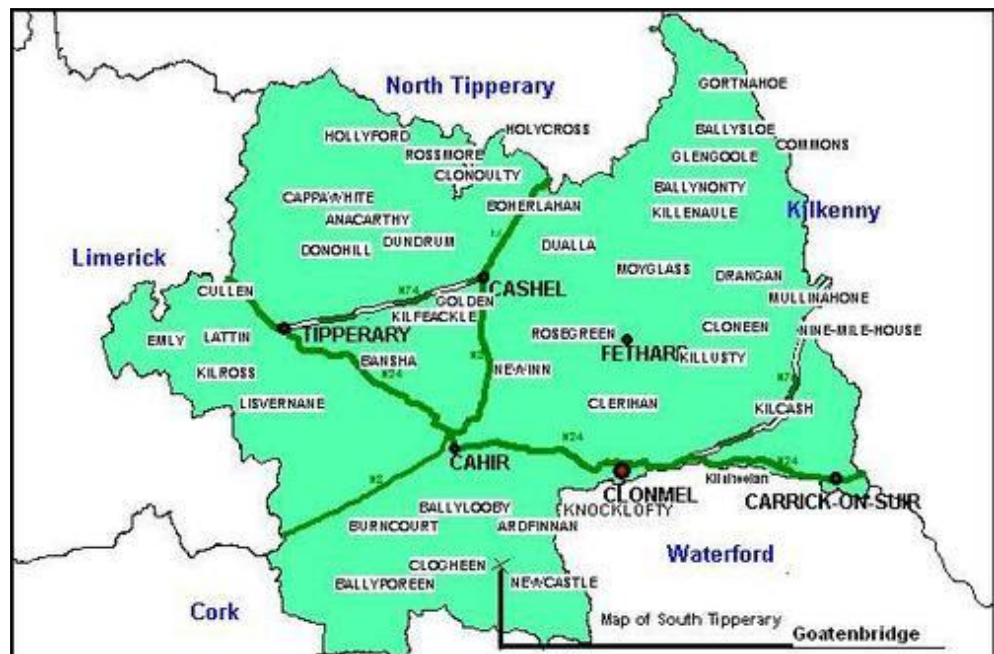
Introduction

The following chapter presents the research setting, transportation links, levels of employment and the current levels of volunteering activity in the south Tipperary region. It also presents the type of volunteering activities and the profile of individuals that volunteer in the region.

Research Setting

The geographical area for this study is South Tipperary County. The demographics of the county area laid out as South Tipperary is an inland county, located in the South East Region and bordered by Counties Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and North Tipperary. The South Tipperary Volunteer Centre serves the county-wide area. The population of South Tipperary is 88,433 according to the census of 2011. The population growth for the County over the period 2006-2011 was 6.3% or 5,212 people. The urban areas recorded low levels of growth in Carrick, Tipperary Town and Cashel and there was a decline in population in the urban area of Clonmel. The greatest increase in numbers of population was in the environs of all the main towns.

Figure 2 - Map of South Tipperary



The population density for South Tipperary of 95 people per sq mile. This suggests a likelihood of social issues related to rural isolation, and also impacts on the ability of isolated people to become involved in formal voluntary activity based within the urban centres. This is exacerbated by the poor public transport within the county, especially in rural areas.

Transport Links

Local transport is consists of a train commute to service the main Cork to Dublin line and the Waterford to Dublin line. Some bus services operate to and from major towns. However getting around the county itself, can prove to be a challenge. The rural link bus operates to help some people but overall, it is difficult for volunteers to get from different areas and the main mode of transport is by car.

Levels of Unemployment

As seen in Table 5 the significant increase in the unemployment rate from Dec 2010 to Dec 2011 in a rural county of this size this makes a significant increase to the county.

Table 5 - Unemployment Levels in South Tipperary 2008-2011

Year	Dec. 08	Dec. 10	Dec. 11
South Tipp.	1,385	1,936	9,038

Economic Indicators/Social Class

There are over 9,000 people unemployed in South Tipperary circa December 2011. There are over 1000 people who are long term unemployed, many of whom are now third generation unemployed. The Volunteer Centre is a member of the '*Social Inclusion Employment Support Strategy*' which operates under the South Tipperary Development Company. The groups are looking at different ways to support the unemployed and the Volunteer Centre is looking at engaging them in volunteer opportunities. The group estimates that South Tipperary has just over 700 graduates who are unemployed.

Other Factors

The population of young persons under 18 years in South Tipperary is 4,971.

Rates of Volunteering

According to 2006 national census, the greatest form of volunteering for people in South Tipperary was '*helping or voluntary work with a sporting*

organisation’ (4,359), although almost as many people (4,066), were involved in helping or voluntary work with a social or charitable organisation. Corresponding figures from the 2011 census are not yet available. Religious group or church involved 2,632 individuals, whereas political or cultural organisation had 1,007 individuals involved and other activities totalled at 3,011. The total number of individuals involved in one or more voluntary activities in the 2006 census was 11,483, compared to the total population of 88, 433 in the census 2011.

The next section of this chapter shall present Current Volunteer Profiling in the South Tipperary area.

Categories and Themes for Volunteers and Organisations

The current database system and the information that is stored within it, is used daily by the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre to maintain its records on volunteers, organisations, contact, placement rates and daily calendar for the centre and its staff and volunteers. The South Tipperary Volunteer Centre uses twenty-seven different categories in order to manage the organisation on its data base system (Salesforce), the same categories are also used to measure the area of interest amongst the volunteers. The categories are selected by the volunteer or organisation at registration. The selection will later be used to assist in the matching of the volunteer and the organisation. Three main themes used to record the results from three sources; the volunteer, the match and the organisations (see Appendix 4 for theme results from data gathered).

Categories Table

Table 6 below shows the categories that are used within the volunteer centre to categorise the organisation and the volunteer's main interest:

Table 6 - Volunteer Categories

<input type="checkbox"/> Animals	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Culture/Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Befriending
<input type="checkbox"/> Campaigning	<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Church Based
<input type="checkbox"/> Computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Education/Literacy
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Health/Disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Information Provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentor
<input type="checkbox"/> Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Older People	<input type="checkbox"/> Once-off
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone/Helpline	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Shop/Retail	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports/Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth/Children	<input type="checkbox"/> No Preference	Other:

Salesforce™

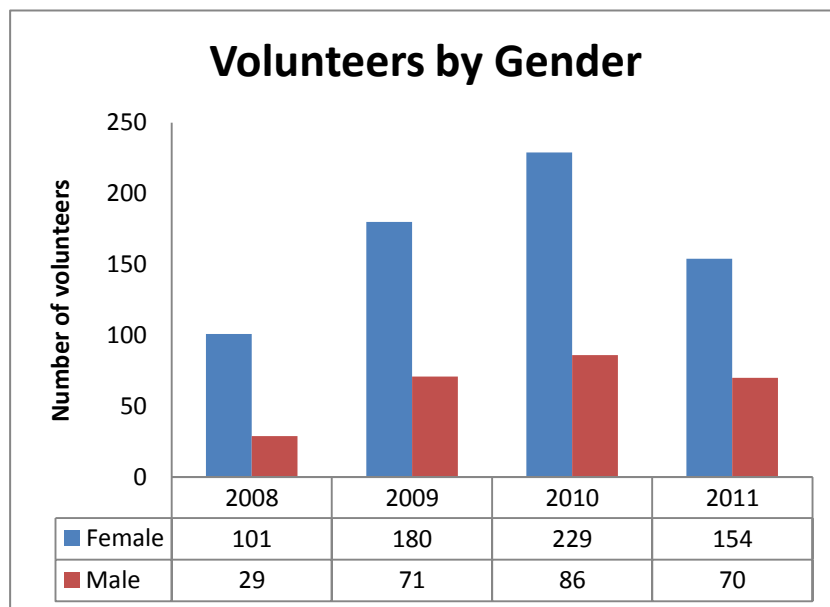
This database has been custom-designed for volunteer centres by Volunteer Ireland and Salesforce, and not only facilitates the day-to-day work of volunteer centres but enables up-to-the minute reporting on volunteering as it occurs throughout volunteer centres. The system was designed in 2005 and is used by all twenty-two centres. Volunteer Centres Ireland has worked with Salesforce over the past 7 years and continues to be tweaked and modified the system to meet ever changing demands of local centres, funders, volunteers and organisations. The system is used to identify, track and support volunteer programmes, and also to match volunteers' skills with volunteering opportunities. Salesforce is now used to collate approximately 1,500 records and provide statistical analysis to plan and provide for appropriate service delivery within the area. A system called Dashboards is used as a quick reference to show the daily work of the centre. At the end of a twelve month

period (January to December) they are collated into a year-end report (see Appendix 8 for 2008-2011 Dashboard Report).

The following is a selection of three points of information that has been used to record Salesforce information since 2008 and looks at three main profile areas, volunteer gender, age and registration numbers. I have included this information in order to present a current snapshot of volunteer profiles in the South Tipperary area.

Over the past four years the centre has continuously had more women than men register to volunteer as seen in Figure 3 below. The centre can clearly say that women are more likely to register to volunteer. Anecdotally the placement officers have reported an increased in unemployed male skilled labour approaching the volunteer centre to fill volunteering opportunities to utilise their skills and also to network for the possibility of being job ready.

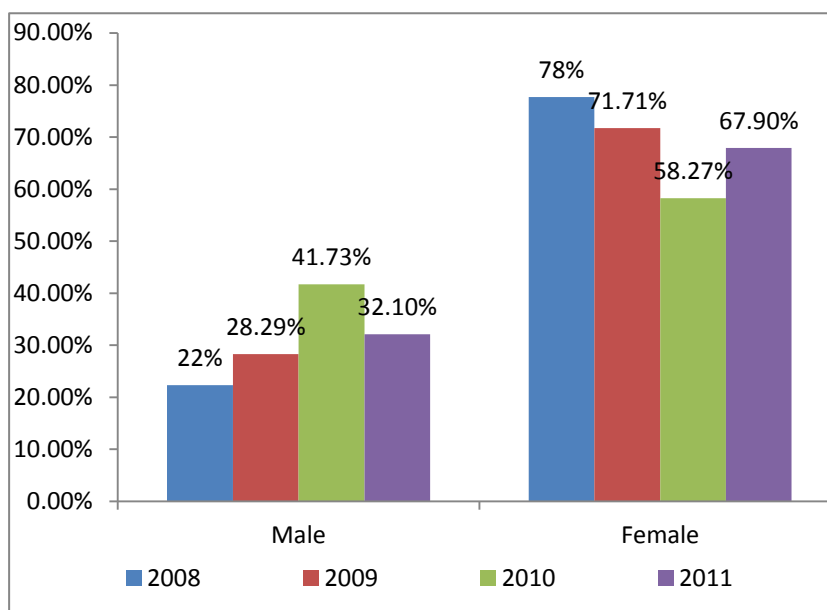
Figure 3 – Showing frequency of volunteers by Gender for years 2008-2011



Volunteer Gender

In the south Tipperary region, 664 of the registered volunteers are Female and 256 are male. The ratio of female to male volunteers is 2.6 females for every 1 male volunteer. The Figure 4 below shows the percentage breakdown of volunteers by gender from the year 2008 to November 2011 inclusive.

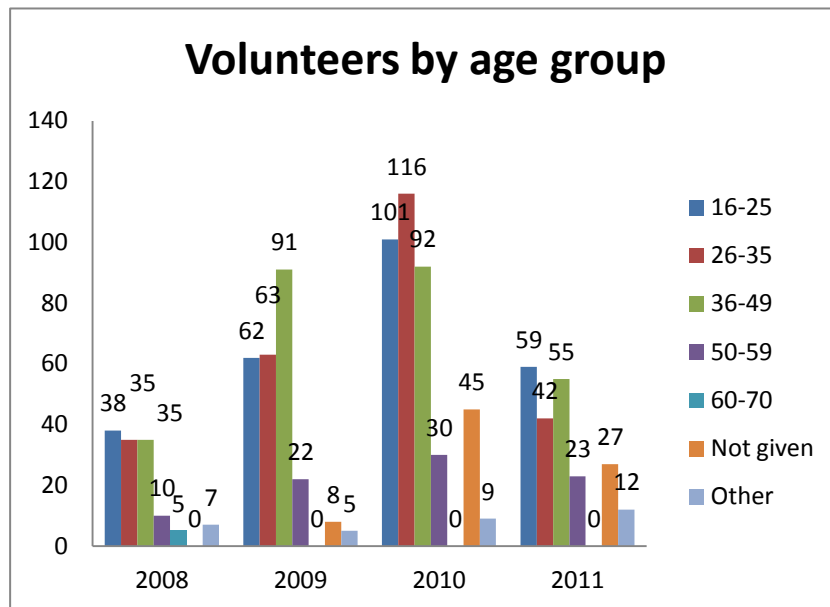
Figure 4 - Volunteer Gender by Year



Age

Since 2008 the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre has noticed the consistent steady increase of 16-25 age group over the four years period. This may be directly related to our project work, marketing and promotional campaigns with young people, for example, in schools, youth organisations, marginalised youth projects, and youth sporting groups. A person can actively volunteer once they have reached 16 years of age. In 2011, the highest participation in volunteering was observed in the 16-25 year age group. Figure 5 below indicates the volunteers by age group from 2008 to 2011. The highest levels of participation over this period is from the age category 36-49 years (273 volunteers) and then from the 16-25 year category (260 volunteers). As seen in Figure 5 below.

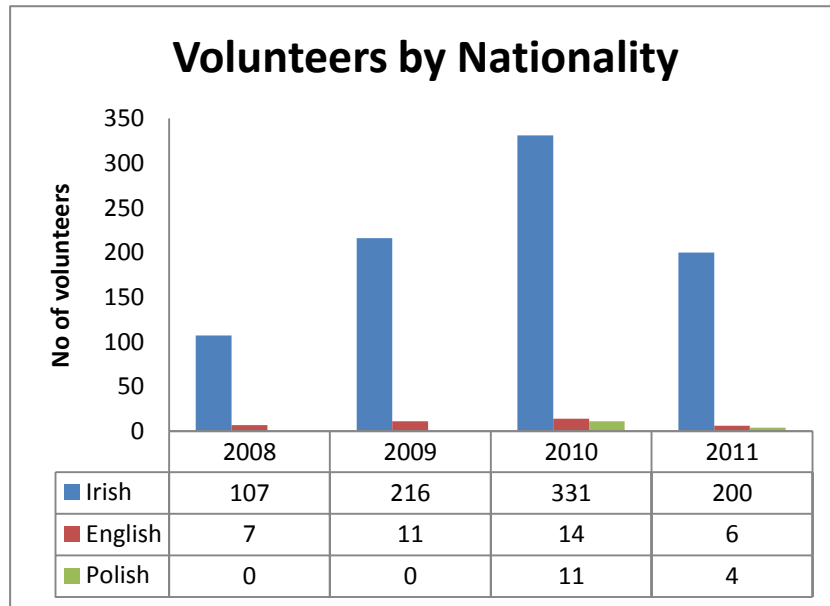
Figure 5 – Frequency of volunteer by Age Profile



Volunteers by Nationality

The volunteers' nationality is illustrated in Figure 6 below for the top three nationalities. The majority of the participating volunteers are Irish. There is small representation from America, Asia and other European nations.

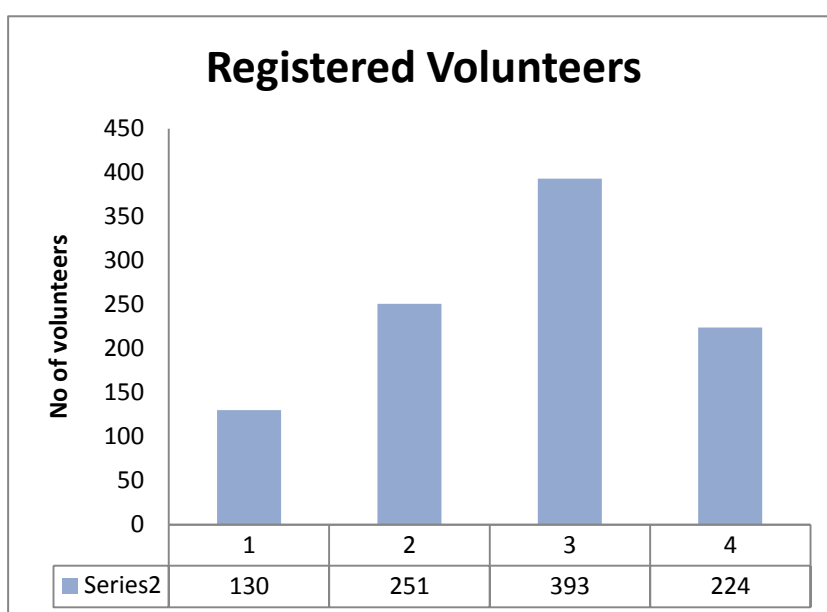
Figure 6- Frequency of volunteers by Nationality



Volunteer registrations

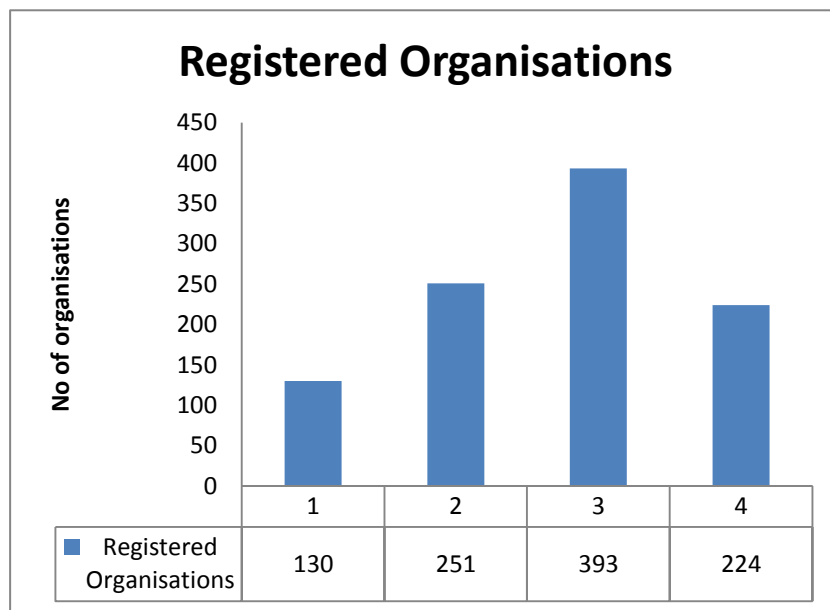
In 2008, 130 people were registered as volunteers, a further 251 volunteers registered in 2009, 393 in 2010 and a further 224 up to November 1st 2011 (see figure 7 below). The current number of volunteers registered at the South Tipperary volunteering centre is now 896. This represents 1% of the region's population.

Figure 7 – Number of registered volunteers



There are currently 358 volunteering organisations registered with the volunteering network as of November 2011. Figure 8 below shows the number of organisations that have joined the network since 2008. The South Tipperary Voluntary and Community Forum have addresses for over 700 non-for-profit organisations in South Tipperary. This represents 1% amount of the region's population.

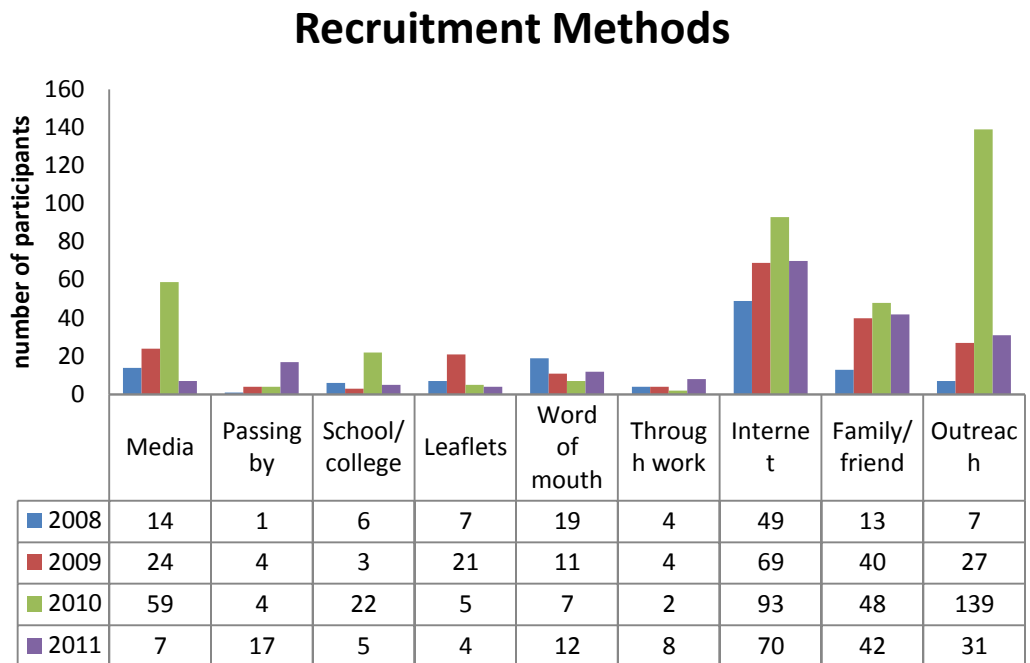
Figure 8 – Number of Registered Organisations 2008-2011



Recruitment Methods of Volunteering

The volunteer recruitment method 2008 -2011 is illustrated in Figure 9 below. Referrals by outside agencies' such as outreach and family and friends, are indicated as the best method of recruitment of volunteers in the South Tipperary region. On the non-referral, direct recruitment methods are best achieved through the Internet and other media related activities (i.e. radio etc.). Through work and passing by the volunteering centre is indicated as the least method of recruitment.

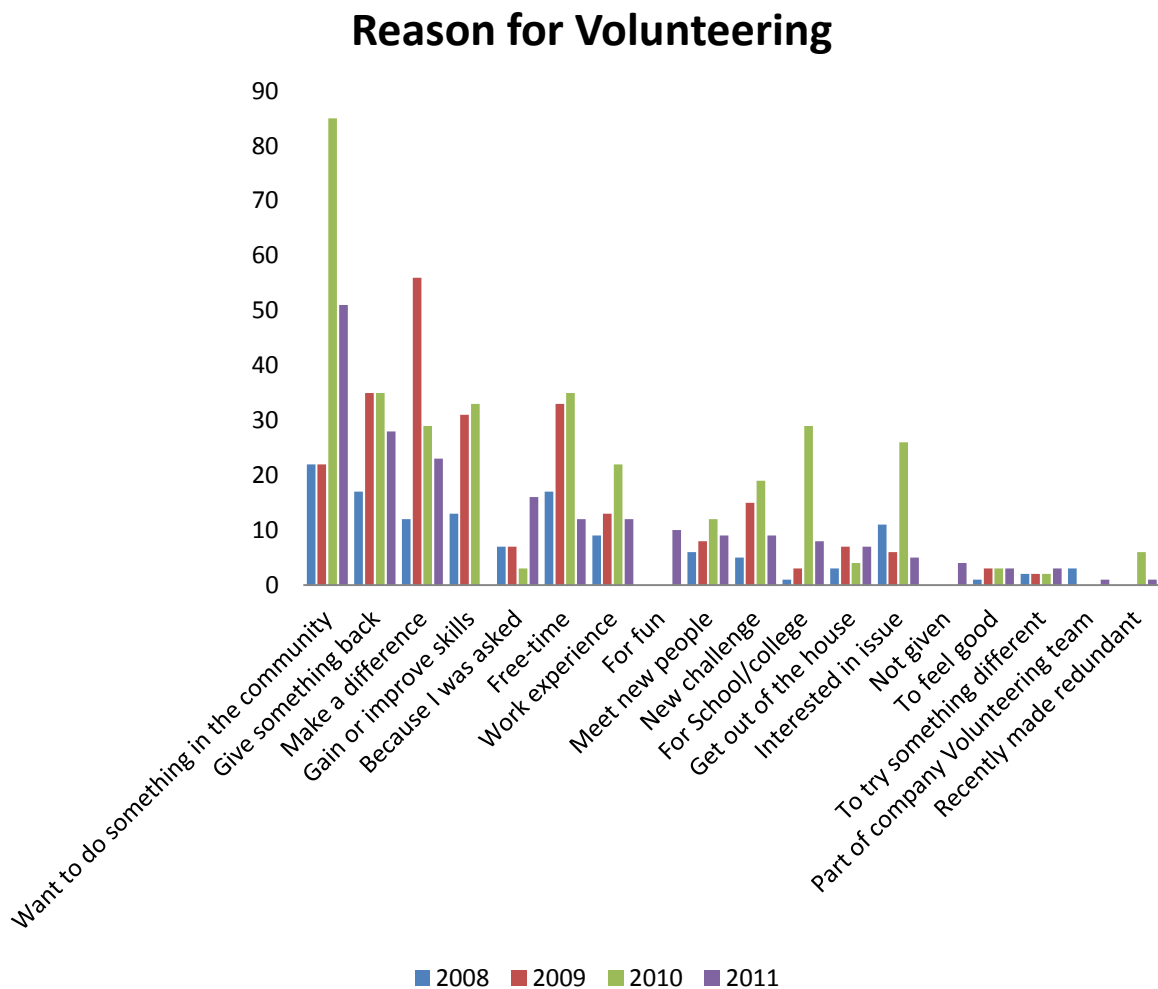
Figure 9 - Volunteer Recruitment Method



Reasons for Volunteering

Figure 10 below shows the main reasons for volunteering for 2008-2011. The reasons that appeared most frequently were related to the community and participation in the community. The reason ‘want to do something in the community’ was indicated as the highest reason, followed by ‘give something back’ and ‘make a difference’ when all four years (2008-2011) were taken into consideration.

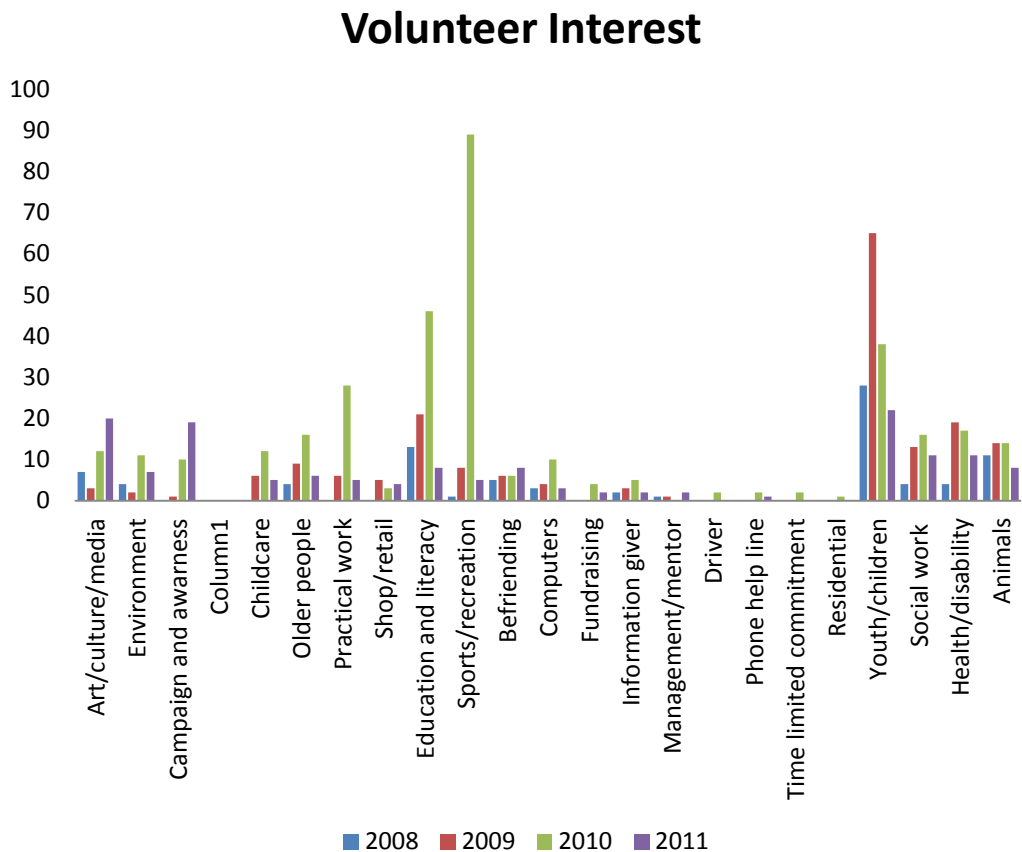
Figure 10 - Main Reasons for Volunteering



Volunteering Interest

Volunteering interest is shown in Figure 11 below. Highest levels of volunteering interest for 2008-2011 are centred on youth/children (total 153 Volunteers), sporting organisation (totals 103 volunteers) and health and disability (total 88 Volunteers). Lowest levels of volunteering interest are seen in residential (total 1 volunteer), driver (total 2 Volunteers) and phone line (total 3 Volunteers) activities.

Figure 11 - Volunteers Interest



Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented an overview of the region and demographic profile of volunteers in the South Tipperary. The next chapter will present the results of the qualitative study conducted with both the volunteers and volunteering organisation.

Chapter 5 – Qualitative Results

Introduction

The following chapter presents the results of the qualitative study undertaken with nine female and eight male volunteer participants (n=17), and seven female and four male organisation representatives (n=11). The demographic for volunteer participants and organisation representatives is presented in table 7 and 8 below;

Table 7 - Demographic for Volunteer Participants

<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
16-25 years	0	0
26-35 years	3	1
36-49 years	2	4
50-59 years	2	2
60-70 years	1	2

Table 8 - Demographic for Organisation Representatives

<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
16-25 years	0	0
26-35 years	0	2
36-49 years	1	4
50-59 years	2	2
60-70 years	0	0

Themes

The following thematic categories emerged from the data analysis: *‘Volunteer Participation and Trajectories’*; *‘Volunteering Motives, Socialising and Reciprocity’*; *‘Volunteers and Sense of Belonging’*; *‘Well-being and Productivity in Volunteer Associational Networks’*; *‘Volunteering and the*

Contemporary Economic Climate’; and *‘Interplay between Volunteering, Training and Employment’*.

Volunteer Participation and Trajectories

Volunteering can be categorised in terms of mutual aid or self-help, philanthropy or service to others, civic participation and advocacy or campaigning (United Nations Volunteers, U.N.V., 1999). Types of volunteer activity appeared primarily to serve others in the community and consisted of a wide range of activities and tasks (i.e. Meals on Wheels, adult literacy tutoring, Social Services, Lions Club, Youth Services, Addiction Services, and Childcare). Here follows several quotes from volunteer participants:

“I suppose it’s a bit of everything, I suppose some days I work ten, twelve hours and I do everything from meeting people coming in the door to cleaning and scrubbing floors, chatting with people, organising classes, trying to fit people into their proper niches maybe, if I feel somebody needed counseling, I would recommend that or suggest it, or if I think somebody should be in a particular class, maybe personal development they might need to regain their confidence, I would suggest personal development something like that; any of the classes going on in the place.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“Well I’ll put it to you this way, it opens up new avenues; somebody could have been working in a factory on a production line, and now they think they have a creative side and decide that’s what they really like now and it’s giving you a new opportunity; I’ve been doing the reception work answering the phone, typing up letters, looking up stuff on the web, emailing and stuff, I’ve been kind of doing that all my life and that’s what I kind of like, a nine to five job.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.4).

Gender stereotyping in the selection of volunteers and volunteer roles in some placements was described by one male volunteer participant who said:

“There should be yeah, I know if I go to a sports club, most of the people there are men, but I think with something as important as a youth organisation, there should be a mix; but in these sports organisations it’s nearly all men, and maybe some women don’t want

to get involved. I know there's probably a lot of people qualified in sport, and women would like to get involved, but maybe there's still a bit of the all-boys club about it, you know? Sometimes in organisations, it was all females, there was no mix and sometimes you need a mix; and sometimes when working with a load of fellas, they need a role model, I'm not saying the women are not, but the fellas would look up to a man, and the same with the girls groups would look up to a woman, if they had problems in their family and it was a man they would look at a man and say "all men are bad" you know...[PAUSE] All these sports partnerships and organisations...there's more women than men, if there was some more balance in that." (Male Volunteer, Participant No.1).

Several volunteer participants reported habitual volunteering pathways, with both choices of volunteer activities and invitations to volunteer grounded in past participation and said:

"With the XXXXX [ORGANISATION], I was always interested in first aid so I joined them when I was fifteen, and stayed with them until I was twenty-two. I had to leave because of work commitments, I moved out of the country and there wasn't a similar branch in the area I was living." (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

"I was asked to be part of the boxing committee, as another member knew that I used to do a lot of boxing." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

Other volunteer participants described being approached to partake in volunteering, and that the initiation of volunteering appeared spontaneous and opportunistic. Here follows their quotes:

"It wasn't really a conscious decision on my part to go out and do that, but probably because I'm having a good experience with this I will volunteer to continue this and maybe other types of volunteering in the future." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.5).

"Somebody asked me would I and I said I would, that's it really, I like being involved in things that are happening in the community." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.8).

Several female volunteers described volunteer participation in community activities for long periods of time ranging from twenty to fifty years in length, and which commonly commenced when new to the community and seeking to meet people and form relationships. Several female volunteer participants said:

“I’m volunteering since 1962; anything they would have, I would just go in as a volunteer on the evening. Anything that was going on in the town, I would volunteer to do it, if they were looking for help. I absolutely loved it and enjoyed it, and it’s been part of my life since I came to XXXXX [TOWN].” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“I’ve been volunteering since... [Pause] I’m actually volunteering since 1973, I was in XXXXX [ORGANISATION] before that, and I was a volunteer also. But I have worked in and out in between.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“I’m volunteering a lot of places and I suppose I’m volunteering all my life.”(Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

In contrast, the majority of male volunteers reported shorter and transient levels of volunteering participation, ranging from one to seven years. Here follows two quotes from male volunteer participants who said:

“I’m doing voluntary work at the moment, the past four to five years with XXXXX and XXXXX [ORGANISATIONS], yeah the past four or five years I’ve been involved with it, voluntary work, yeah.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“I am actually, yeah. I have two volunteer opportunities; one is a long term one. I tutor an adult learner; I’ve been at that, that’s been ongoing for three years. The other one is a temporary one, I would have German students on an exchange programme over at the moment and that’s going on for two weeks, we’re halfway through that at the moment.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.4).

Several organisation representatives also commented on the need for younger volunteers, with some organisations over represented by those in retirement. This appeared to be due to increased levels of time availability and commitment to help others at that age. Here follows several illustrative quotes from organisation representatives who said:

“There would be a reasonable mix between male and female but age is a problem, most of them at the XXXXX [ORGANISATION] are too old, older members not enough young people.” (Organisation Representative, Male No.3).

“The majority of our volunteers are older people, the majority of them are retired; we have more women than men, although we do have some younger people but they come and go if they get a job; whereas with the older people, there’s more of a commitment from that age group.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.9).

“The ages, they tend to be more settled, they range from late thirties to late fifties; and I have three male volunteers and three female volunteers.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.10).

“Yes, there’s a lady who looks after her mother, she’s a full-time carer, her mother is here on a Tuesday and she actually comes in as a volunteer, she’s always volunteered for the centre; even when her mother wasn’t coming here, she’s always come here; then there’s an elderly man he’s in his seventies, he’s been here since the centre opened; the other lady she’s about fifty, so her children are grown and she’s just looking for something to do to fill her time.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

Time spent volunteering ranged from one hour to several days per week, and appeared dependent on the range of responsibilities and level of contact with the community. Issues relating to time and level of participation were also discussed by organisation representatives, who said:

“That’s very variable; the busy ones might be given five to ten hours a week and others just attend meetings, so could be three hours a month, three hours a month to ten hours a week.”(Organisation Representative, Male No.3).

“At the moment we have two who turn up on a Wednesday, one lady who comes on a Tuesday and lady on Friday; the lady on Thursday has gone on holidays so she can't be here, so we're down today, that's why we're so busy.”(Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

“No they're all different, some people do two days and some people do one day. We have two girls in the morning on the C.E. project and two girls in the evening.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.5).

“They work for around two or three hours.” (Organisation Representative, Male No.6).

“Each one is different because the ones on the management team would maybe only volunteer a couple of hours a month, whereas the one who facilitates the family support group could be maybe four hours a week.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.1).

“It depends, a couple of them could be here quite a lot every week, they could be here up to forty hours a week, maybe more than that even at the weekend; depending, because they could be involved in the room rental, people coming in using the rooms, and that happens in the evening time up to five evenings a week or at the weekends. But some of the volunteers would be here full-time a couple of them, then the other volunteers might come in once a month for meetings, for sub-group meetings, but they would also be there for annual meetings, A.G.M.s and for the monthly meetings, like the voluntary board, they meet once a month as well, for a few hours a month.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

Difficulties with volunteer availability, having to give volunteers notice to partake and agreeing times/days for volunteering were observed by most volunteer participants and one organisation representative, and in some instances contributed to a sense of taking volunteers for granted. Here follows several illustrative quotes from both volunteer participants and organisation representatives who said:

“It would have suited me better to do it at a different time, but I think that they assume that a volunteer should be available whenever they want them to be. They need see things from the volunteer’s perspective and never forget that the volunteer is doing them a favour, not the other way around.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

“It’s all about availability with some people.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

“What happens is they kind of ask one or two of the main members who are local and they ring around and say ‘can you do it, can you come does it suit you and what time?’, that’s how it works we text each other if there’s something going on if anybody can help and they’ll text back and say ‘I can’ or ‘I can’t. I think notice is a big thing for anything volunteer wise.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.2).

However, difficulties in both securing a suitable volunteer placement and provision of a fulfilling experience were described by several volunteer participants who said:

“I know we get quite a lot of volunteers, but I really don’t know how you do it, but there’s so many people out there who give nothing, not because they don’t want to but because maybe they’re too shy, and if...I don’t know how you would do it, I often talk about it in school, we run events and it’s so difficult to get people, even if their children are involved to come along and help out; maybe something can be done through the media, it could only be a couple of hours a month for a few months of the year, but it would make things a lot easier for a lot of organisations if a few more people helped out.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

“It is not easy to get job and it’s not easy to get volunteering place, as well with the Garda [IRISH POLICE] forms and the paperwork, so many people willing to volunteer and do something but it’s just impossible; that’s one thing I would to change because it’s definitely not easy to find a place to, there is many but there is too much paperwork involved and it puts you down; I finally, finally got there thank God because I was gonna (sic) crack.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

Volunteering Motives, Socialising and Reciprocity

Both volunteer participants and organisation representatives recognised that for some volunteering appeared to act as ‘gap filler’ activity for those with free time (primarily housewives and unemployed). Here follows two illustrative quotes from a female volunteer participant and an organisation representative who said:

“Just to get bit of experience and to get out of the house I suppose, and to use my skills; that’s why really.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“The other one [VOLUNTEER] has got young children so she just comes while the children are at school, she likes to fill a bit of time, so she comes when they’re at school.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

Reasons for volunteering were ranged from self-interest to community service.

A male volunteer reported:

“I never really thought about that now...My first volunteering was with the adult learning thing, it was just something I always wanted to do, it would be a problem in my own family and I thought if I could help someone else as well then I would be willing to do it, that’s what kind of got me into the volunteer organisation, I met some other people, and I occasionally take volunteer opportunities when I’m asked, if I have the time I will.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

Several volunteer participants described responding to an identified need in the community (i.e. special needs, youth at risk, elderly, and sports) as reason for their chosen volunteer activity. Here follows an illustrative quote from a male volunteer participant who said:

“How I got in to it.... not to be funny about it, but with the summer scheme when I was younger, I started working with the mentally handicapped when I was asked, there was a person on the street who was involved in it and they would have a lot of male service users of the facility and they didn’t have enough male volunteers, it was all female... a lot of girls doing it, so he asked me to give a hand out, so I was doing it for four years.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

Other volunteer participants commented on their personal interest and commitment to the chosen service or host organisation, and described their alignment with that organisations mission statement and goals/objectives. Here follows an illustrative quote from a female volunteer participant who said:

“Because I’m very interested in what they provide; its service based, it’s a service based volunteer opportunity and I would believe in the service they provide to the community, in both cases actually.”
(Female Volunteer, Participant No.4).

Many volunteer participants described ‘giving and getting something back’ within their volunteer experiences, and particularly with those disadvantaged, vulnerable or with special needs. Here follows several illustrative quotes from male volunteer participants:

“I suppose where you know you’re giving, in a sense with working with special needs... When working with that you know you’re going to get something back from it.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“I never really thought about that now...my first volunteering was with the adult learning thing, it was just something I always wanted to do, it would be a problem in my own family, and I thought if I could help someone else as well then I would be willing to do it, that’s what kind of got me into the volunteer organisation, I met some other people, and I occasionally take volunteer opportunities when I’m asked, if I have the time I will.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

“Instead of taking it’s giving something back to the community.”
(Male Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“Am....I think the benefit I’ve found is that the more you give the more you get back, I think genuinely whatever time I’ve given to the community you always...I think at the start you’re doing it to help them but in the end it’s really helping you.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.8).

There was no apparent gender difference in motives for volunteering, with all volunteers reporting enjoyment, social relations, self-fulfillment, new opportunities, development of new friendships and peer networks and sense of community integration as important reasons for participation. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“A combination of different things; it’s something I enjoy and there’s the sense of doing something and achieving something for the community, and putting your talents to something; here’s the social aspect to it and the general sort of satisfaction because it’s always interesting and it’s always a challenge and it gives you an opportunity to do things you mightn’t normally do.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

“A genuine interest with people with special needs; I would have done a lot of community work all through my life, so I would enjoy it.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“I think as well it’s a good opportunity to meet people, you know, that’s one of the real benefits of it.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

“The benefit I get out of it is enjoyment, I love being out there, I love meeting people, the enjoyment I get from doing something as a volunteer, and helping out an organisation or an adult person or whatever the case may be; yeah I get tremendous satisfaction from that, I do I love it, I really love it.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.1).

Volunteering was frequently described as a mechanism for meeting people and forming relationships contributed to individual perceived levels of community embeddedness within certain social networks over time. Here follows several illustrative quotes from female volunteer participants who said:

“Through my visiting of the post office on a regular basis, I met up with this gentleman behind the counter and got friendly with him, and he got me involved in volunteering, which was absolutely great because I was new to the town and didn’t know people. I knew nobody except the staff I was working with, and he asked me to come in as a

volunteer with XXXXX [ORGANISATION], which I did, and I was involved with them ever since; and then he got me involved with XXXXX [ORGANISATION], the management committee board up there. I think I was involved there I think for twenty-four years, which was absolutely brilliant because it was a great way to get to know people and getting to know all about volunteerism, because I would have been only nineteen at the time.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“I wanted to get to know new people, as I had not lived in the area very long and didn’t know that many people. It is certainly a great way of getting to know people locally, especially if you are moving to a new area. You meet new people that you have something in common with.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

Motives relating to social connections, socialising, companionship, helping others and reciprocity was also recognised by some organisation representatives who said:

“Sure one of the main things is friendship, and some of them are retired, so it’s something for them to do, you know it’s a reason to go somewhere; yeah it’s getting together and having friends and helping each other out which is the main thing, people will do it if they can on the day, but I would say friendship is the biggest thing they all, there’s a good lot of them there that are friends and they like to help each other out, and while they’re at it, they’re entertaining each other you know that way as well.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.10).

“The volunteers that come in want to help the members that are here, so they get satisfaction from that because they’re helping the people...they wanted to come and help in the first place, they come on the door without a push for them, they come in because they want to help; that’s the kind of centre we are they try to make the day as nice as possible.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

“It’s just really how our volunteers and our members meet is to get to know each other, a lot of them came into the area, married into the area and wanted to know the locals, and that’s how they know each other down the years then.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.2).

Organisation representatives also recognised the value of the volunteer residing in the community they engaged with, in terms of the utilisation of localised knowledge and existing networks. Here follows an illustrative quote from an organisation representative who said:

“Staff will come and go but you’ll always have the volunteers. You need them because they’ve got a lot of knowledge as well, knowledge of their own community; nobody knows their own community, as well as the volunteers that are working here. Most of them grew up here, you can’t say that about most of the paid staff members, staff members might come from outside the community, they might travel in and out of XXXXX [TOWN], but with the volunteers usually they’re from XXXXX [TOWN] itself, so they would have an in-depth knowledge, they know the community very well; they’d be very knowledgeable of the areas of deprivation as well in XXXXX [TOWN] and the people that need to be targeted, because that’s the remit of the organisation, it’s to target people who are experiencing disadvantage and to make services available to them. You have to be proactive in picking out these people, and a lot of the time the volunteers know these people more so than staff would know, because the volunteers are living in the community the longest, usually that’s the situation.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

Volunteers and Sense of Belonging

Positive processes of volunteer integration into host organisations were described by some volunteer participants and organisation representatives, with staff and volunteers viewed as equal partners and contributors to integrative work based social networks. Here follows a series of quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I think they look on their volunteers as an extension of their staff, not that there’s any difference between the two of them.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.4).

“I think our relationship with the staff is, you know, good; the work that takes place here is I suppose an inspiration to everybody, the way people are being helped out you know; we have really put ourselves on the map with the tremendous work being done by both staff and volunteers; we have to recognise the great work that the staff are doing here, while we would be hugely into volunteering ourselves, it’s

the staff at the end of the day who keep things ticking over. Oh yeah, I would definitely say I am part of the whole organisation.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“I suppose we try to be all the one company or the one...on the one level, we like to treat the staff very well, I would hope there’s no huge difference, the paid get on and do their work and I think, you know, we’ve always had a good relationship with the staff and we try to maintain that as best we can; we work hard at it, we try to be as fair to the staff as we can be.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“I know the place inside out, same as the full-time staff would.” (Male Volunteer Participant, No.2).

“Yeah I’ve always felt that I’ve been treated inclusively and equally, I can’t have any complaints, I’ve never felt I was marked down as a volunteer, I was treated like a regular staff member to be honest; that could be their attitude, that could be just the way they treat volunteers anyway; I never felt conscious of being a volunteer I was just another part of a team. That’s what I always felt anyway.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

“Yeah I’d say I’m part of the furniture!” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.4).

“I suppose I am treated like of the team and I don’t feel like an outsider, I don’t feel like I am different or I can’t do something, so I’m happy.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“We are ALL volunteers and the relationship in the committee is usually very good. We all want the same thing.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.9).

All organisation representatives described how volunteers created diversity of skills and perspectives within their businesses. Here follows an illustrative quote from an organisation representative who said:

“They bring different experiences and talent to the work. Absolutely yeah, maybe they’re part of the wider community so they’re bringing that perspective to the work; you know when you’re a worker on a

project you can get very into your own way of thinking and it's good to have that outside approach because we're community based; so they definitely bring value yeah, and different ideas, different approaches to the work. We are paid staff so the volunteers complement the work, their presence would be necessary for the group work that way.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.8).

This ideology was reciprocated by several volunteer participants who described specific aspects of volunteer roles and responsibilities within a clearly defined volunteer-staff partnership. Here follows an illustrative quote from a volunteer participant and several organisation representatives who said:

“I feel it's a very respectful relationship, we all have our parts to play and we get on as a team, the manager is there to manage the centre and we're there to help and support her do a good job, she's very conscientious anyway.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“Yeah, the staff are there to support the volunteers.” (Organisation Representative, Male No.3).

“Our centre is like an extended family to the members who come here; and this might sound corny but all the girls and myself we all work together as a team. If ever we were doing something outside of work we would always invite them; if you don't include everybody in things like that socially you'll get barriers, we try to make it very family orientated.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

“Fantastic, we all work as a team here there's a great atmosphere here, the volunteers and the girls that are here and myself all get on very well, and so do the clients as well.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.5).

“It's a very good relationship, we work well together as opposed to working against each other we work together, the work is shared, they're a great support to myself in all aspects of the work here. They would be included in the management meetings and it's the management meetings where the work of the project is directed from, they would also be involved in the planning of the work.”
(Organisation Representative, Female No.10).

“Yes, there’s a very positive relationship with them, they’re a very important part of the organisation; without them we wouldn’t be here, they formed it really.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

Perceptions of trust in volunteer-work based networks appeared grounded in the volunteer work ethic, in terms of volunteers *‘being trusted’* to undertake certain tasks and to act in a responsible manner. Here follows an illustrative quote from a volunteer participant who said:

“I don’t trust other people, sometimes so maybe I should delegate more. I think it’s important to delegate, we have a committee of eight of nine, yet there is only two or three of us that are hands on; I do think that maybe we should have the others more involved. I’d like to be able to do something about that myself. I’m very happy volunteering and it doesn’t matter what I have to do whether it’s scrub floors, clean windows or do computer work it’s all the same to me I’m happy doing it; but I do think I have to delegate more.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

Assertive personality traits and group leadership skills were described by several volunteer participants as vital to the success of these insular volunteer-work based groups and networks. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I think if you keep small groups volunteering together, rather than big groups; and one thing I feel you need in every group, no matter how big or small they are is one good driver, a good driver, an organiser who will motivate the team to achieve the big picture; one really good people person, if you know what I mean; a person who can recognise the different qualities of the different volunteers, and plays to their strengths.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.7).

“Oh yeah definitely, then again things like that depend on personalities, some people just won’t gel but I was fortunate any place I’ve gone I’ve always got on with the people that had been there and I’ve found them to be supportive and friendly and accepting people, that’s just my personal experience of it anyway; I’ve always developed good working relationships with the people I’ve volunteered with, so I’m very fortunate in that sense. Definitely yeah, that maybe that wouldn’t be everyone’s experience but that’s just my personal experience of it, I’ve always seemed to get on well with the people.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

However, several volunteer participants observed the presence of tension between paid staff and volunteers, with volunteers viewed as being different to staff within their host organisation. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“Generally positive, everyone has their role, yet sometimes there can be tension between paid staff and volunteers; but in general everyone has their role they know what their role is they know what the boundaries are; it’s never been a particular issue for me and I actually work in the community and voluntary sector as well, so it’s never been a particular issue for me.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

“Most of the time good, sometimes you’re looked at as different, I think 90% of the time it’s o.k.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“On one or two occasions yeah, I felt I had been taken advantage of and didn’t get much appreciation, it hasn’t happened very often but does happen occasionally, rarely even; the people that you’re working for, they tend to be paid, they wouldn’t really mix with the volunteers...you feel like you’re being taken advantage of and pushed around and shoved here and there, and when you think it’s over you don’t feel included because they just piss off and you’re left to your own devices and sometimes you won’t even get a thank you. But I must say that’s rare and if it did happen to me I wouldn’t go back there, you wouldn’t let it happen to you twice; but it is rare you are generally appreciated and you would often get a cup of tea or a sandwich or a drink, that’s what you ask for, a bit of social interaction.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

Organisation representatives described how integration of volunteers within the host organisation was dependent on amount of time spent volunteering and availability, and on the nature of the work with confidentiality procedures impacting on levels of inclusion within staff processes. Here follows several illustrative quotes from organisation representatives who said:

“Well, all volunteers are going to be part-time; it’s whatever they can offer, and then different stuff comes up for them, but they’re not always available. I think some do, it depends on the level of

commitment they're putting in, some people are very reliable and committed and some aren't; I suppose if they're with us six months plus they would feel part of us, but they wouldn't initially it takes time. On occasion yes, on occasion no, it kind of depends on the individual; we've had varying experiences, absolutely varying experiences." (Organisation Representative, Female No.8).

"No, because a lot of our work is confidential, so they wouldn't no; but they would on more practical decisions. They don't go to the staff meetings they're just for the staff but we do have monthly meetings to make sure they're involved and if there was a policy change or something coming up there would be a meeting to include them in that as well. Yeah I would describe it as very good and healthy and respectful from both sides; there's a sense that people are working together to provide a common service." (Organisation Representative, Female No.9).

Several volunteer participants reported good relations within their host organisation, but lonely experiences of volunteering with little interaction with staff and other volunteers outside of the volunteering role in some cases, and in other cases restricted contact with staff and other volunteers. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

"Yeah we have good relations, only downside is I live far away so we don't have any engagements only work engagements, but you never know." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

"I think if I was working with others, if I was working in a larger group, rather than working alone, I think that would have made a big difference. (Female Volunteer, Participant No.3).

"It's part of the criteria that we don't socialise with each other." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.4).

"I definitely have a relationship with the staff....I don't meet the other volunteers much unless we have a training session...so maybe it's up to me to volunteer for more things to get access and meet more people.....Because it's just very individualistic, I go off do my thing and that's it.....but if there was a get together only once a year for all the volunteers and they have an event where we can all meet up and have a chat with each other and share ideas; that would be lovely because then you would feel part of something bigger rather than ploughing away on your own." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.5).

Several organisation representatives observed how volunteer inclusion remained (for the most part) confined within day to day volunteer work obligations, and some '*informal work related get-togethers*' several times per year. Here follows several illustrative quotes from organisation representatives who said:

"We have two functions in the year and the staff and volunteers come together so we do that, after that whatever socialising they do I'm not so sure." (Organisation Representative, Female No.9).

In response to perceived experiences of volunteer exclusion and isolated volunteering experiences, several volunteer participants described meeting other habitual volunteers at organised volunteer events and commented that this opportunity to network with other volunteers boosted their sense of belonging and self-identification within a larger '*volunteering community*'. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

"There's a common bond there; what I have found is that you meet the same people, the same faces, they turn up at so many different events, there really seems to be a hardcore of people there that will get up and volunteer and do things; you do tend to meet a lot of the same faces and you get to know one another and form friendships." (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

"No, I wouldn't be invited to any meetings, I would be notified of any events that they're holding for volunteers, I would be notified of them, but I only was at one." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.5).

Well-being and Productivity in Volunteer Associational Networks

Volunteering for several participants was observed to become engrained in their day to day life, and appeared very much grounded in reciprocity in civic

engagement, and associational individual, group and community relationships.

Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“It’s part of my life now, being a volunteer, I really enjoy meeting people; as you’re aware... I really enjoy being here, I help out wherever I can; and basically being involved with people you know. I suppose you motivate yourself to get involved in these things. The thing about volunteering is you get into a group or groups and you just seem to stay there over all the years you know.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“People, I have great feel for people, especially with this work in the centre, I just feel that I have a lot to give to people and...people who are vulnerable especially, I would have great time for them, and I would always be willing to help. I suppose at this stage, I don’t know anything but volunteering, it’s my life and I wouldn’t change it.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“You try to pick the people you’re volunteering with and if you have capable people you’re volunteering with, you’ll make things happen.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.7).

Several volunteer participants described how both sporadic and habitual forms of volunteering contributed to increased feelings of well-being, empowerment, sense of place and positive outlook in life, and said:

“Absolutely, I think it keeps you positive, it keeps you focused if it’s something you really want to do, and it keeps you up to date and you get to meet new people. It kept me real. I think it’s just made me aware that everybody is equal, irrespective of circumstances or what they’ve been through, or what they’ve done or what they will do, it’s just to see people like that all the time.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.2).

“I can only speak personally, it changed mine, it changed mine; it made me appreciate stuff that I had, and made me appreciate once you hit roadblocks a certain attitude arises, when you’re exposed to the level of work some people have to put in just to get out of bed in the morning or to get their kids out of bed in the morning, it kind of puts things in perspective. I think there’s a lot of issues with peoples mental health that volunteering can address, it’s not a one solution fits all.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

For several volunteers, the day to day participation in volunteering tempered feelings of perceived inactivity and lack of perceived productivity (in some cases due to unemployment), and contributed to increased socialisation, garnering of skills and sense of purpose within community life. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I’ve met a lot of people, a lot of good people, I’ve formed good relationships with people, I was kept busy when I was out of work or not doing anything, I was kept occupied mentally instead of just sitting around doing nothing; you feel good as well if you’ve gone out and done something constructive with your day, instead of sitting at home being idle, you’ve contributed to a cause or an organisation or you’ve out helped out some people, you feel good if you feel you’ve achieved something in that day, a good feeling comes from that, you know.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

“I don’t know, it’s not easy I suppose but it does make you feel good when you get up in the morning and go somewhere and you’re being useful, it’s not a waste of a day; and plus I think they are happy with what I am doing there so they’re happy too and that’s the main thing I suppose, if I like it that’s fine and if they like me then both sides are happy.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“I would and do recommend it to people because it gives a person a sense of purpose if they’re not doing anything, it gives them something to do and you do get to meet a lot of people that you otherwise would have no contact with whatsoever, you wouldn’t even know they exist; you get to say you’ve done something with yourself and achieved something that day; there’s a whole lot of positives attached to it, not a whole lot of negatives unless you come to a position where you’re being exploited but that hasn’t happened to me or anyone I know.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

Other volunteer participants observed how volunteering increased their social reach, changed their outlook on life, heightened their awareness of disadvantage, vulnerability and special needs, and increased the amount and denseness of their social relationships. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I wouldn’t say it changes my outlook but it would certainly make me more aware of people who are less fortunate, one thing I really like is people do get up and help, so in that respect yeah, I suppose it did. Nothing happens by accident, nothing happens without effort from people.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.5).

“It certainly gives you a broader outlook on life and it brings you into contact with a wide range of different people, depending on the organisation you’re involved with, and from that point of view, I think it’s really good; the more people you meet, the more your attitude and outlook broadens, no matter what way you meet them, and volunteering is one way of doing it, you meet nice people.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

“Yeah, because I contribute. I would be involved in it, I wouldn’t just be volunteering I’d be involved in the organisation as well, I believe in what they do as well so it gives me a sense of involvement as well, yeah.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.4).

Volunteering and the Contemporary Economic Climate

Several volunteer participants described how current financial constraints impacted on volunteer experiences, with reduced formal opportunities to volunteer in organisations available (or advertised) and with time devoted to community fundraising detracting from actual volunteer responsibilities and outcomes. Several also observed that volunteering assisted in the development of potent social networking amongst potential employers, with motives for volunteering becoming increasingly egotistic and self-serving. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I just think it’s changing; it’s changed an awful lot now because people are using it for different reasons.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.4).

“If there was a way... there’s always this shortfall of money, like we’re always out fundraising trying to make ends meet, if there wasn’t that worry there about money, that would be really good.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“Particularly now with the economic situation the way it is, if you wanted a job volunteering would be the best thing to do, because not only would it get you out of the bed in the morning, but when the economy does turn, at least you’ll have networked and have made some inroads into getting some experience, things like that.”

(Female Volunteer, Participant No.3).

In contrast, several organisation representatives with formalised volunteer placements described the usefulness of volunteers (and in some case vital roles) given current staff and funding constraints with all organisations observing that volunteers added value to the operation of their businesses, and that in some cases couldn’t operate without volunteers. Here follows several illustrative quotes from organisation representative who said:

“I just think they’re a very important part of the organisation and they contribute greatly to it. As I’ve said, we’ve lost a lot of funding in the last few years, especially with FAS and the Community Employment workers; we rely an awful lot on the volunteers, and the organisation wouldn’t have been established without them, they’re there from the very beginning.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

“If we didn’t have volunteers, it would be awful pressure. They really do relieve a lot of pressure here; you’d be lost without them.” -

“Well they do contribute because if we didn’t have the volunteers we wouldn’t be able to give the care and attention to the clients. It would impact it extremely, because you’d have one person trying to do everything, and I’d be up there trying to look after the clients, trying to do the office work, trying to answer the telephone; so it wouldn’t actually work without the volunteer really.”(Organisation Representative, Female No.5).

“There wouldn’t be an organisation, no.” (Organisation Representative, Male No.6).

“We would have to close the doors because there wouldn’t be enough people there to offer the service.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.9).

“It would mean there would be a lot less work being done because with the help of the volunteers we can reach out into communities, that would be very hard to do on your own; and also in the delivery of some of the programmes, often you need more than one person to deliver a programme; it would greatly restrict the work of the project.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.10).

“Oh we couldn’t, oh we really rely so much on the volunteers, particularly in this current economic climate; so without them really we couldn’t; they’re very, very, important part of our organisation, we rely on them very much so.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

Interplay between Volunteering, Training and Employment

The distinction between wanting to give a personal contribution to the community or group of individuals and wanting to volunteer in order to gain experience for future employment desires was noted by several volunteer participants who said:

“Well, we all need to work and we all need to make money, but the thing about being a volunteer is you have no inhibitions, you either want to be there or you don’t....and if you are into it in fairness, you’ll give your all because you are there to get experience. Maybe a lot of people don’t want to be a volunteer just to get experience, maybe they just want to give something back, they already have experience in that area and they feel they want to contribute something. And maybe they have spare time and they want to give something back, you know? Volunteers are there for different reasons; some are for experience for work. Some just want give back to the community, or they’ve had good experiences or bad experiences, and maybe somebody helped them as a volunteer and they want to put something back in, they appreciate what was done for them.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“I suppose it does, it makes you think about the blessings you have; it makes you think as well about things you could do to make other people’s lives better. For me it’s not a strategy for getting employment, it’s fulfilling to feel that I can help provide a valuable service to people who are vulnerable in society.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.8).

“It has not yet lead me to employment, but I think that long term, it may... At least I would like to think that employers appreciate that I rather do something for nothing than do nothing at all! It has also

given me an insight into problems in the community but also shown me what good people can do for each other Coming from a different culture, I am very impressed with people's generosity and surprised at how much the community and the whole society relies on volunteers, it is certainly not the case where I come from.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

Indeed, both volunteers and organisation representatives reported that in some cases volunteering was utilised in order to gain experience within a certain service modality or specific target group, and as opportunity to up-skill or gain relevant work experience for the employment market. Here follows several illustrative quotes from volunteer participants and an organisation representative who said:

“There was no work at all there, you know with the recession and I was trying to find work; the best way...I'm a believer that if you volunteer somewhere you might get something out of it, if you put in the work...if you work voluntary and put your time and energy into a business you might get something out of it or someone might say there's funding there for you to stay permanently or part-time, it's a great way to get back into the world of work, if you're staying at home all day twiddling your thumbs you're not using your skills; that's basically why I did it was to keep my skills updated and keep my skills active. I could be sitting at home doing nothing and gaining nothing; it's given me confidence, as well in doing what has to be done and what is required, if you're volunteering you're more employable, it's a strong word.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.4).

“I was unemployed and thought it might be a chance to network and get some contacts with potential employers and to develop report writing skills.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

“I suppose some of it is to gain more experience in the work, some people are exploring what kind of work they would like to do, so they try volunteering in different organisations, for maybe personal development.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.8).

One female participant described using volunteering to escape having to justify or explain her unemployment:

“It is also easier to tell people that you are busy doing something, rather than just saying that you are unemployed. Even if I would get a full-time job, I would like to think that I will keep volunteering in my town.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

Several volunteer participants described volunteering participation with sole objective of gaining experience in order to secure employment and viewed volunteering with a restricted lens. Here follows their quotes:

“What motivated me? It was the work placement. I was very aware I was only there for a very short space of time...and it just, it was a means to an end; in my circumstance it was a bit different. So I’m not an ordinary volunteer in that respect.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.3).

“Well I suppose the main part for me was to gain experience for employment and to give me skills I wouldn’t get in work; I mean I know I’m still unemployed but to get experience because to come out of college like I did like any other graduate coming out of college you can’t get experience, they want 2-3 years’ experience, but how are you going to get that, you know what I mean, if that’s all employers are going to look for; the only way around that is to get voluntary experience or, you know, that’s what I think anyway it’s a start. I know my position is if you want to get experience to really get a job, you would have to get on a work experience programme....With volunteering, if you really wanted to get employment, you would have to get work experience with a company or the organisation kind of full time, to really get a chance of employment, when you’re volunteering during the week for a few hours you’re kind of limited in one way, you are helping and helping out with what’s going on but you’re kind of limited, you know.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.1).

Several volunteer participants also underscored the need for greater recognition of the role and contribution of volunteers as equated on par with work based experiences within the current movement toward increased levels of work motivated volunteering. Here follows several quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I’d like to see volunteers and my own efforts in some ways recognised better, but in the financial climate the money’s not there.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“I suppose one thing in the career area would be recognition from the employers of the volunteers and the voluntary work and putting experiences gained on a voluntary basis on a par with experiences gained in employment; I think that’s something that’s coming, but it’s slow.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

“I think volunteers are used; that’s what I feel about it; look volunteers need recognition, if there was some kind of awards or something like that, in the organisations every couple of months just to recognise the volunteers you know, because volunteers have made a contribution as well. I mean they’re giving their time, and a lot of people and everyone has their own reasons for doing it, but I think if something was put on your social welfare to say you are a volunteer you should get extra money something like that, some kind of expense something so that if you are a volunteer it’s recognised. There’s a lot of people doing it for years and years and you have to get something out of it, I know you might get a personal, you know everyone has their reasons, but if volunteers drop off there’s a reason why, it’s because sometimes they don’t feel appreciated or...and I know some organisations the way things are going they don’t have money and are just about surviving, but there should be some of tax relief or something, but in this country it would probably be abused anyway. I just think there should be some kind of incentive for people to volunteer as well, and to keep the people who are volunteering, volunteering.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.1).

In some instances the host organisation was described as acting as benefactor or facilitator of its volunteers’ personal development and skill acquisition for the employment market, and appeared to further underscore evidence of power differential between volunteer and organisation. Here follows two quotes from organisation representatives who said:

“They’re offered learning of new skills; a lot of people say they want to give something back and we provide them with the opportunity to do that.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.9).

“It’s a reward for them to be involved.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.6).

In addition, one male volunteer described how volunteering provided the opportunity to participate in and test out a certain area of work prior to undertaking training. He said:

“Several things really, sometimes it’s just that I’m not busy and it’s for something to do, another factor would be to explore career opportunities; for example the adult literacy, when I came out of college it was something I felt an interest in so I felt it was an opportunity to explore and test myself out in that area so I did; luckily enough as I found that I didn’t really enjoy it, so it saved me a lot of grief in that sense; it saved me a lot of time and possibly money in terms of training and stuff, so I explored that area and found I didn’t like it.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

One volunteer participant reported that payment for volunteering operated as a reward scheme in his organisation, and that his volunteering had progressed into paid employment. He said:

“I was actually getting paid one day a week while I was still volunteering one day a week myself, through a thing called the Matching Grants programme...The company I worked for... for every ten hours you volunteered with a local organisation... what they did was they’d give ten U.S. dollars to the organisation, so the more volunteering I did, the more money they got, which was kind of a win-win for both of us because I was getting stuff out of it and we were able to hire a minibus and take them to places they wouldn’t normally have gone, so it worked out on both sides. Sure the job I’m doing now I’m getting paid for seventeen and a half hours a week and volunteering another ten.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

Volunteering which progressed to paid employment also appeared to facilitate increased integration within the host organisation for this individual who said:

“I’m the paid person so the role is reversed, they see me as the paid person even though I’m only paid seventeen and a half hours, like last Sunday we were helping at the mini-marathon, I wasn’t getting paid for doing that I was there as a volunteer, but I think some of the volunteers kind of think that’s it’s easy for you to be out there you’re getting paid, and they’re the kind of issues we work with, it’s come full circle, in my volunteering capacity I do get paid sometimes to volunteer....If you’re asking if I got integrated into the organisation then yeah, I certainly did; and because now I’m in a paid capacity... they give me a lot more responsibility than if I wasn’t working here.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

The need for improved volunteer induction and training within both formal and informal volunteer placements was emphasised by most volunteer

participants, with several volunteer participants describing leaving volunteer placements due to self-perceived lack of volunteer effectiveness, lack of job satisfaction and role ambiguity. This appeared to be grounded in power differentials between paid-staff and volunteers, and lack of volunteer supports.

Here follows several quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I think that’s one thing, you know if there was some kind of incentive for volunteers, I know volunteers go in and all that but sometimes, and I’ve been in an organisation myself that ...once you’ve done the volunteering the volunteer should get something out of it; I don’t really mean monetary but maybe if they got access to further training or given some sort of expenses even if it’s not massive because I think some organisations don’t treat volunteers with respect. I suppose I got, basically what was an induction kind of thing, but I would have liked more training, a lot of organisations do give training but I think they could be doing more. As a volunteer... you can’t just come into an organisation and just hope for the best and just find your way around, sometimes you do need help having someone to mentor you within there would be a big help. A lot of it is outside courses but I think it’s up to the organisations to give you a bit of help as well.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.1).

“I also used to volunteer in an arts group in XXXXX [TOWN], but then left as I didn’t feel that much was achieved.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.9).

Several volunteer participants described the need for improved volunteer experiences through development of specific volunteer management and training procedures in the host organisation. Here follows several quotes from volunteer participants who said:

“I think a lot of organisations are clueless when it comes to volunteers, think that just because they’re a good cause they deserve volunteers and people will show up irrespective of the way they treat their volunteers, I’d like that to change.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“I don’t know to be honest; I suppose training maybe, if you go in somewhere and come out with a really good skill set from it so you’ve been educated, as well as putting something in you’ve gotten something tangible back as well, something you can put down on paper. That’s the only thing I can think of, the only thing that springs

to mind in that sense; I've only really had positive experiences so I'm very fortunate, that's all I could think of to improve it." (Male Volunteer, Participant No.3).

"I think maybe, I know it's a big job but maybe they could get more placement officers to come and talk to the person who's over the volunteer, and find out how they could improve things, what areas need working on things like that, I suppose that would be a good idea, if you had someone qualified to do it, they could come in and talk with the supervisor and the volunteer, and find how the person could improve in themselves; I'd love to know if I was doing something wrong if I could improve in an area I would improve on it." (Male Volunteer, Participant No.4).

A change in the definition of volunteering processes from informal civic networks of individuals helping each other out, toward more formalised and regulated volunteer places were observed in recent years. A female volunteer described:

"Well maybe five or six years ago, volunteering was a thing that was never really spoken about or mentioned much; probably on a community level you were involved with whatever group in your community and that's what you did voluntarily, but you didn't call it volunteering, whereas now there's a lot more help out there in regards to being an individual volunteer....So it's much easier to do it now, really." (Female Volunteer, Participant No.5).

Most organisation representatives recognised that informal volunteering management and training processes remained dependent on individual and small group networks and ties. This was described by one male volunteer participant who said:

"At the moment I'm actually surprised by the genuineness towards...I'd have to say it's taken me a little bit aback, they're looking to push you forward all the time, so I can't be negative about who I'm volunteering with, if you understand me. I have to say if a course comes up they're saying go for it or look forward to doing it, whatever course would be a benefit to you. Even outside on normal time when I'm not volunteering I meet them and they're always thanking you for the effort you put in, so I have to say I give them 10/10 for that; I have to say that about them you know what I mean,

after working with so many other organisations the fact I was put through as a volunteer, it did surprise me they do take so much time to make sure you're o.k. and everything, 100% on that one.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.8).

One female volunteer participant described the need for both informal peer training and formal training systems for volunteers in order to both improve and optimise on the volunteer experience, and individual up-skilling. She said:

“I'd love to see more people volunteering and more people volunteering in different and creative ways; I'd like to see organisations in a better space to be able to take on volunteers and for there to be resources for organisations to train volunteers and work with volunteers so they would see it themselves as a professional development opportunity as well as just helping out.... I can think of one organisation where just because of the wonderful people who were in that organisation, I learned vast amounts about organisations and structures, you learn so much from working with really good people, not from a formal learning programme but from just sitting around a table with people and having the opportunity to benefit from their experience, it could be younger or older but it's just the opportunity to learn from other people and other peoples experiences; but in terms of if I ever had formal training as a volunteer it is no.” (Female Volunteer, Participant No.7).

More formal volunteering processes appeared governed by Volunteer Charters or Policies. Volunteer procedures appeared to have become more regulated over time:

“It was good to see the unwritten policies and procedures it's gone more stringent now with Garda vetting [IRISH POLICE] and this that and the other, but back then it was just 'you don't do this' and 'this is what you can't do'.” (Male Volunteer, Participant No.6).

“We do have a volunteer policy; it would have been drawn up with the constitution. We have a constitution with the volunteer board of management when we together became a company limited by guarantee in 2001. And with that there would be implications for the volunteers in the constitution. Now we need to draw up a separate volunteer policy as well, and we're in the process of doing that, we're

receiving training and we'll have one in place.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.11).

One female organisation representative described inclusive and empowering formal training, support and management systems for her volunteers within her organisation and said:

“We like to think that we offer the volunteers the opportunity to participate in all of the work in the service we provide, also training and building their capacity to get jobs themselves and maybe in the future they might have the opportunity to take on some work. They are offered training to build their capacity but also involving them in the social aspect as well, and often asking them to represent the project at the forums as well.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.10).

However, not all organisations had a volunteer policy and some organisation representatives described a reluctance to ascribe to formalised volunteer routes:

“We don't have a charter no, the organisation has been going for seventeen years, and what it is...it would be local people that would know...because we're rural everybody would kind of know everybody else and the people come in and they'll pick a date where we don't have any volunteers and they'll literally just come in and help out; the people usually do if they're not tired, or a few minutes in between picking up children, a couple of hours in between picking up the children...it's local people that come, we don't have a policy for the volunteers that would make it another extra job for me to do as a supervisor on top of every other job I have to do. A volunteer is a volunteer, but if you start making it like a business you haven't physically got the time, you know what I mean with volunteer policy.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

“The only policy I would insist on is confidentiality; they wouldn't discuss outside of here anything that goes on.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.5).

One organisation representative also observed how (in her opinion) formal training systems could deter older volunteers from taking part, and lead to

fragmentation of existing informal networks of volunteers within the community. She said:

“Without the volunteers we’d struggle; I do feel if you make it a very structured purpose for the volunteers, they don’t want to be doing courses, unless they’re trying to get back to work which they would be going on their own courses; if you start making it too complicated for like myself to train volunteers like they were a worker, I haven’t got the time to be training them up to be a XXXXX [JOB TYPE], if they want to be XXXXX [JOB TYPE] then come in as a XXXXX [JOB TYPE]. If I said to them [VOLUNTEERS] you have to go on a course I’d lose my volunteers because the volunteers that come in here aren’t looking for a job they’re trying to fill a few hours for themselves, as well as help out the community.” (Organisation Representative, Female No.4).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the finding of the qualitative study with the volunteers and volunteer organisation representatives. In the next chapter the results of the quantitative study will be presented.

Chapter 6 – Quantitative Results

Demographic Information

The following chapter presents the findings of the 83 respondents who consented to complete the questionnaire, this represented 16% of the total population available for the study. 12 of the 83 participants did not complete the survey, so in total 71 people participated in the final survey.

32.9% (n=27) of the participants were Male while 67.1% (n=55) of the participants were female (see Figure 12 below).

Figure 3 - Participants by Gender (total n=82)

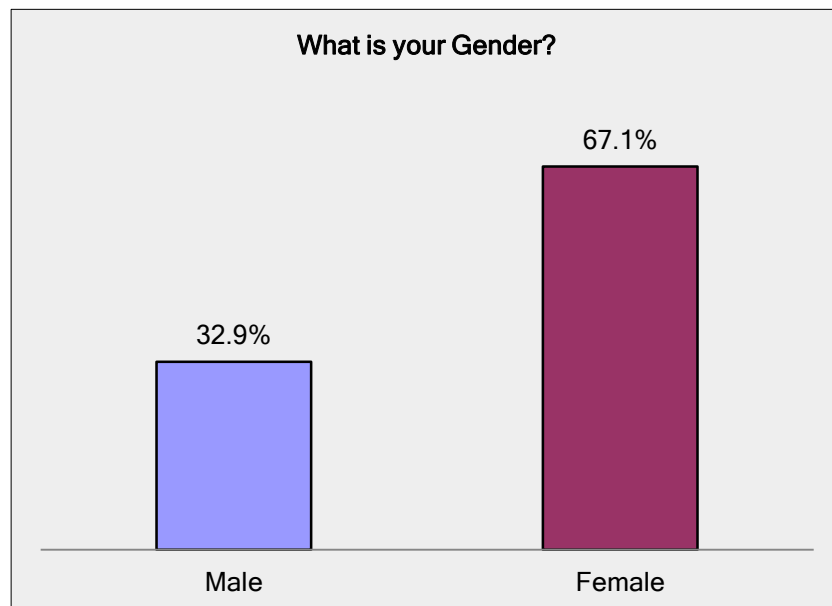
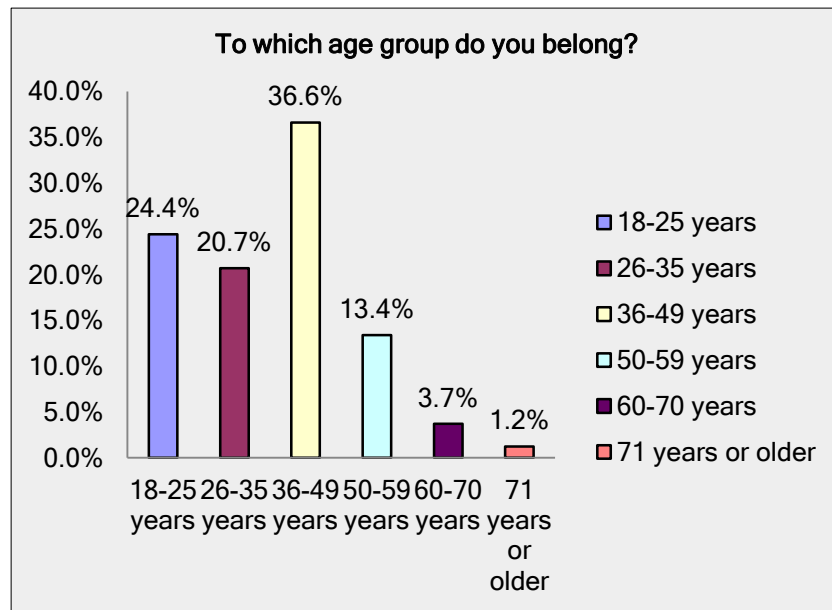


Figure 13 shows the age category of the participants by percentage. 24.4% (n=20) of the participants were aged 18-25years, 20.7% (n=17) participants were aged between 26-35 years, 36.6% (n=30) of the participants were aged between 36 and 49 years, 13.4% (n=11) participants were aged between 50-59, 3.7% (n=3) of the participants were aged 60-70years and 1.2% (n=1) were aged over 71years

Figure 4 - Participants by Age Category (total n=82)



The participants were asked to indicate the area which described where they lived. Figure 14 below show the percentage of participants' by their location of residence. 26.8 % (n=22) indicated that they were located in an urban region, 15.9% (n=13) were located in a suburban region, while 52.4 % (n=43) were located in a rural region and 4.9 % (n=4) in a remote region of Tipperary.

Figure 5 - Participants' by their Area of Residence (total n=82)

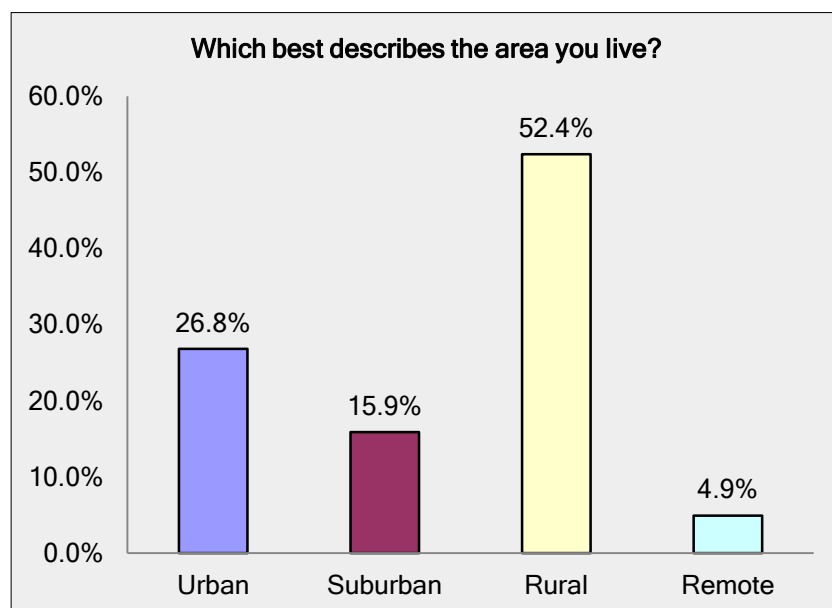
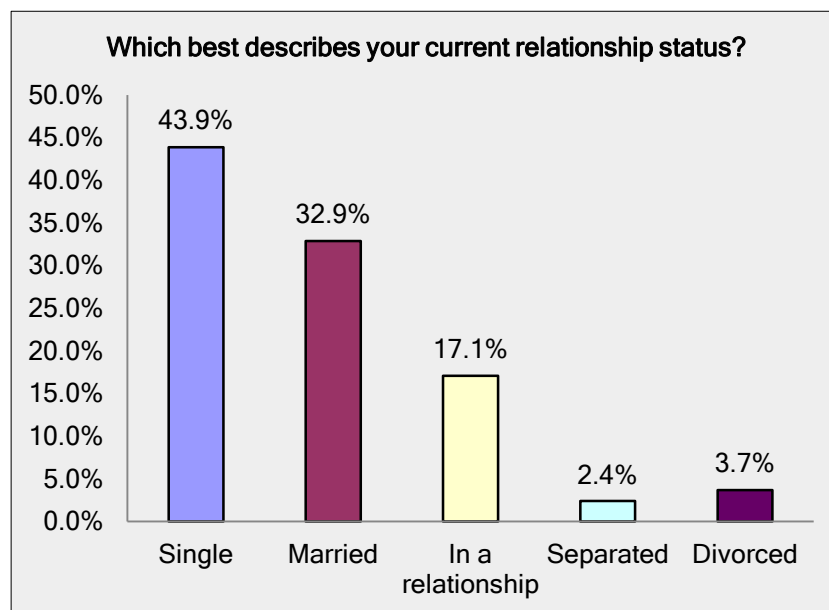


Figure 15 shows the relationship status of the participants by percentage. 43.9% (n=36) of the participants were single, while 32.9% (n=27) were married. 17.1% (n=14) of the participants indicated that they were in a relationship, 2.4% (n=2) were separated and 3.7% (n=3) indicated their status as divorced.

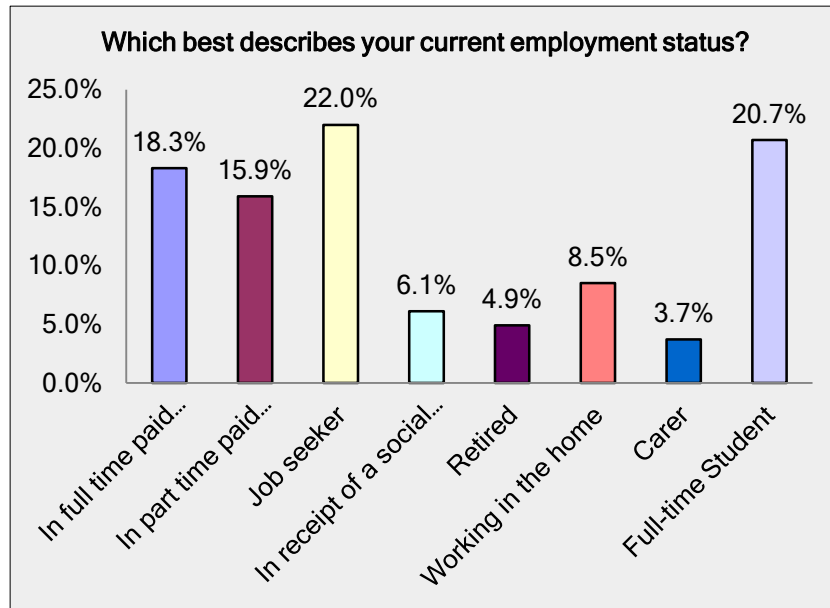
Figure 6 - Relationship Status of Participants by Percentage (total n=82)



The participants were asked to indicate which description matched their current employment status. The participants were also given an option to indicate if their status was other than those indicated in Figure 16 below. Two of the respondents indicated that in addition to their current status they were also in part-time education. 18.3% (n=15) indicated that they were in full-time paid employment, 15.9% (n=13) were in paid part-time employment. 22% (n=18) of the participants were currently seeking employment, 6.1% (n=5) were receiving a social welfare payment for illness or disablement and 3.7%

(n=3) were carers. 8.5% (n=7) were working in the home, while 4.9% (n=4) were retired. 20.7% (n=17) of the participants indicated they were in full time education.

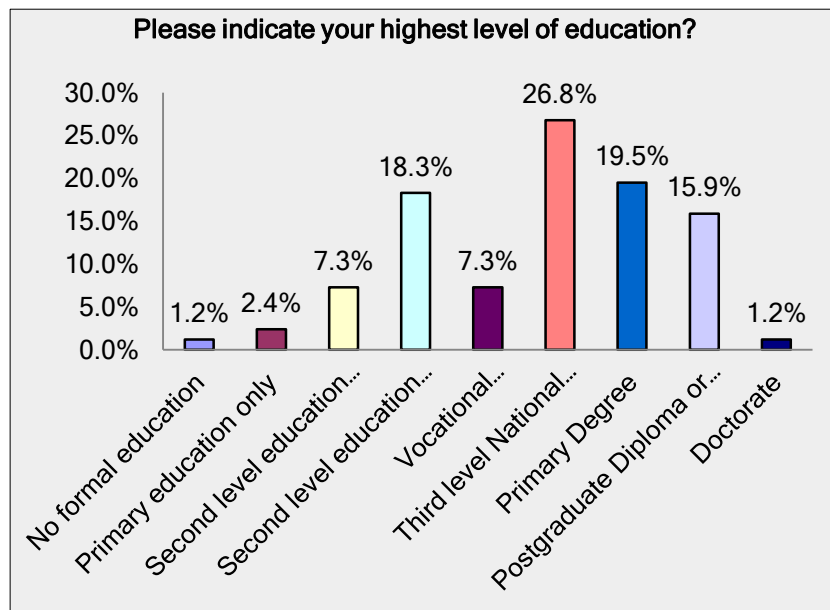
Figure 7 - Employment Status of the Participants (total n=82)



In the course of questioning the participants were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The highest percentage of participants (26.8% or n=22) were educated to a third level National Diploma or National Certificate level. The second highest level of education were those educated to a primary degree level (19.5% or n=16). A high proportion of the participant had also completed a postgraduate course, with 15.9% (n= 13) indicating that they had a postgraduate qualification, 1 person was also educated to doctorate level. Figure 17 shows the percentage of participants by education level for all categories. 1(1.2%) person had no formal education, 2.4% (n=2) of the participants had completed primary education only, 7.3% (n=6) and 18.3%

(n=17) indicated intermediate/group/junior cert and leaving certificate respectively. 7.3% (n=6) of the participant had a vocational qualification or apprenticeship.

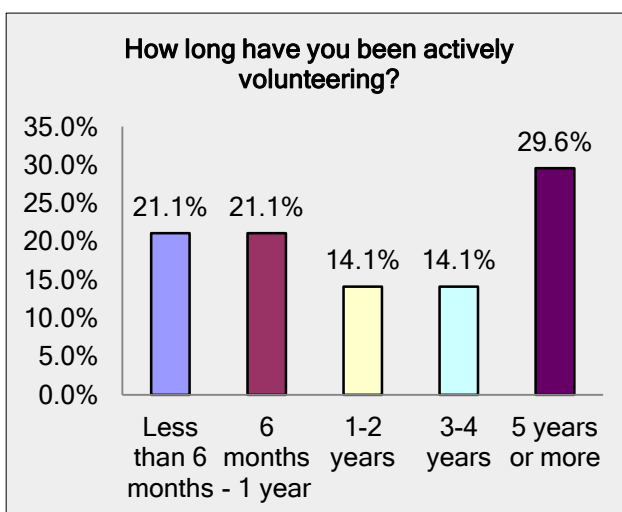
Figure 8 - Educational Status of Participants (total n=82)



Volunteering Status

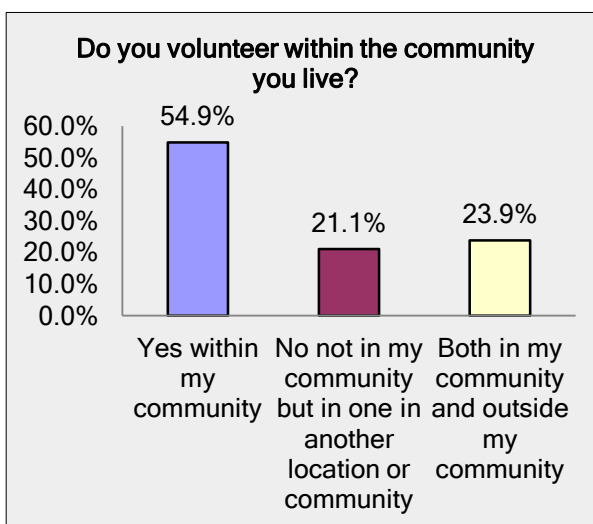
The following results describe the volunteering activity in the South Tipperary region. Each of the participants was asked to indicate their duration of volunteering activity, the location of their active volunteering and the types of groups that they volunteered with. In addition, the participants were asked to indicate if their volunteering activity was regular or sporadic, and how much time they gave to volunteering on a weekly basis. Figure 18 to Figure 22 show the results for the participant volunteering status, including percentages, response count, totals number of participants and missing data.

Figure 9 - Activity Data for Participating Volunteers



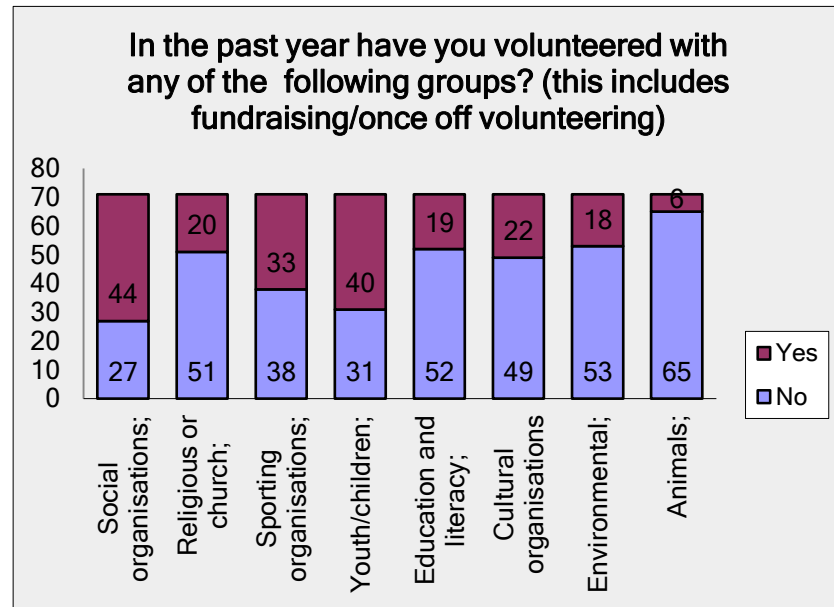
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months	21.1%	15
6 months - 1 year	21.1%	15
1-2 years	14.1%	10
3-4 years	14.1%	10
5 years or more	29.6%	21
<i>Total n=</i>		71
<i>Missing</i>		12

Figure 10 - Region of Participation for the Active Volunteers



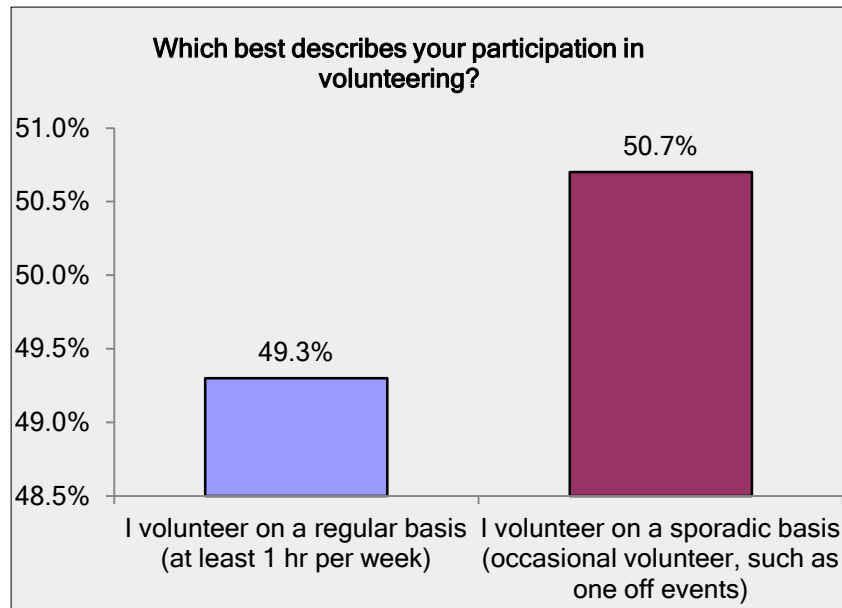
Answer Options	Response Percent	n
Yes within my community	54.9%	39
No not in my community but in one in another location or community	21.1%	15
Both in my community and outside my community	23.9%	17
<i>Total n=</i>		71
<i>Missing</i>		12

Figure 20 – Showing the participants’ participation in volunteering



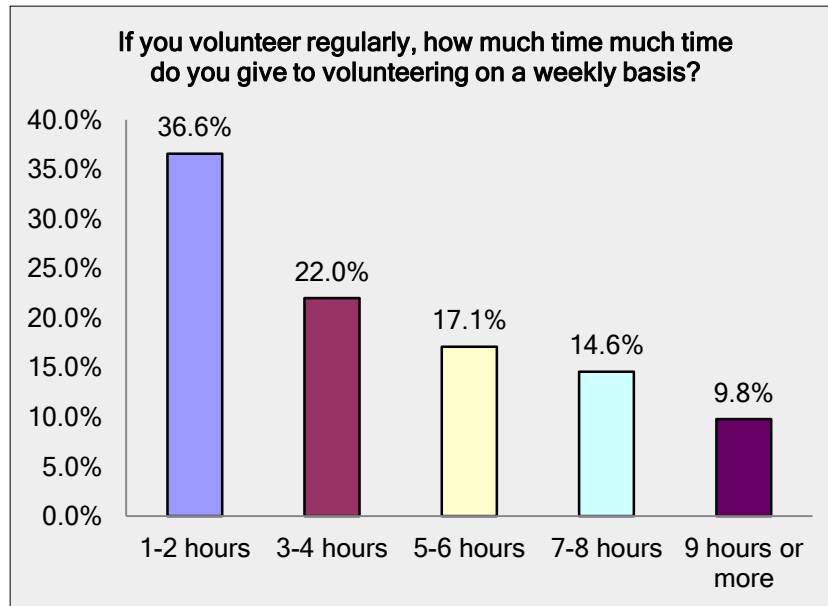
Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
Social organisations;	44	27	71
Religious or church;	20	51	71
Sporting organisations;	33	38	71
Youth/children;	40	31	71
Education and literacy;	19	52	71
Cultural organisations	22	49	71
Environmental;	18	53	71
Animals;	6	65	71
Other (please specify)			8
<i>Total n=</i>			71
<i>missing</i>			12

Figure 21 – which best describes your participation in volunteering



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I volunteer on a regular basis (at least 1 hr per week)	49.3%	35
I volunteer on a sporadic basis (occasional volunteer, such as one off events)	50.7%	36
<i>Total n=</i>		71
<i>Missing</i>		12

Figure 11 - Time these Volunteers Participate in Activities



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2 hours	36.6%	15
3-4 hours	22.0%	9
5-6 hours	17.1%	7
7-8 hours	14.6%	6
9 hours or more	9.8%	4
<i>answered question</i>		41
<i>skipped question</i>		42

Volunteering in the Community

The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1= agree strongly, 2= agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = disagree and 5 = disagree strongly) with two statements relating to volunteering in their community (see headings below). Figure 23 shows the responses for the participating volunteers for statement 1. The participants were split in their level of agreement, 29 of the 71 participants agreed with the statement, 14 participants were neutral, while 28 disagreed.

Figure 23 shows the responses for the participating volunteers for statement 1.

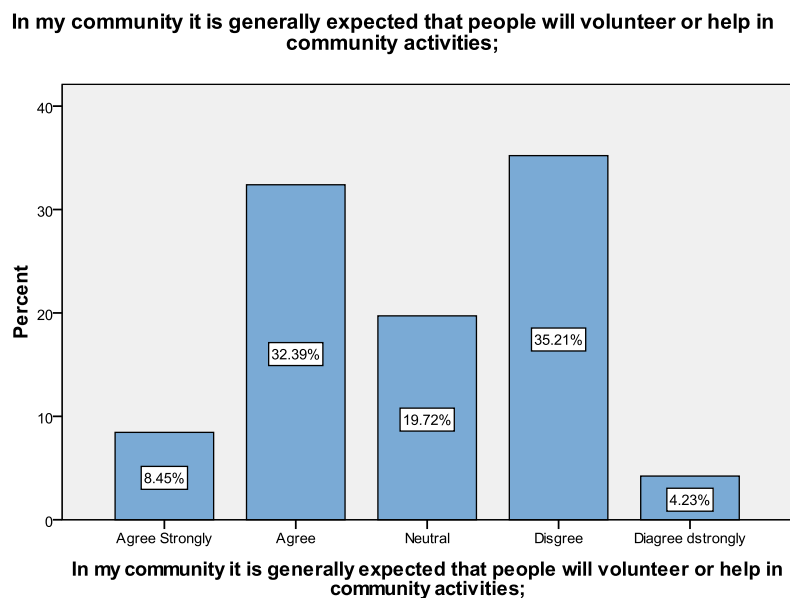
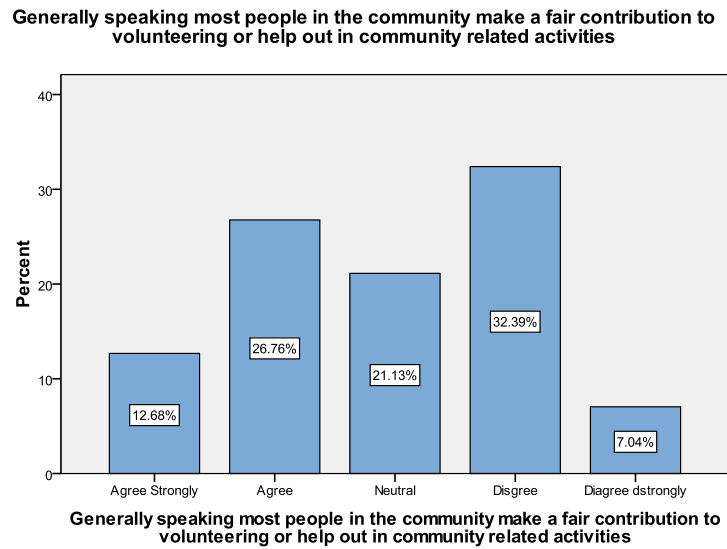


Figure 24 illustrates the response rate for statement 2 (see heading below) from the participating volunteers. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement with a second statement. The groups were split 28:28 with 28 of the total participants agreeing with the statement and 28 of the participant disagreeing with the statement. 15 of the participants were neutral.

Figure 24 showing the response rate in percentage for statement 2



Level of Impact

The participants were asked to rate the level of impact that volunteering had in the community using a rating scale of 1-10 where 1= no impact and 10 is high impact. A mean score was calculated to assess the level of impact. Table 9 below indicates a moderate to high score of 7.25 with a standard deviation of 2.241. Table 10 shows the level of impact by frequency and percentage for the participating group.

Table 9 – Showing mean score for level of Impact

Descriptive Statistics					
	n=	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Impact	71	2	10	7.25	2.241

Table 10 – Level of impact score of volunteering by frequency and percentage

Level of Impact					
Score		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	4	4.8	5.6	5.6
	3	2	2.4	2.8	8.5
	4	2	2.4	2.8	11.3
	5	5	6.0	7.0	18.3
	6	9	10.8	12.7	31.0
	7	16	19.3	22.5	53.5
	8	10	12.0	14.1	67.6
	9	8	9.6	11.3	78.9
	10 High Impact	15	18.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	71	85.5	100.0	
Missing	System	12	14.5		
Total		83	100.0		

Social Capital

The following table (11) shows the response rates for participants (1= agree strongly, 2= agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = disagree and 5 = disagree strongly). The rating average for each of the statements is also shown. In totality, strongest agreement was indicated for statement “I enjoy the feeling of participation while participating as a volunteer” (rating average score 1.70). Strongest disagreement was indicated for statement “Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment” (rating average 2.97).

Table 11 - Social Capital Responses

Answer Options	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Dis-agree strongly	mean
Generally speaking there is a good community spirit in the area or areas I volunteer in;	14	40	10	6	1	2.15
People that I volunteer with can be trusted;	15	44	7	5	0	2.03
I feel a sense of belonging because I volunteer;	18	41	7	4	1	2.00
The rewards of volunteering are greater than the input I give as a volunteer;	18	39	9	5	0	2.01
Volunteering has increased my involvement in community life;	21	35	12	3	0	1.96
Being a volunteer had improved my social relationships;	19	36	10	6	0	2.04
I enjoy the feeling of participation when I volunteer;	25	43	2	1	0	1.70
Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment;	7	18	21	20	5	2.97
I have learned new skills while participating as a volunteer;	17	36	8	7	3	2.20
Volunteering has increased my sense of well-being;	15	44	10	2	0	1.99
My confidence to try new things has been improved because of my work as a volunteer;	20	36	12	2	1	1.99
Volunteering has increased my awareness of others;	20	44	5	1	1	1.86
I have a greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures because of volunteering;	12	37	15	6	1	2.25
Working as a volunteer had increased my understanding and acceptance of people with special needs or disability;	12	34	16	7	2	2.34
Being a volunteer has raised my awareness of diversity in society;	15	34	16	4	2	2.21
I have formed lasting relationships as a direct result of being a volunteer;	15	36	12	6	2	2.21

Social Capital Contribution

The aim of the research was to measure the extent to which volunteering added to social capital. Each of the participants score were combined to give a total capital score (T.C.S.). Scores were re-coded in S.P.S.S. for each of the statements and then combined to give the T.C.S. A score of 4 was given where a participant indicated a strongly agree, a score of 3 was given for agree, 2 for disagree, 1 for disagree strongly and 0 if the participant opted neutral, for each of the 16 statements relating to social capital. This produced a scale of 0-64, where a score of 0 indicated that volunteering had no addition to social capital and a score of 64 had the highest addition to social capital. Equally, a combined score below 32 indicated that the participant's volunteering did not add to social capital and a combined score above 32, indicated the participant's volunteering added to social capital in the South Tipperary region.

58(81.7%) of the 71 participants were considered to add to social capital as a result of volunteering, while 13(18.3%) of the participants were considered not to add to add to social capital as a result of volunteering. The graph below illustrate the T.C.S. frequency distribution, the black line indicates those above and below the 32 threshold. Figure 25 shows the frequency distribution. The mass of the distribution is concentrated on the right of the figure, indicating a negative skewed distribution and relatively few low values for total capital score.

Figure 25 – showing the distribution of combined T.C.S. by frequency

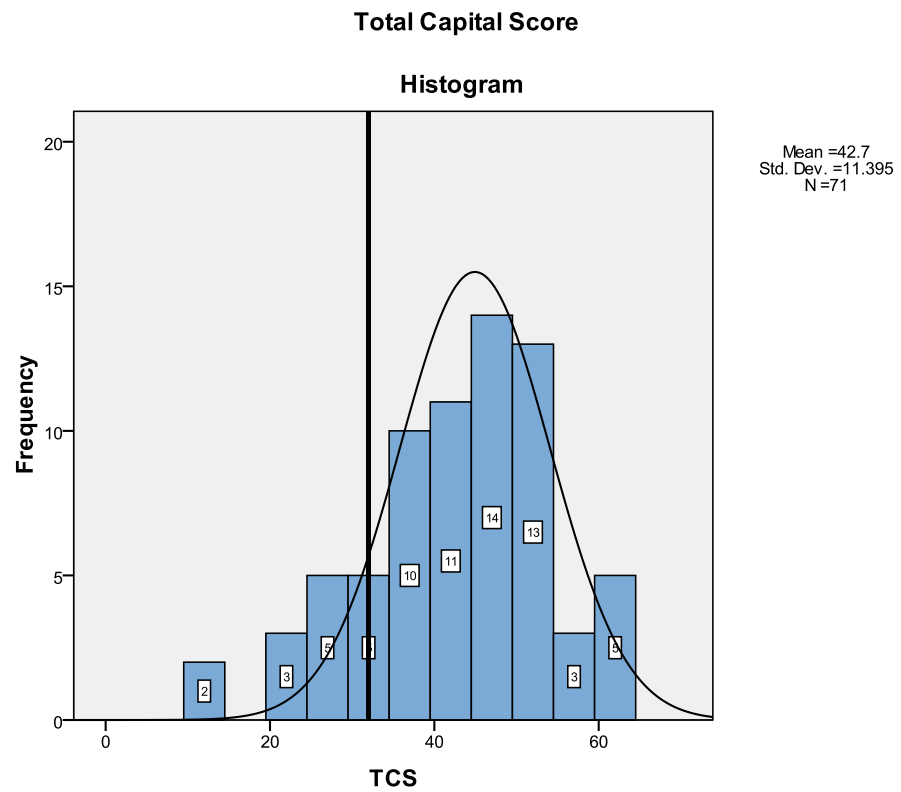


Table 12 – Show the frequency distribution table for T.C.S.

TCS Category					
Score (T.C.S.)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	11-20	2	2.4	2.8	2.8
	21-32	11	13.3	15.5	18.3
	33-40	15	18.1	21.1	39.4
	41-50	28	33.7	39.4	78.9
	51-60	11	13.3	15.5	94.4
	61-64	4	4.8	5.6	100.0
	Total	71	85.5	100.0	
	missing	12	14.5		
Total		83	100.0		

Relationship between Participants Variables and T.C.S. Score

The T.C.S. score was recoded into a categorical variable to explore the possibly of relationships between its score and other categorical variables collected during the questionnaire. The T.C.S. scores were coded “yes” 33 or above and “no” if scored 32 or below. Each of the categorical variables was then examined to check for statistical significance using Chi-squared for independence. The significance level was set at the 0.5% level for all statistical testing. Fisher's exact test is computed when a table cell reported an expected frequency of less than 5.

Question 1: Are Males more likely to have contributed to social capital than Females?

Table 13 below shows the crosstabulation for Gender and contribution to social capital. A chi-square test for independence (with Yates continuity correction) indicated no significant association between gender and contribution to social capital status. $\chi^2(1, n=71), p=0.47$

Table 12 - Gender Contribution to Social Capital

What is your Gender? * Crosstabulation					
			Contributes to social capital		Total
			Yes	No	
What is your Gender?	Male	Count	18	6	24
		% within What is your Gender?	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	40	7	47
		% within What is your Gender?	85.1%	14.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	58	13	71
		% within What is your Gender?	81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

Question 2: Does social capital status depend on your age?

Table 14 below shows the cross tabulation for contribution to social capital status by age category. A chi-squared test (Fisher exact test) for independence was used to determine if the two categorical variables were related. No statistical significance was observed in the relationship between age and contribution to social capital status. $\chi^2(1, n=71), p=0.904$

Table 14 – showing the age profile by contribution to social capital status

To which age group do you belong? * Postive/neg Cross tabulation						
			Contribution to social capital		Total	
			yes	No		
To which age group do you belong ?	18-25 years	Count	14	3	17	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	82.4%	17.6%	100.0%	
	26-35 years	Count	11	3	14	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	78.6%	21.4%	100.0%	
	36-49 years	Count	21	6	27	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%	
	50-59 years	Count	8	1	9	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%	
	60-70 years	Count	3	0	3	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	100.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	71 years or older	Count	1	0	1	
		% within To which age group do you belong?	100.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	Total		Count	58	13	71
			% within To which age group do you belong?	81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

Question 3: Does social capital status depend on relationship status?

Table 15 below shows the frequency and percentage of social capital status by the relationship status of the participants. A chi-squared analysis (Fishers exact test) indicated no significant difference in the reported status for social capital and the participant relationship status. $\chi^2 (1, n=71), p= 0.069$

Table 15 – showing the frequency and percentage of social capital status by the relationship status of the participants

Best describes your current relationship status? * Postive/neg stab					
			Contribution to Social Capital		Total
			yes	No	
Which best describes your current relationship status?	Single	Count	27	4	31
			87.1%	12.9%	100.0%
	Married	Count	16	8	24
			66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	In a relationship	Count	13	0	13
			100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Separated	Count	1	0	1
			100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Divorced	Count	1	1	2
			50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	58	13	71
			81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

Question 4: Does social capital status depend on current employment status?

Table 16 illustrates the social capital status based on the participants' employment status. A chi-squared (Fishers exact test) indicated no statistically significance for the two variables χ^2 (1, n=71), p= 0.537. The higher numbers of contributors were associated with the career group at 66.7%; however this represents only 3 of the participants and therefore has to be viewed in that context. As a proportion of respondents the higher number of contributors to social capital (86.7%) was observed in the jobseeker category.

Table 13 - Social Capital by Relationship Status

Which best describes your current employment status? *						
			Yes	No	Total	
Which best describes your current employment status?	In full time paid employment		11	3	14	
			78.6%	21.4%	100.0%	
	In part time paid employment		9	2	11	
			81.8%	18.2%	100.0%	
	Job seeker		13	2	15	
			86.7%	13.3%	100.0%	
	In receipt of a social welfare payment for illness or disability		4	1	5	
			80.0%	20.0%	100.0%	
	Retired		4	0	4	
			100.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	Working in the home		5	1	6	
			83.3%	16.7%	100.0%	
	Carer		1	2	3	
			33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	
	Full-time Student		11	2	13	
			84.6%	15.4%	100.0%	
	Total			58	13	71
				81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

Question 5: Does education status affect social capital status?

A chi-squared (fisher exact test) was conducted to test for a statically significant difference between groups. The results indicate no statistical significance for education status at the 0.5% level, but it was significant at the 0.10% level. $\chi^2 (1, n=71), p= 0.056$. Although a difference was not observed, 6 of the 13 participants who were educated to postgraduate level were non contributors to social capital. The next highest group of non-contributors were those educated to leaving certificate, 4 of a possible 12 participants (see table 17 below).

Table 17 – Contributors to social capital by educational status.

Please indicate your highest level of education? * Positive/neg Crosstabulation		Contributi on to social capital		Total	
		yes	No		
Please indicate your highest level of education?	No formal education	1	0	1	
		100. 0%	.0%	100. 0%	
	Primary education only	2	0	2	
		100. 0%	.0%	100. 0%	
	Second level education to intermediate, group cert or junior	5	0	5	
		100. 0%	.0%	100. 0%	
	Second level education to leaving cert or leaving cert applied	8	4	12	
		66.7 %	33. 3%	100. 0%	
	Vocational course/apprentice	5	1	6	
		83.3 %	16. 7%	100. 0%	
	Third level National certificate or Diploma	16	1	17	
		94.1 %	5.9 %	100. 0%	
	Primary Degree	14	1	15	
		93.3 %	6.7 %	100. 0%	
	Postgraduate Diploma or Masters Degree	7	5	12	
		58.3 %	41. 7%	100. 0%	
	Doctorate	0	1	1	
		.0%	100 .0%	100. 0%	
Total		Count	58	13	71

Question 6: Does social contribution to social capital status depend on the type of volunteering conducted?

11.4% (4) of the participants who volunteered on a regular basis were non contributors to social capital while 25% (9) of the participants' who volunteered on a sporadic basis were non contributors (see table 18 below). However, a Pearson chi-squared indicated no difference between the participation in volunteering and the contribution to social capital. χ^2 (1, n=71), p= 0.22

Table 18 – Showing the participation of volunteering by the type and the contribution to social capital status

Which best describes your participation in volunteering? * Positive/neg Crosstabulation					
			Contribution to social capital		Total
			yes	No	
Which best describes your participation in volunteering ?	I volunteer on a regular basis (at least 1 hr per week)	Count	31	4	35
			88.6%	11.4%	100.0%
	I volunteer on a sporadic basis (occasional volunteer, such	Count	27	9	36
			75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	58	13	71
			81.7%	18.3%	100.0%

Question 7: Is there a relationship between the level of impact score and the T.C.S.?

The relationship between the perceived levels of impact volunteering has in the community (0 no impact and 10 high impact) and perceived contribution to social capital score (as measured by the total capital score, T.C.S.) was examined. Due to the non-normal distribution of scores Spearman's Rho non-parametric was specified. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure linearity and a review of the scatterplots showed evidence of homoscedasticity. There was a weak positive correlation between the two variables $r=0.25$, $n= 71$, $p=0.035$, with high levels of impact associated with high T.C.S. scores (see table 19 below).

Table 19 – Showing the correlation coefficient for T.C.S. and level of impact.

Correlations				
			TCS	Level of Impact
Spearman's rho	T.C.S.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.251*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035
		N	71	71
	Level of Impact	Correlation Coefficient	.251*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.
		N	71	71
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Chapter 7 - Discussion

While the concept of volunteering remains contested and increasingly open to interpretation (Wilson & Musick, 1997; Harris, 2000; Lukka & Ellis, 2001; Sixsmith & Boneham, 2003), the volunteer ethic remains grounded in trust, reciprocity and social embeddedness (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Stolle & Rochon, 1998; Claibourn & Martin, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Mayer, 2003; Wollebaeck & Selle, 2003; Eurodiaconia, 2010) in varied layers of immediate and peripheral social networks (Wollebaeck & Selle, 2002; Prouteau & Wolff, 2004). The current study utilised social capital theory (Wall et al, 1998; Kawachi et al, 2009; Berkman, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Poortinga, 2005; Son & Lin, 2008; Boeck et al, 2009) as heuristic device to illustrate and understand individual and collective volunteer experiences as situated within immediate and peripheral social networks in the community. Both the survey and qualitative study yielded interesting and rich data with regard to volunteer and organisation experiences of volunteer participation in the midst of Ireland's recession. The contribution of volunteering to social capital in the form of social relations, community and volunteer group integration, development of trust and mutual resource acquisition in community service and employment related skill acquisition is evident in this descriptive 'snapshot' of social volunteering phenomena in Irish volunteer and organisation experiences. The qualitative findings reflect existing research by illustrating how social connectivity within volunteering improves social and networking skills, mutual cooperation, reciprocity and trust within groups and wider social contexts (Ellis and O'Brien, 2001; Hill, 2011; Brodie *et al.*,

2011). The survey indicated that volunteering has a high level of impact on the community in the South Tipperary Region.

A change in definition of volunteering was described in the qualitative data with spontaneous informal volunteering (Amato, 1990) increasingly replaced by structured and formalised volunteer placements and procedures (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Research shows that situational factors influence levels of formal volunteer participation (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Difficulties in securing volunteer places were also mentioned, and were perhaps indicative of the recessionary times occurring in Ireland at that time. The qualitative findings indicated a merging of informal and formal volunteer processes, with formal volunteering hosted within a group or organisation, and informal taking place between individuals (Smith, 1999; Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Parboteeah et al, 2004; Low et al, 2007; Brodie et al, 2011). Similar to other research describing the understanding of volunteering as hinging on '*net cost*', (dimensions where cost to the volunteer exceeds any benefit they incur) (Handy et al, 2000; Meijs et al, 2003), in this study benefits in most cases appeared to exceed volunteer cost, in the form of increased well-being, community and group integration, work related experiences and up-skilling, sense of '*giving something back*' and associational and cooperative relationships. Similar to other research, the benefit of volunteering appeared in most cases to exceed volunteer cost, in the form of increased personal well-being and sense of purpose, development of friendships and meeting new people, identification with the volunteer activity and ethos of the relevant group or organisation, sense of '*giving something back*' and serving a

specified community need, work related experiences, productivity in free time and chances for up-skilling (Handy *et al*, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Musick and Wilson, 2003; Meijs *et al*, 2003; Whiteley, 2004; Post, 2005; Borgonovi 2008; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Survey participants implied that '*enjoying the feeling of participation*' was the main reason for participating as a volunteer.

Of interest for this work, is that social capital theory can illustrate volunteer processes as situated within firstly '*inclusive networks*' relating to volunteer group relations and contributing to a sense of belonging and inner affirmation within host volunteer organisations; and secondly within '*exclusive networks*' such as wider volunteer networks operating to create links and reciprocal norms (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Warren *et al.*, 2001; Boeck *et al.*, 2009). Social processes of volunteering were described as incurring levels of social trust relating to close and personal volunteer relationships, and also extending into the wider community (Putnam, 2000; Ockenden *et al.*, 2007). In this way, volunteering appeared increasingly utilised as a medium for community integration in the form of bridging ties (Putnam, 2000), and the serving of vulnerable or marginalised groups, and self-serving motives grounded in up-skilling for employment.

Similar to Brodie *et al* (2011), in their extensive work on volunteering participation, motives, commitment carried out in the United Kingdom, participation was particularly personal to all volunteers involved in the study, with attention drawn to both the need for positive volunteer experiences and placements within both formal and informal host groups or organisations, and

the personal identification with the volunteer activity and the ethos of the relevant group or organisation. A range of benefits were described by both volunteers and participants related to the acquisition of new skills and learning, helping others, gaining career or work related experience, socialisation, enhancing self-esteem, reciprocity, identification to certain groups or mission statements and recognition. In this way, instrumental and expressive actions within these volunteer and community networks aimed to both maintain and increase levels of resources within bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Several participants observed habitual volunteer participation trajectories, which differed greatly from those who voiced opportunistic self-serving motives for participation.

Gender specific volunteer roles and placements were described, with women engaging in lengthier periods of volunteering, and men adopting a more transient intermittent approach. Research shows that women volunteer more than men (Drever, 2010), with other research indicating how intrinsic motivations facilitate the creation of social networks based on familiarity (Antoni, 2009), and how informal voluntary contributions (especially in the case of women) may be viewed as a natural extension of community engagement (Sixsmith et al, 2001, 2002). Indeed, the relationship between employment, education and income impacts on levels of volunteer participation (Pearce, 1993; Smith, 1994; Turner, 1997; Wilson & Musick, 1997; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Hill & Russell, 2009) with higher income, and educational level stimulating greater opportunity and depth of volunteer participation. Of interest is that the survey results showed that those trained to

postgraduate level, volunteer participation was shown not to contribute to perceived levels of social capital. One may speculate that these individuals already have high levels of perceived social capital. Contribution to social capital as a result of volunteering was also not influenced by age, gender, employment or relationship status in survey results. Despite this, the need for younger and student volunteers was also underscored in the interviews (see Boeck et al, 2009; Darwin & Rannard, 2010), with the age category 16-25 years least likely to participate in formal volunteering, but most likely to get involved in informal volunteering (National Centre For Social Research, 2011). Volunteers in this research described both continuous and sporadic involvement in volunteering (Smith, 1999), with organisations observing difficulties in volunteer availability and notice, and some volunteers emphasising the need for greater recognition of volunteers (for example not being taken for granted). In this instance volunteering remained very much grounded in levels of free time, availability and for some individuals served as a '*gap filler*' for housewives and those unemployed.

For the majority, volunteering occurred in response to a need in the community, as commitment to a specific service and for fulfilment and satisfaction. This is echoed in recent research describing a complexity of individual, group and societal motives grounded in egotism, altruism, collectivism, instrumentality, meaning, identity and principalism (Sixsmith et al, 2001, 2002; Bason et al, 2002; Klandermans, 2004; Eurodiaconia, 2010; Brodie et al, 2011), with the contemporary shift away from helping others and towards personalise benefits of volunteering (creating relationships, acquiring

skills, gaining experiences, securing paid employment) resulting in resource acquisition for those unemployed or socially disadvantaged (Smith, 1999). The contribution of volunteering to social capital in the form of social relations, community and volunteer group integration, development of trust and mutual resource acquisition is evident in this research. In particular, the contribution of localised knowledge provided by volunteers in existing social and community networks was underscored by organisational representatives, and supports previous research by Flanagan & Sadowski (2011) who observed that outsiders may be more accepted into certain communities due to their willingness to achieve social change and '*giving something back*' to the community. Research shows that volunteering increases as individuals perceive themselves to be more embedded and experience greater levels of trust within their group or community (Hooghe, 2003; Son & Lin, 2008; Lee et al, 2009). However, social capital theory describes how through face to face interaction, levels of social trust (both '*thick*' relating to close and personal relationships, and '*thin*' grounded in norms and extending beyond the individual), horizontal social networks and community partnership between individuals from different backgrounds increase (Putnam et al, 1993; Saguaro Seminar, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Ockenden, 2007); and with volunteering stimulating agency of change through reciprocity and learning exchange (Ostrom & Ahn, 2001, Mohan and Mohan, 2002, Brunie, 2009, Eurodiaconia, 2010).

Of interest were the varied experiences of acceptance of volunteers within organisations, with some volunteers observing volunteer-paid staff equality,

and others describing a lack of respect and recognition within a hierarchical system. In some cases, volunteers were described as bringing a diversity of skills, values and interests into the host organisations, and in other cases volunteers described feeling used. Both volunteers and paid staff described the need for clear boundaries relating to volunteer roles and responsibilities, within a clearly identified power dynamic. However, volunteer opportunity, uptake and participation can be affected by the negative distribution of power resources and social capital (Brodie et al, 2011), with social connectivity in the form of bridging ties between the volunteer and the professional can be compromised by the lack of mutual communication, reciprocity and trust (Sixsmith & Boneham, 2003). Integration of volunteers into the organisations workforce was also dependent on length of time and intensity of volunteer contributions. In some cases, volunteers described lonely experiences of volunteering, with little social connection with staff or with other volunteers. In this manner, simply being part of a volunteer network contributed to a sense of social capital, secondary to participating in the host organisation. Research shows that although a sense of group cohesion is achieved, volunteer participation can become exclusionary (Putnam, 2003; Field, 2003) and also become quite insularised within dense social networks of volunteers. Paik & Jackson (2011) underscored how social networks and volunteering depend on recruitment of individuals and resultant bonding or bridging forms of social capital.

Putnam (2000) advocated the development of bridging ties in the stimulation of novel ideas and opportunities within communities, with Sixsmith &

Boneham (2003) illustrating how constrained social capital in the form of such bonding ties grounded in power differentials between volunteers and professionals can exist; with other research illustrating the creation and maintenance of social capital in the form of informal social volunteer networks grounded in active, passive and multiple familiarities within communities (sometimes deprived) (Cooper et al, 1999, Campbell et al, 1999, Sixsmith et al, 2001,20002; Wollebaeck & Selle, 2002; Kolodinsky et al, 2004; Isham et al, 2004; Antoni , 2009). Indeed, Coleman’s definition of social capital is “*the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organisation.*”(Paldam & Svendsen, 1999:4). Indeed, Sixsmith & Boneham (2003) described how relationships between volunteers and paid staff can be underpinned with lack of trust, with mutual exchange of resources and potential for bridging ties compromised by misconceptions around communication. Several participants described the need for assertive personality traits in order to optimise on volunteer experiences, with research showing that extraversion and volunteering go hand in hand (Bekkers, 2005; Carlo et al, 2005; Okun et al, 2007). In addition, individuals with a variety of organisational ties have a greater number of volunteer opportunities (Okun & Michel, 2006). However, volunteering was described as becoming part of the individual’s life, contributed to heightened sense of well-being, increased social space, agency and status, a greater number of relationships and situation within localise networks. This is reciprocated in other research describing the positive results incurred from social connectivity which improved social and networking skills, mutual cooperation, reciprocity and trust (Argyle, 1996; Bandura, 1997; Ellis & O’Brien, 2001; Parker, 2007; Cornwall, 2008; Hill,

2001; Brodie et al, 2011). Indeed, research shows that volunteering lowers depression levels and contributes to happiness, empathy and positive mental health (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Whitely, 2004; Post, 2005, Borgonovi, 2008).

Volunteering appeared to be changing in response to the recession experienced at the time, with a reduced amount of volunteer places available, with many volunteer placements directed at fundraising, and with volunteers emphasising the need for continued recognition of their contribution. Volunteering appeared to be utilised for self-serving purposes in many cases so as to gain experiences, undertake training and learn new skills; or as a justification for simply filling free time due to unemployment (see also Price, 2002). Informal volunteering processes appeared to be losing their spontaneity and becoming subsumed within a drive to formalised volunteers experiences with Volunteer Charters and protocols. Volunteering had become more formalised and less organic, less grounded in helping others and more directed at helping oneself. Indeed, research by Fahey (2003) underscored the need for governments to reduce efforts at community self-reliance and to continue to foster community volunteering and the protection of volunteers. In this way, social capital within volunteering can be viewed as social resource, connective mechanism for inclusion of outsiders and insiders, and as a basis for collective action (Bewugelsdijk & Van Schaik, 2003; Holland et al, 2007; Weller, 2007; Boeck et al, 2009; Paik & Jackson, 2011). In some cases, the host organisation viewed itself as helping volunteers and not the other way around. Some volunteers reported progressing onto paid employment during the course of

host organisation integration within the staff cohort. However, survey participants felt that the ‘*ability to gain or sustain employment*’ was not enhanced as a direct result of volunteering. Some reported using volunteering to test out certain types of work, and which contributed to alienation from staff. In terms of the literature, volunteer work is essentially defined as “*unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial, of friendship obligations*” (Tilly & Tilly, 1994:291). In this way, the concept of reward for volunteers is present in the form of training, or progression onto paid volunteer hours. However, Smith (1999) underscored that the volunteer should not be partaking with the sole objective of financial gain. However, an emergent policy directive in Europe is the utilisation of volunteering as a route successful employment and life changing experiences. VolontoEurope emphasises that volunteering must retain its value as mechanism for social integration, and valuable component in all employment directed and social policies. According to Hill (2011), the dynamic effects of recession on volunteering and pathways towards employment are complex; with those out of work less likely to volunteer even though they have more time to volunteer.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

The research however small-scale and context specific presents an illustration of volunteering as expression of the civic self through social relations formed between volunteers and host organisations. Social capital tenets as they emerge from the volunteer experience are grounded in mutual reciprocity, individual and group level trust, resource acquisition, social connectivity, and purposeful outlook, health and well-being situated within their volunteering experience. The research underscores the need to preserve the informal organic processes for volunteers as every bit as valued as formal volunteer placements, and the concern that informal reciprocity may be undermined by the drive to formalised with volunteer protocols and training programmes. A consultative process is needed to ensure, recognise and protect the contribution which volunteers make. There is a need to both quantify and understand contemporary volunteering trends and benefits of volunteering as they relate to social capital in Ireland, and utilise this data for specific volunteer and governance policy approaches which recognise cultural and context specific dynamics, not only in relation to the host organisation, but especially in relation to community engagement and civic society in Ireland. The act of volunteering shall always depend on relations between the volunteer and the *'other'* in the form of an individual, group, organisation, community or society. Both volunteers and host organisations need to develop realistic expectations around volunteer roles and responsibilities, and treat volunteers well in order to preserve and protect all forms of volunteerism.

No formal research had been carried out in South Tipperary amongst the voluntary community. The voluntary sector also had no monitoring framework from which to work from and would ask random questions of people who used the service in an attempt to measure its value. In this way, the research contributes in a pragmatic way to the continued quality of volunteer placements and administration in the South Tipperary Volunteer Centre. South Tipperary Volunteer Centre will launch the Research in September 2012 to the non-for-profit sector in the hope that it can be of value to them in their everyday work.

The study has made a significant impact on the way in which the centre now evaluates and monitors its services, as we now use the developed survey as part of our data systems. The additional information now available to the board and staff means that the contribution of social capital and its relevance for the work of the centre is incorporated into day to day management. We are also delighted that the survey was published by the International Journal of Volunteer Administration, and is being used by other volunteer centres.

Strategic planning and annual work plans must meet with our funder's requirements and allow us to drive change and create better opportunities for volunteers and support the organisations in which they volunteer. The importance of informal volunteering is highlighted and needs to be supported to create environments when communities can meet, network and support each other without structure of barriers. By understanding social capital and how it interplays with our volunteer, it allows us to formally recognise what the

centre does to its core funders and places a real value on the contribution that volunteers make to our society.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Policy to Support Volunteer Centres.

Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

Background

1. In March 2005, the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs (D/C.R.G.A.) announced a package of measures to support volunteering, which included providing core funding for the then eight local volunteer centres in existence, and funding for Volunteering Centres Ireland (V.C.I.) as a national organisation to support the development of the network of local volunteer centres. Under the *Towards 2016 Partnership Agreement* (2006) increased funding was provided in support of volunteering and further volunteer centres were provided with funding by the Department. Twenty-one centres are currently being supported by the Department, a list of which is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Following a review of the operation of the volunteer centres in 2008, a new policy to support the work of the centres has been developed, the key elements of which are set out below.

Minimum Level of Quantifiable Service Standards

3. To provide a clear and quantifiable framework for assessing the delivery of service by volunteer centres in the future, each centre will be required to provide the following minimum service standards:

- a volunteer-centred placement and support service;
- supports for not-for-profit organisations;
- to market and promote volunteering;
- ensure internal good practice.

4. Minimum expected standards will be based on the V.C.I. Document, "*A Quality Standards Document for Volunteer Centres in Ireland*". Adherence to this framework will ensure a minimum level of service standards is achieved. Evaluation is also seen as a capacity building tool to bring about high quality

delivery of core functions. V.C.I. will facilitate a performance improvement framework. While it is acknowledged that the services volunteer centres provide are not always captured in raw statistics, evidence of a transition to best practice and a more standardised approach to developing work-plans and setting targets adopted across the network of centres will be required.

5. Additionally, volunteer centres will be required to occupy a physical space as well as a virtual one, and be open to all non-profits and all kinds of volunteers (i.e. not just sports; not just employees) within a county-wide geographic remit (in some cases local authority wide). There will be a base-level expectation regarding opening hours and other operational details. Volunteer centres will be required to facilitate Garda vetting of local volunteers and other necessary supports not available to volunteer-involving organisations. They will also be required to have a Board of Management and to be in compliance with relevant regulatory legislation.

Robust Evaluation Procedures

6. The V.C.I. *Quality Standards* document incorporates a workbook listing examples of indicators and volunteer centres will be assessed in relation to it. The assessment process will be based on this workbook. Volunteer centres are required to develop an ‘evidence portfolio’ for submission. Wishing to draw on the collective knowledge and experience of V.C.I. and the volunteer centres currently in existence, assessments will be by way of peer review, involving representatives from V.C.I., D/C.R.G.A. and volunteer centre managers on a rotating basis. It is envisaged that a minimum of 20% of volunteer centres will be reviewed each year and the review process will be managed by V.C.I. Emerging centres will be required to receive approval from the peer review group prior to being awarded funding by the Department. All centres are required to complete a self-assessment based on the *Quality Standards* workbook by the end of October 2009. These self-assessments will form the basis for the peer review process going forward.

7. In addition, a number of volunteer centres will be selected for inspection by the D/C.R.G.A.'s Inspection Services Directorate (I.S.D.) and the grant payments made in the previous calendar year will be examined. The selection of centres for inspection will be based on appropriate risk analysis criteria to cover at least 5% of the total yearly grant payments from the Department. The role of I.S.D. will be to carry out checks that take the form of an inspection of documents sourced from the Department, followed by an inspection of the volunteer centre. The outcome of the inspections will be recorded on an inspection report form, which will be submitted to the D/C.R.G.A. for due consideration and appropriate follow-up action.

Guidelines Regarding Funding, Staffing, Conditions of Work

8. In light of current economic circumstances, resources are not available to the Department to support the further expansion of the network of volunteer centres in the short term. Any future expansion would therefore be dependent on financial resources becoming available to the D/C.R.G.A., and would take population density and geographic spread into account.

9. A multi-annual funding structure will be implemented for volunteer centres, subject to available resources, to include a contribution towards staffing and running costs. Subject to funding being available, there will be a contribution towards one full-time member of staff for the development of a centre, leading to one full-time manager and one full-time (or equivalent) placement officer, where appropriate.

10. The Department's contribution will, therefore, lead to the provision of funding towards up to two full-time members of staff in total. Costs of appropriate overhead expenses will be calculated based on factors that include population size, geographic spread, rurality and socio-economic factors. Agreement with other local stakeholders will be sought to share the costs of overhead expenses. The level of funding provided will also be dependent on service delivery - volunteer centres which satisfy the intermediate/advanced

criteria, as set out in the V.C.I. quality standards document, will be prioritised for support.

11. The Department's financial contribution to volunteer centres will take account of reasonable overhead costs and elements of staff costs. In this context the employer role of Volunteer Centres in relation to recruitment and remuneration of staff is recognised. The Department notes also that volunteer centres will be guided by V.C.I.'s recommended salary scales. In this regard volunteer centres may also seek to fund elements of staff costs, including remuneration, from other donors/sources.

12. V.C.I. or funded volunteer centres will be required to be involved in recruitment procedures. The Department will not be involved in the recruitment process.

Cost Sharing with Local Agencies

13. At present, a number of local partnership companies, local authorities etc. make contributions towards the funding of their local volunteer centre. However, the practice is not uniform and the amount contributed varies considerably. It is critical that volunteer centres develop synergies with other relevant stakeholders to ensure their long-term financial sustainability. An agreed approach to cost sharing will be sought with local stakeholders, such as local authorities and partnership groups. Support from these organisations will promote greater local ownership of the objectives of the volunteer centre. In encouraging local partnership companies and other stakeholders to support the volunteer centres, the countywide role and specific functions of the centre must be understood by all parties. Centres should, however, retain a large degree of autonomy in order to best serve the community as a whole. The optimum model, which has been adopted in several instances, is where a centre receives funding from several sources, including stakeholders, but retains the necessary autonomy to carry out its activities in a best practice manner.

Conditions for Renewal of Contracts and New Centres

14. At present, there are twenty-one volunteer centres in receipt of core funding from the D/C.R.G.A. The relevant provisions of this policy document, which have been formulated in conjunction with V.C.I., will form the basis for renewal of contracts with the Department. In addition, new volunteer centres seeking support from the Department (when resources might permit this in the future) will be required to fulfil conditions set out in this policy. Assessment will be carried out jointly by the Department and V.C.I. to ensure best practice. Contracts will be subject to renewal every three years.

Role of V.C.I.

15. V.C.I. is the national organisation whose responsibility includes representing the network of volunteer centres. Specific functions of V.C.I. include facilitating the network of volunteer centres; developing best practice within the network; representing the network nationally, cross-border and internationally; managing the database used by member centres as well as the website www.volunteer.ie as a conduit for volunteering; overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of the volunteer centres and assessing new applicants.

16. In order to streamline administration of the funding scheme for volunteer centres, membership of V.C.I. will be a condition for funding by the Department. In circumstances where membership of V.C.I. is either revoked or suspended, no payment shall issue from the Department until membership has been restored. There are a number of advantages in having the volunteer centres as members of the V.C.I. network:

- V.C.I. member centres share a common I.T. database management system, allowing comparative analysis and evaluation on a county by county basis;
- It provides for agreement across the network on the role of the volunteer centres and provides the public with a clear understanding of the services provided by the centres;

- It provides for common evaluation and monitoring procedures, with the co-operation of V.C.I.

Future Role of Volunteer Centres

17. A countrywide network of volunteer centres represents a potentially valuable asset for the community & voluntary sector as a whole. Maximising the potential of the volunteer centres will require the involvement and co-operation of the wider community & voluntary (C&V) sector and opportunities will arise for joint initiatives and synergies to develop between the network and other stakeholders. Volunteering is not a segregated activity that takes place in a discrete space separate from the rest of society. It is critical, therefore, that volunteer centres develop synergies with other relevant stakeholders including educational institutions and the local C&V infrastructure.

18. In particular, there will be opportunities to develop joint initiatives in schools and third-level institutions to encourage and facilitate the involvement of young people in volunteer activities. Other opportunities include developing the network of centres for training or information for other C&V actors e.g. in the area of charities legislation. There is evidence that assistance is required for volunteer-involving organisations to become more pro-active in the support they provide to volunteers, particularly in relation to training. The Department recognises the importance of positive volunteering experiences for volunteers and sees as an objective of volunteer centres, the promotion of good practice in working with volunteers through the delivery of training and support. The challenge for the voluntary sector is not just about increasing the numbers of volunteers but also about developing good policies and practices with regard to volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs

11 May 2009

List of Volunteer Centres currently funded by the Department

1. Carlow

2. Cork
3. Drogheda
4. Donegal
5. Dublin City South
6. Dublin City North
7. Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown
8. Fingal
9. Galway
10. Kerry
11. Kildare
12. Limerick City
13. West Limerick
14. Mayo
15. Meath
16. Monaghan
17. Sligo
18. South Dublin County
19. South Tipperary
20. Westmeath
21. Wicklow

Appendix 2 Publication 1

Abstract

Ireland has a longstanding history of diverse volunteer action (Volunteering Ireland, 2010a). Ireland's current economic recession has impacted on the community and voluntary sector, with frequent contraction in staff numbers and incomes, and increasing reliance on volunteer participation (Harvey, 2012). This study utilised social capital theory to garner a phenomenological understanding of the contribution of volunteering to perceived social capital amongst Irish volunteers and host organisation representatives. A convenience sample of 28 participants (17 volunteers and 11 organisation representatives) was interviewed. A shift in personal and social definitions of volunteering were described, with informal volunteering increasingly replaced by structured, formalized and regulated volunteer placements. Volunteers described their experiences as contributing to increased personal well being and sense of purpose, development of friendships and meeting new people. The volunteer participants identified volunteering activity as a specified community need, providing work related experiences, fulfillment in free time and opportunity for up-skilling. Integration of volunteers into the organisation's workforce was described as dependent on duration, intensity of interaction and scope of volunteer contributions. Power differentials and a lack of trust between volunteers and staff, was described, as was a lack of volunteer recognition staff. Subsequently, some volunteers identified and aligned themselves within the wider social volunteer network rather than their host organisation. The research reflected an emergent consumerist approach to volunteering and underscores the need to preserve informal social networks of community volunteers, alongside the development of more formalized work specific routes for volunteering in Ireland.

Key Words

Volunteering, social capital, social connectivity, community.

Introduction

Ireland has a longstanding tradition of contributing to the common good (Volunteering Ireland, , 2010a). A strong surge of voluntary activity grounded in social solidarity and cultural nationalism was witnessed in the late nineteenth century, for example, Conradh na Gaeilge, Muintir na Tíre and the Gaelic Athletic Associations, (National Committee on Volunteering, 2002). Payment for community development work, predominantly in urban areas, emerged in Ireland in the 1960s with later support from the Irish state and European Union. The Irish ‘*volunteering infrastructure*’ began to gain ground in the late 1990s, with the formation of the Volunteer Resource Centre (later known as Volunteer Ireland), which aimed to improve active citizenship, social capital and social entrepreneurship. The *Supporting voluntary activity* white paper on a framework for supporting voluntary activity and developing the relationship between the State, community and voluntary sector was published in 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000). The current social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* proposes relations between the state and the community/voluntary sector to include formal recognition of volunteer contribution to civic engagement and participative democracy, the designation of voluntary activity units in relevant government departments, development of consultative mechanisms, allocation of funding, regular policy fora and government commitment to implement key actions.

Current levels of Volunteering in Ireland

Current volunteer levels in Ireland are unknown. Figures from the Irish National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) published in 2003 state that volunteering levels in previous timeframes consisted of approximately 20% of the general population, with participation in volunteering higher among older individuals (40-64 years), those with higher education attainment and among higher socio-economic status (NESF, 2003). In contrast, figures showed that those performing house duties, disabled or ill were less likely to volunteer. Statistics published by the Central Statistic Office (CSO) in 2006 showed that the most common volunteer activity was 'charitable work'. Volunteer participation was reported by 16.4% of the adult population and, similar to the NESF (2003) findings, was more common amongst older cohorts (45-54 years) (CSO, 2008). The Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2007 also reports that national volunteering rates in Ireland are on the increase.

Volunteer participation

The definition of volunteering remains contested (Harris, 2000; Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003). It is essentially an activity engaged in with free choice, which does not involve remuneration and benefits those beyond an individual's immediate family network (Zappala, 2000; Brooks, 2005). Definitions of volunteering vary culturally in terms of level of participatory activity and dimensions of '*net cost*' to the volunteer (Handy *et al.*, 2000; Meijjs *et al.*, 2003). Research has explored a continuum of volunteering ranging from participation in service delivery in '*liberal or welfare partnership models*' to '*advocacy or leisure*' type activity in social democratic models (Lester *et al.*,

2004; Stevens, 2011). It can occur within statutory, voluntary and community sectors (Low *et al.*, 2007; Rochester *et al.*, 2010). Volunteering can be classified as '*formal*', taking place within identified groups or organisations, or '*informal*' taking place between individuals (Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003; Volunteering Ireland, 2010a; Hill, 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Of interest is that Irish community and voluntary sectors have developed historically to deliver activities and services which in other countries are the sole responsibility of the state (Volunteering Ireland, 2010b). Previous Irish reports dedicated to active citizenship have restricted their focus to civic participation and formal volunteering/community involvement, and have observed that the valuation of volunteering participation in recent times has changed from philanthropy to reciprocity and mutual resource acquisition, with the '*giving*' element of volunteering giving way to the existence of a mutually beneficial relationship (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007).

Research shows that educational level, religiosity, age and gender are significantly associated with levels of participation in volunteer activities (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2004; Bekkers, 2005; Hill and Russell, 2009; Drever, 2010). External environmental factors such as upbringing, family and social networks shape the volunteer's choice of and level of participation, with individual motivation ranging from altruism to self interest, and with access to resources dictating individual expectations, perceptions of perceived value of contribution and situational factors relating to quality of volunteer experiences (Newman, 2001; Ellis and O'Brien, 2001; Batson *et al.*, 2002; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003; Klandermans, 2004; Low *et al.*, 2007; Okun *et al.*, 2007; Brodie

et al., 2011). Given the shift in Ireland to allocate greater amounts to funding to fewer organisations and the emergent drive to formalize and ‘*professionalise*’ volunteering, the traditional altruistic values of volunteering within localised settings are increasingly set aside by volunteer demands for recognition, choice and short term assignments (Volunteering Ireland, 2010a). This occurs in line with Ireland’s economic recession contributing to further uncertainty within the community and voluntary sector, with reduction in staff numbers and incomes, and increasing organisational reliance on volunteer participation. This is echoed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin in 2010 who said; “*in times of unemployment and economic difficulty, volunteering has a more significant role to play than ever*” (Volunteering Ireland, 2010a, p. 19).

Volunteering and social capital

Volunteer participation is personal and freely chosen, with volunteers needing to sense a common collective or connective purpose, align themselves with the host agency or community group, and require ongoing support and encouragement (Pathways through Participation, 2009; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Participation increases as individuals perceive levels of trust within reciprocal volunteering arrangements and over time may become entrenched within these communities (Lee *et al.*, 2009). The volunteer ethic is grounded in trust, reciprocity, sense of belonging, shared norms and values, and social embeddedness, all of which are tenets of social capital theory (Putnam, 1995; Claibourn and Martin 2000; Putnam; 2000; Mayer 2003; Wollebæk and Selle 2003; Eurodiaconia, 2010). Social capital research has underscored how volunteering impacts positively on community engagement and wellbeing, trust and normative networks in

associational life (Claibourn and Martin 2000; Wollebæk and Selle 2002; Wollebæk and Selle 2003; Freitag, 2003; Mayer, 2003; Meier and Stutzer, 2004; Prouteau and Wolff, 2004; Yeung 2004; Parboteeah *et al.*, 2004). Research on the generation of social capital in volunteering has described the contribution to social capital as arising from the social interaction between groups of people or organisations joined together for the common good (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Hurlbert *et al.*, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Lin, 2001a; 2001b; Stone and Hughes, 2002; Van der Gaag *et al.*, 2004; Briggs, 2004; Son and Lin, 2008; Brunie, 2009). Micro level research illustrates how the creation and maintenance of social capital occurs as a result of interpersonal relationships formed from informal social volunteer networks. (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002; Wollebæk and Selle, 2002; Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2004; Antoni, 2009). Indeed, the Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2006 commented on Ireland's richness in informal social networks, with the National Committee on Volunteering (2002) stating that volunteering in Ireland contributed to a key source of Irish '*social capital*'. Irish research has demonstrated how volunteering has the ability to strengthen social capital and social connectiveness. Volunteer participants immerse themselves into a relational engagement, contribute to the building of social units, community or group cohesiveness, shared social values and norms, community sustainability, and ultimately economic and social development (Healy and Cote, 2001; Donoghue *et al.*, 2006).

The measurement of volunteering impact on social capital remains problematic in terms of establishing contributory factors, and the presence of a multiplicity of confounding micro and macro level influences (Wollebæk and Selle, 2002).

Volunteer contribution to social capital is dependent on individual embeddedness within volunteer and group networks of relationships, synergies between individuals and groups or communities, and degree of interpersonal civic engagement (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; NESF, 2003; Son and Lin, 2008; Brunie, 2009). The aim of this study is to garner a greater understanding of the lived experience of volunteer participation and its contribution to social capital.

Methods

This study was conducted as part of a larger sequential mixed method study where findings from this phenomenological research were used to develop and validate a Social Capital scale to quantitatively measure volunteer social capital in Volunteer Centers in Ireland (and elsewhere) (Foley et al., 2012).

A phenomenological approach was adopted so as to identify the participant's experiences applicable to the social capital tenets of community attachment, community participation, social networks, trust and reciprocity. The research team consisted of two academic staff and a post graduate research student. The South Tipperary Volunteer Centre assisted in the recruitment of volunteers willing to partake in in-depth interviews. In total a convenience sample of 17 volunteers (nine females and eight males) and 11 organisation representatives (seven females and four males) took part in the study. As soon as data saturation was reached no further volunteers were recruited. Snowball sampling was limited to two referrals from each study participant, in order to reduce the bias effect of disproportionate membership of similar informal and formal volunteering social networks (Babbie, 1995). Ethical approval for the study was granted in 2010 by Waterford Institute

of Technology research ethics committee. All participants gave informed written consent and were advised prior to participation with regard to research aims, confidentiality and ability to withdraw if and when they so wished. The demographics for the volunteer participants and organisation representatives were as follows in Table 1 below;

Age	Volunteer Participants n=17		Organisation Representatives n=11	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
26-35 years	3	1	0	2
36-49 years	2	4	1	4
50-59 years	2	2	2	2
60-70 years	1	2	0	0

Table 1: Participant Details

Data Collection and analysis

The data collection phase involved researcher ‘*bracketing*’ of pre-conceived perspectives on volunteer choices, levels of participation, experiences, processes and pathways and how they related to social capital contribution (Miller and Crabtree, 1992). In depth interviews were conducted face to face in semi public settings, and lasted between one and two hours. Interview questioning was conducted in a conversational tone and without judgement. Each interview was digitally audio recorded with permission and transcribed shortly after. The interviews included questions on volunteer social processes and experiences. The findings were plotted against identifiable social capital tenets adapted from a similar study by Eriksson et al. (2010).

Social Capital Tenets	Specific Categories
Community Attachment	Sense of Community Sense of Volunteer Group Sense of Belonging
Community Participation	Participation in Associations Participation in Local activities

Social Networks	Organisation Volunteers Organisation Staff Volunteer Networks
Trust	Trust between groups Trust between volunteers Trust between staff and volunteers
Reciprocity	Altruistic Motives for Volunteering Mutual resource acquisition Self serving Motives for Volunteering

Table 2: Social capital tenets observed in volunteer interviews

Data analysis commenced during fieldwork via ‘*phenomenological bracketing*’ which involved asking the volunteer and organisation representatives to describe and reflect on their experiences of both volunteering and volunteers (Davidson, 2000; Caelli, 2001). This phenomenological ‘bracketing’ or phenomenological reduction involved the unpacking of phenomena (in this case volunteering experiences) by setting aside the question of the real existence of volunteering and peeling away its symbolic meanings until volunteering as experience remained (Zahavi, 2003). It was then possible to focus on volunteering as an experience which contributed to perceived individual and volunteer group social capital for the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007). Observational field notes and detailed memos (Caelli, 2001) were additionally incorporated into the data analysis, which involved listening to and re-reading transcripts, in order to reach a holistic sense of the data as a whole, and to assist in the identification of emergent themes (Hycner, 1999). Several briefing sessions were conducted between the researchers, in order to achieve inter-rater corroboration in the identification of initial units of meaning, placement within thematic categories and interpretation of data outliers or ambiguities (Moustakas, 1994; De Castro, 2003). The following themes emerged; ‘*Volunteer Profiles, Motivating Factors and Trajectories*’,

'Relationships, Trust and Sense of Belonging' and *'Informal and Formal Volunteering Processes in contemporary Ireland'*.

Qualitative Results

Volunteer Profiles, Motivating Factors and Trajectories

Volunteer activities appeared primarily to serve others in the community and consisted of a wide range of activities and tasks, with gender stereotyping evident in the selection of volunteers in some sports and special needs related placements. Volunteering was frequently described as a mechanism for meeting people and forming new and lasting relationships. Several volunteers described responding to an identified need in the community, for example, special needs, youth at risk, addiction services, elderly, and sports, as the reason for their chosen volunteer activity. Many volunteers commented on the development of reciprocity of relations in the form of *'giving and getting something back'* within their volunteer experiences, and most commonly with disadvantaged, vulnerable or special needs groups or individuals. Volunteer participants additionally expressed how volunteering changed their outlook on life, increased their social reach, heightened their awareness of disadvantage, vulnerability and special needs, and increased the amount and denseness of their social relationships. Volunteers' choice of organisation was based on their own their personal interest and perceived values of the organisation. Organisation representatives recognised the value of the community volunteers, especially in the contribution of new skills and perspectives and in addition the local knowledge they brought to the organisation

"They bring different experiences and talent to the work. They're part of the wider community, so they're bringing that perspective to the

work...it's good to have that outside approach, they definitely bring value yeah, and different ideas, different approaches to the work"
Organisation Representative, Female No 8 (Active retired group).

"The benefit I've found is that the more you give, the more you get back, I think genuinely whatever time I've given to the community I got back...I think at the start you're doing it to help them but in the end it's really helping you" *Male Volunteer Participant No 8 (Youth and Community group).*

There was no apparent gender difference in motives for volunteering, with volunteers reporting a variety of reasons for participation which included enjoyment, social relations, self fulfillment, new opportunities, development of new friendships and peer networks, new learning and skill acquisition, and sense of community integration as important reasons for participation. Motives relating to social connections, socializing, companionship, helping others, sense of purpose and reciprocity were also recognised by several organisation representatives. Volunteering was described as contributing to social capital in the form of increased feelings of well being, empowerment, socialization, garnering of new skills, sense of place, purpose and positive outlook in life. In the words of one volunteer working in the youth at risk sector;

" I think it keeps you positive, it keeps you focused if it's something you really want to do, and it keeps you up to date and you get to meet new people. It kept me real. I think it's just made me aware that everybody is equal, irrespective of circumstances or what they've been

through, or what they've done or what they will do, it's just to see people like that all the time" Female Volunteer Participant No 2 (Youth and Community group).

Time spent volunteering ranged from one hour to several days per week, and was dependent on individual range of responsibilities, sense of belonging within social networks and level of social connectivity within the chosen organisation or community. Both volunteer participants and organisation representatives recognised that, for some, volunteering appeared to act as 'gap filler' activity for those with free time (primarily active retired persons, home makers and unemployed). Several volunteer participants reported habitual volunteering pathways, with choices of volunteer activities and invitations to volunteer grounded in past participation in that activity. Volunteer participants also described being approached by local residents to partake in volunteering in their community, and that the initiation of volunteering appeared spontaneous and opportunistic. Several female volunteers described volunteer participation in community activities for long periods of time ranging from 20 to 50 years in length. This volunteering commonly commenced when they were new to the community and seeking to meet people and form new relationships. In contrast, the majority of male volunteers reported shorter and transient levels of volunteering participation, ranging from one to seven years. Several organisation representatives commented on the need for younger volunteers, with some organisations over represented by those in retirement.

Relationships, Trust and Sense of Belonging

For several participants volunteering had become engrained in their day to day life activities, and appeared very much grounded in reciprocity in civic engagement, and trust in associational individual, group and community relationships;

“It’s part of my life now, being a volunteer, I really enjoy meeting people; as you’re aware. I really enjoy being here, I help out wherever I can; and basically being involved with people you know. The thing about volunteering is you get into a group or groups and you just seem to stay there over all the years you know.” Female Volunteer Participant No 1. (Church Helper)

Organisation representatives described how the positive integration of volunteers within the host organisation was dependent on amount of time spent volunteering and availability of placements and on the nature of the work. Confidentiality procedures in some community based projects impacted on levels of inclusion of volunteers. These confidentiality procedures were often present when working with vulnerable individuals. Positive processes of volunteer integration into host organisations were described by some volunteer participants and all organisation representatives, with staff and volunteers viewed as equal partners and contributors to integrative work based social networks.

“I suppose I am treated like one of the team and I don’t feel like an outsider, I don’t feel like I am different or I can’t do something, so I’m happy.” Female Volunteer Participant No 6 (Intellectual Disability).

Several volunteer participants described specific aspects of volunteer roles and responsibilities within a clearly defined volunteer-staff partnership. In some cases volunteers describe lonely experiences of volunteering with little interaction with paid staff and other volunteers. One volunteer reported the presence of tension

between paid staff and volunteers, with volunteers viewed as being *'different to'* and in some cases *'lesser'* than staff within their host organisation;

"It is part of the criteria that we don't socialize with each other"
(paid staff and volunteers). Female Volunteer Participant No 4(Care of the elderly).

Organisation representatives observed how socializing between volunteer and paid staff in this sector remained (for the most part) confined to day to day work contact, and a small number of *'informal work related get togethers'* during the year.

When questioned about wider social networks of volunteers in the research area, most volunteer participants described meeting other volunteers at organized volunteer events and commented that this opportunity to network with other volunteers boosted their sense of belonging within a larger *'volunteering community'* . This sense of identification within the volunteer community contributed to an increased sense of civic engagement;

"There's a common bond there; what I have found is that you meet the same people, the same faces, they turn up at so many different events, there really seems to be a hardcore of people there, that will get up and volunteer and do things; you do tend to meet a lot of the same faces and you get to know one another and form friendships."
Male Volunteer Participant No 5 (Sporting organisation).

Informal and Formal Volunteering Processes in contemporary Ireland

Several volunteer participants described how financial conditions in Ireland at the time impacted on volunteer experiences, with reduced formal opportunities to volunteer and the majority of volunteering time devoted to community project fundraising. This was described as detracting from the value of volunteer experiences and outcomes. Competitiveness for volunteer placements was described by most volunteer participants (and also by one organisation representative) as resulting in a lack of consultation with volunteers in designating volunteer times and dates, and was seen as contributing to stress and discomfort for volunteers. In some instances, this was perceived to contribute to a sense of *'taking volunteers for granted'*. In contrast, all organisation representatives described the usefulness and contributory value of volunteers given funding and staff constraints, and observed in several cases that the host organisation could not operate efficiently without volunteers;

"I think that they assume that a volunteer should be available whenever they want them to be. They need see things from the volunteer's perspective and never forget that the volunteer is doing them a favour, not the other way around." Female Volunteer Participant No 9 (Sporting organisation).

"We really rely so much on the volunteers, particularly in this current economic climate; so without them really we couldn't; they're a very, very, important part of our organisation." Organisation Representative, Female No 11 (Youth organisation).

For those unemployed, day to day participation in volunteering appeared to temper feelings of perceived individual inactivity, unemployment related

frustration and lack of perceived productivity. One Male participant described using volunteering to escape having to justify or explain his unemployment. In this way, volunteering appeared to contribute to increased self esteem and sense of usefulness;

“I’ve met a lot of people, a lot of good people, I’ve formed good relationships with people, I was kept busy when I was out of work or not doing anything. You feel good as well if you’ve gone out and done something constructive with your day, you’ve contributed to a cause or an organisation or you’ve out helped out some people, a good feeling comes from that, you know, it’s not a waste of a day,” Male Volunteer Participant No 3(Youth and Community group).

Several volunteers observed that volunteering assisted in the development of potential social networking amongst potential community based employers, with motives for volunteering becoming increasingly self serving over time. Both volunteers and organisation representatives reported that in some cases volunteering was utilized in order to gain experience within a certain service modality or specific target group, and as opportunity to up-skill or gain relevant work experience for the employment market. Several volunteer participants described volunteering participation with the sole objective of gaining work related experience;

“Particularly now with the economic situation the way it is, if you wanted a job volunteering would be the best thing to do, because not only would it get you out of the bed in the morning, but when the economy does turn, at least you’ll have networked and have made

some inroads into getting some experience” Female Volunteer Participant No 3(Intellectual disabilitysector).

“It has not yet lead me to employment, but I think that in the long term, it may. I would like to think that employers appreciate that I rather do something for nothing than do nothing at all.” Female Volunteer Participant No 9 (Child care).

Most volunteer participants emphasized the need for greater recognition of the role and contribution of volunteers, and for volunteer experience to be equated with work based experience.

“I’d like to see volunteers and my own efforts in some ways recognised better.” Male Volunteer Participant No 6 (Religious organization).

“I suppose one thing in the career area, would be recognition from the employers of the volunteers and the voluntary work and putting experiences gained on a voluntary basis on a par with experiences gained in employment.” Female Volunteer Participant No 7 (Youth work).

Only one volunteer participant reported that payment for volunteering operated as a reward scheme in his organisation, and that his volunteering had progressed into paid employment and full integration into the organisation. In some instances the host organisation was described as acting as benefactor of its volunteers’ personal development and skill acquisition for the employment market, and this was

described as further undermining parity of volunteers and paid staff. The need for improved volunteer induction, training and supported experiences within both formal and informal volunteer placements was emphasized by most volunteer participants, with several volunteer participants describing leaving volunteer placements due to perceived lack of volunteer effectiveness, lack of task satisfaction and role ambiguity. However, one female organisation representative described inclusive and empowering formal induction, training and support systems for her volunteers as integrated within her organisation, and said;

“We like to think that we offer the volunteers the opportunity to participate in all of the work in the service we provide, also training and building their capacity to get jobs themselves and maybe in the future they might have the opportunity to take on some work”

Organisation Representative, Female No 10.(Helpline)

Volunteer procedures appeared to have become more regulated over time. A change in the definition of volunteering processes from informal civic networks of individuals *‘helping each other out’*, toward more formalized volunteer placements was observed in recent years. Most organisation representatives recognised that informal volunteering management, training and regulatory processes in local communities remained dependent on individual and small group networks and ties. Not all organisations had a volunteer policy and some organisation representatives described a reluctance to ascribe to formalized volunteer routes. Formal training systems were considered to deter older volunteers from taking part, thus contributing to a fragmentation of existing informal networks of volunteers within the community;

Discussion

The contribution of volunteering to social capital in the form of social relations, community and volunteer group integration, development of trust and mutual resource acquisition in community service and employment related skill acquisition is illustrated in this descriptive ‘*snapshot*’ of social volunteering phenomena in Irish volunteer and organisation experiences. The findings illustrate how social connectivity within volunteering improves social and networking skills, mutual cooperation, reciprocity and trust within groups and wider social contexts. Similar to other research, the benefit of volunteering appeared in most cases to exceed volunteer cost, in the form of increased personal well being and sense of purpose, development of friendships and meeting new people, identification with the volunteer activity and ethos of the relevant group or organisation, sense of ‘*giving something back*’ and serving a specified community need, work related experiences, productivity in free time and chances for up-skilling.

Volunteering participation appeared very much grounded in levels of free time and entrenchment within community volunteer contexts. Volunteers in this research described both habitual and transient opportunistic involvement in volunteering, and being approached in their community to volunteer. Similarly, Ruddle and Mulvihill (1999) found that personal involvement for a good cause forms the basis for volunteering. The contribution of localised knowledge provided by volunteers in existing social and community networks was valued by organisational representatives, and supports previous research by Flanagan and Sadowski (2011). Indeed, research shows that levels of volunteer participation

increases as individuals perceive themselves to be more involved in their community and experience greater levels of trust within their community (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003; Son and Lin, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2009). Gender specific volunteer roles and placements were described in the current research, with women engaging in longer periods of community based volunteering, and men adopting a more transient approach. Similar findings are reported elsewhere (for example, Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002 and Drever, 2010).

Both informal and formal volunteering appeared to contribute to social capital by stimulating a personal agency of change through reciprocity and learning exchange (Ostrom and Ahn, 2001; Mohan and Mohan, 2002; Brunie, 2009; Eurodiaconia, 2010). A shift in personal and social definitions of volunteering was described with spontaneous informal volunteering increasingly replaced by structured, formalised and regulated volunteer placements and procedures. This has been observed in the volunteering literature (Smith, 1999; Lukka and Ellis, 2001; Parboteeah *et al.*, 2004; Low *et al.*, 2007; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). The National Committee on Volunteering in 2002 recognised this shift toward volunteer formalisation in Ireland and advocated a continuum of '*light*' to '*structured*' management of volunteers. However, a reduced amount of volunteer places are currently available, with many volunteer placements directed at community fundraising. Participants reported that this detracts from positive volunteer experiences. Indeed, the Volunteering across Europe Country Report (2010) drew attention to the dangers relating to over formalisation, which can restrict and hamper the volunteer experience, contribute to community fragmentation and thereby reduce both individual and community social capital.

Although altruistic motives for volunteering were in evidence, the movement away from such volunteering motives appeared to represent a shift away from traditional informal volunteering processes and community serving objectives. The expressed need from volunteers for greater volunteer induction, support and formalised training routes additionally reflects a consumerist approach to volunteering. Progression routes onto paid employment serve to blur the traditional definition of volunteering, which should not involve the sole objective of financial gain (Smith, 1999). Similar to Price (2002), volunteering processes appeared increasingly utilised for self serving purposes within reciprocal relations, so as to gain experience, undertake training, learn new skills and '*fill time*' in a productive work directed manner. Despite this, personal motivation to partake contributed to heightened levels of familiarity and social relations within host volunteer groups, settings and networks, and assisted in the development of trust.

However, this research shows that social capital theory can illustrate volunteer processes, as situated within inclusive and exclusive networks. '*Inclusive networks*' relate to volunteer group relations and contribute to a sense of belonging and inner affirmation within host volunteer organisations; with '*exclusive networks*' such as wider volunteer networks operating to create links and reciprocal norms (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Warren *et al.*, 2001; Boeck *et al.*, 2009). Social capital research on volunteer participation has shown how volunteering can become exclusionary or insularised within dense social networks of volunteers (Putnam, 2000), with volunteer experiences affected by power differentials between individuals (Paik and Jackson 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, varied experiences of perceived acceptance of volunteers within such

organisations were described, with some volunteers describing positive experiences based on volunteer-paid staff parity and others describing lonely, isolating experiences of volunteering restricted to fundraising, with little social connection with staff or with other volunteers. Individual social capital appears then further compromised by lack of mutual communication, reciprocity and trust between volunteer and staff member. Integration of volunteers into the organisations' workforce was described as dependent on length of time, intensity of interaction and scope of volunteer contributions. However, and perhaps in direct response to these 'staff volunteer struggles', many volunteer participants described that simply being part of a wider volunteering network contributed to a sense of community attachment, belonging, community participation, social networks, trust and reciprocity.

Strengths and Limitations

The volunteers and organisations interviewed for this study represented several different sectors. The sample was small, and based on participants willing to partake in the research. However, researchers tried to include a mix of participants in respect of their age, level of experience as a volunteer and gender. Good levels of consistency were found between the experiences of participants and therefore it may be assumed that an acceptable level of data saturation was reached. Sampling bias may have resulted from the selection of participants; it is feasible that this study represents those who had a particular interest or strong interest in the topic and therefore the results may not fully reflect the views of all volunteers or organisations. With just 17 volunteering respondents, it is not possible to generalize these findings to the wider volunteering population. The

research is small-scale but it provides a rich source of information that could be explored in further volunteer research. This phenomenological research does not claim to measure social capital contained or arising from volunteer experience, rather it uses a phenomenological approach to describe the lived phenomena in volunteer processes as it relates to social capital tenets.

Conclusion

This research presents an illustration of volunteering as an expression of civic engagement. Social capital tenets as they emerge from the volunteer experience are grounded in mutual reciprocity, individual and group level trust, resource acquisition and social connectivity. The social processes of volunteering were described as generating heightened levels of trust at a personal level, which also extended into the wider community. Perhaps most importantly given the contribution of volunteering to individual and community social capital, the research underscores concerns that informal humanitarian social reciprocity may be increasingly undermined by the drive to formalise the experience. There is a need to both quantify and understand contemporary volunteering trends and benefits as they relate to social capital in Ireland, and utilise this data for specific volunteer and governance policy approaches which recognise cultural and context specific dynamics, not only in relation to the host organisation, but especially in relation to community engagement and civic society. The act of volunteering shall always depend on relations between the volunteer and the '*other*' in the form of an individual, group, organisation, community or society. Both volunteers and host organisations need to develop realistic expectations around volunteer roles

and responsibilities, and treat volunteers well in order to preserve and protect all forms of volunteerism.

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Appendix 3 - Publication 2: International Journal of Volunteer Administration.

Abstract

All forms of social, human and cultural capital have positive associations with volunteering, in the form of social connectivity, trust and reciprocity between individuals, groups and wider social networks, community embeddedness and sense of belonging, well-being and mutual resource acquisition relating to friendships, knowledge, skills and education. This 'Tools of the Trade' article shall outline the process undertaken by the research team in the development, validation and testing of a user friendly questionnaire used to measure social capital in volunteering, as part of a large scale mixed method social capital and volunteering study. A 16 item questionnaire was developed and using a computer administered survey tested with a group of volunteers working in a single region in Ireland. Data was collected over a 6 week period in 2011 and the target population was 84 volunteers to validate the scale.

A usable sample of 71 volunteers was obtained. These respondents were representative of the entire population of volunteers in the region when compared to regional organisation's Dashboard database figures. The final summated scale of the 16 indicators had a Cronbachs alpha of 0.86. Further research is required to validate the scale and to evaluate both the internal structure validity and dimensionality. This scale could be utilised in development planning, placement and administration of volunteering in communities and organisation.

Key Words

Social Capital Theory, social connectivity, sense of belonging, trust, reciprocity

Introduction

Research has underscored the positive relationship between participation in volunteering and enhanced social capital, in the form of social connectivity, trust and reciprocity between individuals, groups and wider social networks, community embeddedness and sense of belonging, well-being and mutual resource acquisition relating to friendships, knowledge, skills and education (Claibourn and Martin 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Hurlbert *et al.*, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Wollebæk and Selle 2002; ; Stone and Hughes, 2002; Wollebæk and Selle 2003; Mayer, 2003; Van der Gaag *et al.*, 2004; Briggs, 2004; Son and Lin, 2008; Brunie, 2009; Eurodiaconia, 2010). Volunteer participation rates and intensity increase as individuals experience heightened levels of trust and reciprocity based on active, passive and multiple levels of familiarities within their volunteer group or community (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002; Wollebæk and Selle 2002; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003, Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2004; Son and Lin, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2009; Antoni, 2009). Intrinsic motivations to volunteer which facilitate social networking are grounded in familiarity (Antoni, 2009) and informal contributions in community engagement (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2001; Sixsmith and Boneham, 2002). Indeed, social relations and networking in volunteer processes can improve individual social skills and assertiveness, outlook on life, well-being, knowledge and levels of civic engagement (Ellis and O'Brien, 2001; Hill, 2011; Brodie *et al.*, 2011). The research was undertaken as part of a large scale sequential mixed method study which utilised social capital theory as heuristic device to explore social processes in volunteer experiences and processes. This '*Tools of the Trade*' article shall outline the process

undertaken by the research team in the development, validation and testing of a user friendly questionnaire used to measure social capital in volunteering. The questionnaire was informed by qualitative findings from the first phase of the study (Van Hout *et al.*, 2012 forthcoming).

Purpose of the Study

Ethical approval for the study was granted in 2010 at Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland. The purpose of the study was to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure social capital in volunteering. The following steps were followed to develop the scale:

1. Conceptualise volunteering and its relationship to Social Capital;
2. Develop a scale to measure the degree that volunteering adds to social capital;
3. Assess the content validity of the scale;
4. Measure the scale reliability.

Population/sample design

Non-probability sampling was adopted for the study. Due to resource constraints a computer administered survey was considered to be the best approach for data collection. At 90% confidence levels, a sample size of 84 was required to represent the population under investigation. All volunteers with a register e-mail address at the volunteering centre were invited to take part in the questionnaire study. Variables were collected on demographic characteristics to ensure the respondents were representative of all the volunteers registered in the region under investigation.

Data collection

Data was collected over a four week period in October 2011. Following the Dilman (1978) procedure for questionnaire administration the survey was sent in three mailings (.i.e. 1 week, 2 weeks and 4 weeks). A statement of purpose, including confidentiality and anonymity was prepared for the mailing to appeal to the respondents' altruistic sentiments. A return rate of 83(12%) and a useable rate of 71(10%) were obtained from the mailing. After the 6 week cut-off period the survey was terminated and the electronic data was imported into a standard software package, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (S.P.S.S.). No information was available for the non-respondents so the demographic characteristics of the respondents were compared with Dashboard figures, a database used to record volunteering activity in the region. These were analysed and considered to be representative of the target population in relation to gender, age, level of education and employment status and deemed useable in the study.

Conceptualising volunteering and Social Capital

For the purpose of this study social capital was conceptualised as having 8 domains (see below for figure 1).

With reference to the literature and the aforementioned qualitative study, 14 indicators of volunteering were developed from the social capital framework which resulted in the construction of 16 statements. (See below for table 1).

These included community spirit, trust in volunteering, sense of belonging, involvement, social relationships, participation, skill development, well-being, confidence, awareness of others, awareness of diversity, and acceptance of

other cultures, acceptance of disability or special needs, and rewards. The scale development consisted of a five point likert scale with participants' requested to indicate their level of agreement by ticking their preferred option for each of the listed statements. Each statement was scored using an arbitrary value, agree strongly = 2, agree =1, neutral=0, disagree=-1, disagree strongly =-2 and finally numerated to give a total capital score (T.C.S.). This produced a scale of -32 to +32. Scores above 0 were deemed to indicate the contributory value of volunteering to social capital. Score less than 0 were considered not to contribute to volunteer based social capital.

Face and content Validity

All sixteen statements were further assessed for face and content validity. These included an expert in social capital research, two faculty members of an academic institution, a manager of a volunteering centre, a statistician and two volunteering administration officers. Four volunteers were also asked to complete the questionnaire and comment on the relevance, applicability, misunderstanding and instructions of the questionnaire. Time for completion was also measured, so as to increase the participation rate of the questionnaire. No major ambiguities were found in the contextual arrangement of the statements and through a process of discussion the final 16 statements were agreed with the researchers.

Reliability

Cronbachs alpha coefficient was used to calculate internal consistency and to check that the items in the scale were measuring the underlying construct, i.e. Social Capital in Volunteering. The impact of removing each item from the scale was examined by comparing each of the values to the final alpha value.

On examination, all 16 items were above the recommended level of 0.7 for Cronbach alpha and therefore remained within the scale in the final calculation of the alpha value (Bland and Altman, 1997). The Total Capital Score (TCS) had good internal consistency, with a Cronbachs alpha coefficient reported of 0.86.

Discussion

Care was taken to develop a valid and reliable summated scale to measure for measuring social capital in volunteering. Using the social capital model from Boeck et al (2006) and the results of the qualitative study, 16 statements were constructed and tested for internal reliability. It appears that the scale developed is valid and reliable in measuring the extent that volunteering adds to social capital. This scale could be utilised as a dependant variable for a wide variety of research designs, including studies that attempt to measure social capital in volunteering based on demographic, organisational and individual attributes, and in causal comparative studies. The tool can also be used as an evaluation tool to assess volunteering development and assist in volunteer administration processes. Data can be obtained both formatively and summatively. We also recognise that the small response rate is a problem in this study and it is feasible that this sample represent those who have stronger interest in volunteering activity. The research is confined to one geographical location and it may limit the extrapolation of results to volunteers in general. However, it is possible to develop this scale further with the addition of indicator items to measure internal structure validity and assess dimensionality. Nonetheless, the main advantage of this scale is that it is short

and can be easily administered and does not overburden the volunteer. Further research will determine if the scale is reliable in target populations.

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Figure 1



Social Capital Model – adapted from Boeck et al (2006)

Table 1

	Statement	Please circle your choice for each statement listed below; Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
1	Generally speaking there is a good community spirit in the area or areas I volunteer in;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
2	People that I volunteer with can be trusted;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
3	I feel a sense of belonging because I volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
4	The rewards of volunteering are greater than the input I give as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
5	Volunteering has increased my involvement in community life;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
6	Being a volunteer has improved my social relationships;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
7	I enjoy the feeling of participation when I volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
8	Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
9	I have learned new skills while participating as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
1	Volunteering has increase my sense of well-being;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
0		
1	My confidence to try new things has been improved because of my work as a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
1		
1	Volunteering has increased my awareness of others;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
2		
1	I have a greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures because of volunteering;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
3		
1	Working as a volunteer has increased my understanding and acceptance of people with special needs or disability;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
4		
1	Being a volunteer has raised my awareness of diversity in society;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
5		
1	I have formed lasting relationships as a direct result of being a volunteer;	Agree strongly, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Disagree strongly
6		

Table 1 – showing each of the statements used in the calculation of total capital score (T.C.S.)

Appendix 4 - Data Analysis

Key Themes

- Volunteering appears to either serve the community or serve themselves;
- Change in definition of volunteering from informal to formalised;
- Difficulties in getting a place;
- Some had prior background in volunteering which transferred into adulthood volunteer patterns. the habitual volunteer versus the self-serving one;
- Opportunistic involvement;
- Gender specific volunteer roles and places;
- Length of time longer for women, shorter and more transient for men;
- Higher representation from older age categories, more time, more committed and more responsibility;
- Need for more youth volunteers;
- Different levels of time;
- Giving notice, not taking volunteers for granted in terms of availability;
- Volunteering as free time activity;
- Response to a need in the community;
- Commitment to specific service;
- Fulfillment and satisfaction reciprocity;
- Reasons: enjoyment, social relations and community participation. No gender difference;
- Community integration;
- Development of social relations, dense networks;
- Knowledge and contribution of local volunteer in terms of localised knowledge and existing social networks;
- Variation in acceptance and integrations within organisations...equity and parity...lack of respect and misuse;
- Volunteers utilised to bring new skills and approaches to the host company;
- Volunteers create diversity of skills and perspectives;
- Respect...knowing where the boundaries exist between staff and volunteer also created a happy volunteer experience;
- Type of personality, not shy, assertive, leadership skills are much needed;
- Volunteers being trusted to undertake certain task...indicative of a power imbalance;
- Presence of power imbalance between staff and volunteers, needing to have clearly identified roles and boundaries;
- Integration of volunteers also dependent on amount of time present and engaging with staff;
- Lonely experiences of volunteering...need to socialise with other volunteers to compare experiences and seek support;
- Confined within volunteer time allocation with some informal invites;
- Volunteer events boosted experiences of inclusion within a larger volunteer movement
- Talk about the volunteer community contributing to social capital, secondary to the host organisation community;

- Volunteering becomes part of life, habitual activity;
- Volunteering contributes to wellbeing and positive outlook;
- Sense of purpose;
- Increased social space, agency, status, direction, number and intensity of relationships, trust;
- Effect of current financial climate, reduced amount of places and time devoted to fundraising in order to sustain;
- Use of volunteer for gaining employment;
- Added value of volunteers given the recession;
- Distinction between wanting to help someone or a community versus engaging in volunteering in order to get experience within a certain group or community so as to boost c.v.s;
- Directed at unemployment;
- Explain not working;
- Need to continually appreciate what volunteers do, and equate volunteer based experience with that of work experience on c.v.'s...what effect will that have? Volunteering will become more formalised and less organic, and less grounded in helping others and more directed at helping oneself;
- In some cases the host organisation viewed itself as helping volunteers and not the other way around;
- Talk about how for some volunteering progress to paid employment and increased host organisation integration, and for others work placement for short term serves to alienate volunteer from core staff;
- Opportunistic volunteering in order to test the work environment;
- Volunteering progressing onto paid employed volunteering;
- Need for development of specific volunteer policies and procedures in order to protect the volunteer from mismanagement or unfulfilling experiences;
- Protocols in order to make it formal are present. Volunteer Charters;
- Informal volunteering doesn't have procedures and policies it just occurs organically;
- Reluctance of informal volunteer organisations to ascribe to regulation of volunteer experience;
- Need for more training specific to the volunteer;
- Some reported leaving due to feelings of lack of fulfillment;
- Need for more training for volunteers in order to create a better more directed experience, but will volunteering then lose its identity in helping others?
- Formalised volunteering with training would deter older volunteers and those volunteering informally;
- Different perspectives on training.

Appendix 5 - Pilot Survey

Pilot Survey

The purpose of this survey is to illustrate if volunteering in South Tipperary contributes to social capital. You will be asked a series of questions relating to yourself, level of volunteering and questions relating to the concept of social capital. This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

***1. Consent (please tick all boxes if you consent to take part in the study)**

- I understand what is expected of me
- I understand that I can withdraw from the survey at any time
- I consent to take part in the study

The following questions are asked so that we can collect some demographic details that will be used in the analysis of this survey. There are six questions in total.

***2. What is your Gender?**

- Male
- Female

***3. To which age group do you belong?**

- 18-25 years
- 26-35 years
- 36-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-70 years
- 71 years or older

***4. Which best describes the area you live?**

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Remote

***5. Which best describes your current relationship status?**

- Single
- Married
- In a relationship
- Separated
- Divorced

***6. Which best describes your current employment status?**

- In full-time paid employment
- In part-time paid employment
- Job seeker
- In receipt of social welfare payment for illness or disability
- Retired
- Working in the home
- Carer
- Full-time student
- Other (please specify)

***7. Please indicate your highest level of education?**

- No formal education
- Primary education only
- Second level education to leaving cert or leaving cert applied
- Vocational course/apprenticeship
- Third level, National certificate or Diploma
- Primary Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma or Masters Degree
- Doctorate

The following question will examine your current volunteering status.

***8. How long have you been actively volunteering?**

- Less than six months
- 6 months – 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more

***9. Do you volunteer within the community you live?**

- Yes, within my community
- No, not in my community but in another location or community
- Both inside and outside my community

***10. In the past year have you volunteered with any of the following groups? (This includes fundraising/once off volunteering)**

- Social organisations
- Religious or church groups
- Sporting organisations
- Youth/children
- Education and literacy
- Cultural organisations (musical, media, arts etc.)
- Environmental
- Animals
- Other (please specify)

***11. Which best describes your participation in volunteering?**

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 4-5 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 hours or more
- On occasion only

***12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

In my community it is generally expected that people will volunteer or help in community activities;

Generally speaking most people in the community make a fair contribution to volunteering or help out in community based activities.

***13. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = no impact and 10 = high impact how would you rate the impact volunteering has in the community?**

Level of impact

***14. In the context of your role as volunteer to what extent would you agree with the following statements:**

Generally speaking, there is a good community spirit in the area or areas I volunteer in;

People that I volunteer with can be trusted;

I feel a sense of belonging because I volunteer;

The rewards of volunteering are greater than the input I give as a volunteer;

Volunteering has increased my involvement in community life;

Being a volunteer has improved my social relationships;

I enjoy the feeling of participation when I volunteer;

Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment;

I have learned new skills while participating as a volunteer;

Volunteering has increased my sense of well-being;

My confidence to try new things has improved because of my work as a volunteer;

Volunteering has increased my awareness of others;

I have greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures because of volunteering;

Working as a volunteer has increased my understanding and acceptance of people with special needs or disabilities;

Being a volunteer has raised my awareness of diversity in society;

I have formed lasting relationships as a direct result of being a volunteer.

Thank you for completing the survey.

Appendix 6 - The Final Survey

The purpose of this survey is to illustrate if volunteering in South Tipperary contributes to social capital. You will be asked a series of questions relating to yourself, level of volunteering and questions relating to the concept of social capital. This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

***1. Consent (please tick all boxes if you consent to take part in the study)**

- I understand what is expected of me
- I understand that I can withdraw from the survey at any time
- I consent to take part in the study

The following questions are asked so that we can collect some demographic details that will be used in the analysis of this survey. There are six questions in total.

***2. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

***3. To which age group do you belong?**

- 18-25 years
- 26-35 years
- 36-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-70 years
- 71 years or older

***4. Which best describes the area you live?**

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Remote

***5. Which best describes your current relationship status?**

- Single
- Married
- In a relationship
- Separated
- Divorced

***6. Which best describes your current employment status?**

- In full-time paid employment
- In part-time paid employment
- Job seeker
- In receipt of social welfare payment for illness or disability
- Retired

- Working in the home
- Carer
- Full-time student
- Other (please specify)

***7. Please indicate your highest level of education?**

- No formal education
- Primary education only
- Second level education to leaving cert or leaving cert applied
- Vocational course/apprenticeship
- Third level, National certificate or Diploma
- Primary Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma or Masters Degree
- Doctorate

The following question will examine your current volunteering status.

***8. How long have you been actively volunteering?**

- Less than six months
- 6 months – 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more

***9. Do you volunteer within the community you live?**

- Yes, within my community
- No, not in my community but in another location or community
- Both inside and outside my community

***10. In the past year have you volunteered with any of the following groups? (This includes fundraising/once off volunteering)**

- Social organisations
- Religious or church groups
- Sporting organisations
- Youth/children
- Education and literacy
- Cultural organisations (musical, media, arts etc.)
- Environmental
- Animals
- Other (please specify)

***11. Which best describes your participation in volunteering?**

I volunteer on a regular basis (at least 1 hour a week)

I volunteer on a sporadic basis (occasional volunteer, such as one off events)

***12. If you volunteer regularly, how much time do you give to volunteering on a weekly basis? (If you are a sporadic volunteer please proceed to Q.13)**

- 1-2 hours

- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 hours or more

***13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

- In my community it is generally expected that people will volunteer or help in community activities;
- Generally speaking most people in the community make a fair contribution to volunteering or help out in community based activities.

***14. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = no impact and 10 = high impact how would you rate the impact volunteering has in the community?**

Level of impact

***15. Generally speaking, in the context of your role as a volunteer to what extent would you agree with the following statements:**

- Generally speaking, there is a good community spirit in the area or areas I volunteer in;
- People that I volunteer with can be trusted;
- I feel a sense of belonging because I volunteer;
- The rewards of volunteering are greater than the input I give as a volunteer;
- Volunteering has increased my involvement in community life;
- Being a volunteer has improved my social relationships;
- I enjoy the feeling of participation when I volunteer;
- Volunteering has improved my ability to gain or sustain employment;
- I have learned new skills while participating as a volunteer;
- Volunteering has increased my sense of well-being;
- My confidence to try new things has improved because of my work as a volunteer;
- Volunteering has increased my awareness of others;
- I have greater understanding and acceptance of other cultures because of volunteering;
- Working as a volunteer has increased my understanding and acceptance of people with special needs or disabilities;
- Being a volunteer has raised my awareness of diversity in society;
- I have formed lasting relationships as a direct result of being a volunteer.

Thank you for completing the survey.

Appendix 7 - Interview Questions

Q1. So you're being interviewed as a volunteer in your organisation, can I just get some information on your background? Are you from South Tipperary?

Q2. Are you volunteering at the moment? How long are you volunteering and where?

Q3. Why did you decide to volunteer, what motivates you to volunteer there?

Q4. Can you describe your volunteering role at the moment?

Q5. What is the relationship like between the staff, volunteers and management, the whole organisation?

Q6. But do you feel you are part of the whole organisation? Would you be invited to meetings or asked to socialise?

Q7. What do you get from volunteering? Are there any benefits from volunteering?

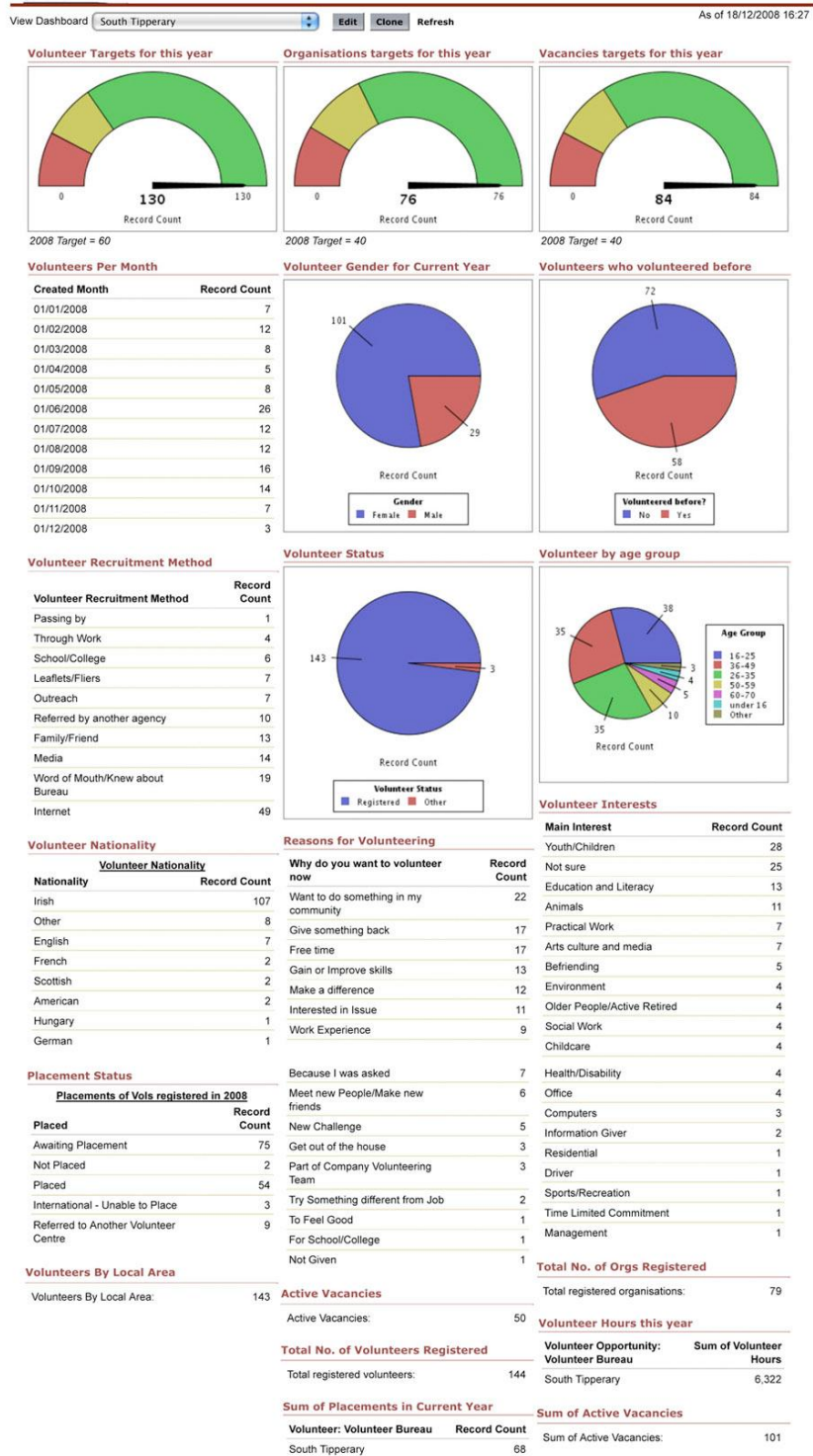
Has it changed your outlook in life?

Q8. Just a last question I think we've covered everything...the last question then if you could change anything then to improve your volunteering experience, what would that be?

Q9. Is there anything else you would like to add that would be valuable for us to know about what it's like to be a volunteer?

Appendix 8 - Dashboards

2008 Dashboards



2009 Dashboards

View Dashboard | Begin typing to search for a dashboard... | Edit | Clone | Refresh | As of 31/12/2009 10:33

Volunteer Targets for this year



Organisations targets for this year



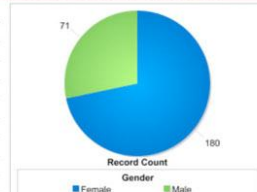
Vacancies targets for this year



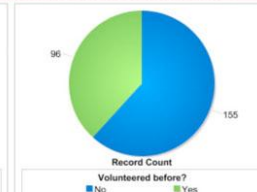
Volunteers Per Month

Created Month	Record Count
01/01/2009	10
01/02/2009	12
01/03/2009	24
01/04/2009	14
01/05/2009	14
01/06/2009	24
01/07/2009	19
01/08/2009	17
01/09/2009	41
01/10/2009	18
01/11/2009	29
01/12/2009	37

Volunteer Gender for Current Year



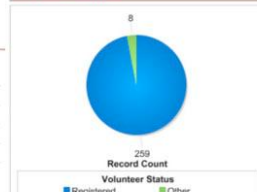
Volunteers who volunteered before



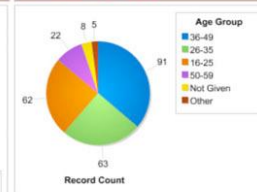
Volunteer Recruitment Method

Volunteer Recruitment Method	Record Count
School/College	3
Passing by	4
Through Work	4
Referred by another agency	8
Word of Mouth/Knew about Bureau	11
Leaflets/Fliers	21
Media	24
Outreach	27
Family/Friend	40
Supported Project	40
Internet	69

Volunteer Status



Volunteer by age group



Volunteer Nationality

Nationality	Record Count
Irish	216
English	11
Nigerian	6
Other African Nations	3
Other	3
Polish	2
Other European Nations	2
American	2
Other Asian Nations	1
Scottish	1
Ghana	1
German	1
Cameroon	1
Hungary	1

Reasons for Volunteering

Why do you want to volunteer now	Record Count
Make a difference	56
Give something back	35
Free time	33
Gain or Improve skills	31
Want to do something in my community	22
New Challenge	15
Work Experience	13
Meet new People/Make new friends	8
Recently made redundant	7
Because I was asked	7
Get out of the house	7
Interested in Issue	6
For School/College	3
To Feel Good	3
Try Something different from Job	2
For Fun	2
Not Given	1

Volunteer Interests

Main Interest	Record Count
Youth/Children	65
Not sure	43
Education and Literacy	21
Health/Disability	19
Office	16
Animals	14
Social Work	13
Older People/Active Retired	9
Sports/Recreation	8
Practical Work	6
Childcare	6
Befriending	6
Shop/Retail	5
Computers	4
Information Giver	3
Driver	3
Arts culture and media	3
Environment	2
Church/Religion Based	2
Campaign & Awareness Raising	1
Time Limited Commitment	1
Mentor	1

Placement Status

Placements of Vols registered in 2009	Record Count
Awaiting Placement	126
Referred to Organisation	24
Placed	108
Referred to Another Volunteer Centre	1

Active Vacancies

Active Vacancies:	120
Total No. of Volunteers Registered	
Total registered volunteers:	395
Sum of Placements in Current Year	
Volunteer: Volunteer Bureau	Record Count
South Tipperary	136

Total No. of Orgs Registered

Total registered organisations:	242
Volunteer Hours this year	
Volunteer Opportunity: Volunteer Bureau	Sum of Volunteer Hours
South Tipperary	12,190

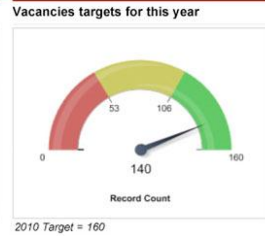
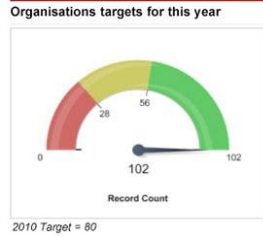
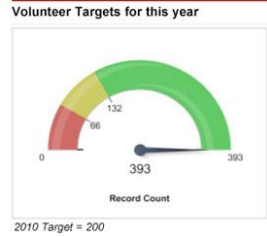
Volunteers By Local Area

Volunteers By Local Area:	259
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Sum of Active Vacancies

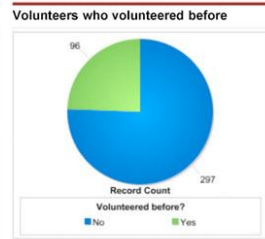
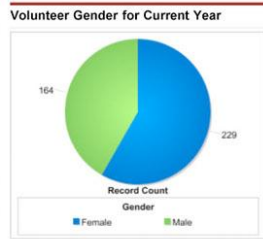
Sum of Active Vacancies:	465
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2010 Dashboards



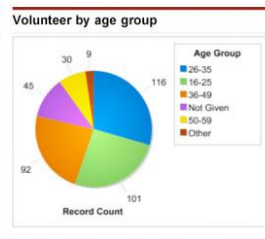
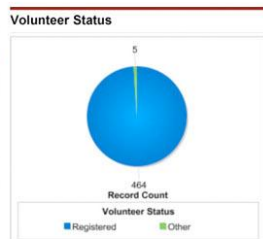
Volunteers Per Month

Created Month	Record Count
01/01/2010	32
01/02/2010	32
01/03/2010	23
01/04/2010	53
01/05/2010	17
01/06/2010	23
01/07/2010	98
01/08/2010	16
01/09/2010	42
01/10/2010	66
01/11/2010	40
01/12/2010	22



Volunteer Recruitment Method

Volunteer Recruitment Method	Record Count
Through Work	2
Passing by	4
Leaflets/Fliers	5
Word of Mouth/Knew about Bureau	7
Referred by another agency	14
School/College	22
Family/Friend	48
Media	59
Internet	93
Outreach	139



Volunteer Nationality

Nationality	Record Count
Irish	331
English	14
Polish	11
Nigerian	5
Other	5
Other Asian Nations	4
Lithuanian	4
Other European Nations	4
Spanish	2
American	1
Cameroon	1
French	1
Hungary	1
Other African Nations	1
Scottish	1
Welsh	1
Zimbabwean	1

Reasons for Volunteering

Why do you want to volunteer now	Record Count
Want to do something in my community	85
Not Given	48
Free time	35
Give something back	35
Gain or Improve skills	33
For School/College	29
Make a difference	29
Interested in Issue	26
Work Experience	22
New Challenge	19
Meet new People/Make new friends	12
Recently made redundant	6
Get out of the house	4
Because I was asked	3
To Feel Good	3
For Fun	2
Try Something different from Job	2

Volunteer Interests

Main Interest	Record Count
Sports/Recreation	89
Education and Literacy	46
Youth/Children	38
Not sure	35
Practical Work	28
Health/Disability	17
Older People/Active Retired	16
Social Work	16
Animals	14
Arts culture and media	12
Childcare	12
Environment	11
Campaign & Awareness Raising	10
Computers	10
Office	9
Befriending	6
Information Giver	5
Fundraising	4
Management	3
Shop/Retail	3
Driver	2
Mentor	2
Phone Line Help	2
Time Limited Commitment	2
Residential	1

Placement Status

Placements of Vols registered in 2010	Record Count
Placed	187
Awaiting Placement	31
Referred to Organisation	1
Not Placed	245

Active Vacancies

Active Vacancies:	139
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Total No. of Volunteers Registered

Total registered volunteers:	845
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Sum of Placements in Current Year

Volunteer: Volunteer Bureau	Record Count
South Tipperary	314

Total No. of Orgs Registered

Total registered organisations:	323
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Volunteers By Local Area

Volunteers By Local Area:	463
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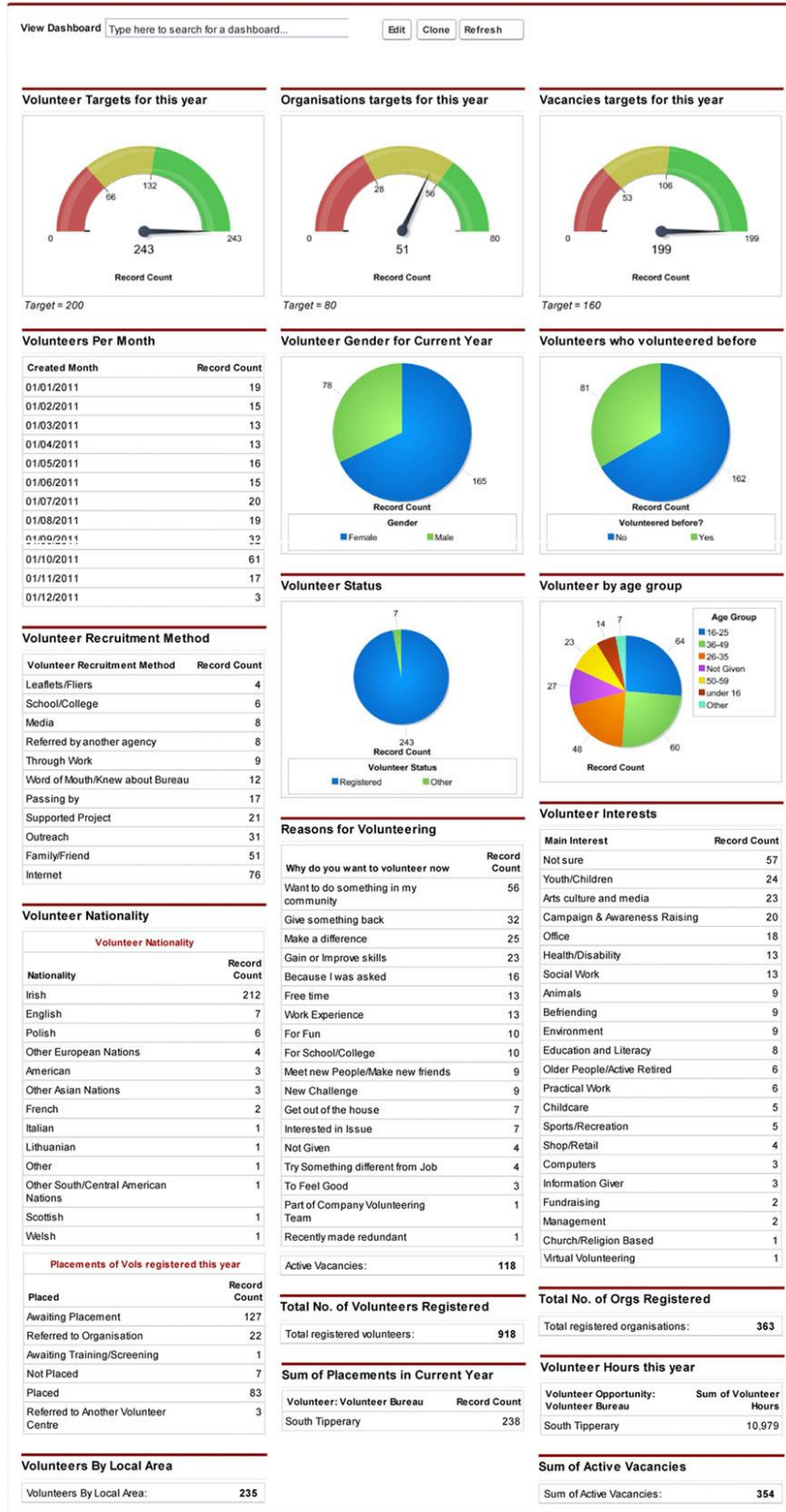
Volunteer Hours this year

Volunteer Opportunity:	Sum of Volunteer Hours
Volunteer Bureau	17,191
South Tipperary	

Sum of Active Vacancies

Sum of Active Vacancies:	139
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2011 Dashboards



Volunteer

Centres

Ireland

Quality Standards Document



volunteer centres

Ionaid d'Oibrí Deonacha na hÉireann

IRELAND

CORE PRINCIPLE 1: A VOLUNTEER-CENTRED PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Standard 1:

The placement service will provide accurate and up-to-date information on appropriate volunteer opportunities.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT	PRACTICE EXAMPLES
<p>1.1 The V.C. will provide the V.C.I. licensed Salesforce (web-based database) of volunteering opportunities alongside providing information and advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilising the Salesforce/V.C.I. database. - Active opportunities advertised on database and accessible on V.C. website. - Web-based forms utilised for volunteer, organisation and volunteer opportunity registrations. - Hard copy print out of volunteering opportunities available to view in V.C.
<p>1.2 Opportunities registered with the V.C. will be within organisations that are not-for-profit, agree to principles of volunteering and support equal opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details of not-for-profit status (e.g. CHY number) on file for each registered organisation. - Aims of registered organisations kept on Salesforce database. - Equal opportunities box checked. - Opportunities include as much information as possible.
<p>1.3 The V.C. will encourage volunteer-involving organisations to develop the range and breadth of their volunteering opportunities, including responding to volunteering needs and/or specific requests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salesforce report illustrating new volunteer opportunities on file (including opportunities created by volunteer-involving organisations with support of V.C). - Procedures illustrating how V.C.s work with volunteering-involving organisations to develop new opportunities that illustrate equal opportunity, diversity and accessibility. - Encouragement and support is provided to volunteer-involving organisations to develop diversity of opportunities. - Diversity of opportunities on file.

Standard 2:

The placement service will make information available to ensure potential volunteers understand the concepts and principles of volunteering, and will be responsive to the individual needs of each volunteer facilitating and supporting them to make an informed choice.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT	PRACTICE EXAMPLES
2.1 There will be at least one member of staff whose principle role is to provide brokerage to volunteers.	- Member of staff whose title or principal role is placement (i.e. placement officer).
2.2 A member of staff will be available to provide face-to-face meetings with potential volunteers and offer additional support where necessary.	- Volunteers are encouraged to visit the V.C. and meet with staff. - Regular opening hours and availability of placement officer is advertised.
2.3 The V.C. will ensure accurate information on volunteering opportunities is made fully available to potential volunteers.	- Database is kept up-to-date. - Active opportunities are publicised on V.C. web pages via Salesforce database. - Database information cleansed on a regular basis.
2.4 The V.C. will have a clear understanding of voluntary organisations and opportunities available locally.	- Information on volunteering is available both in the V.C. office and on its website. - V.C. holds a diverse range of opportunities on file, offering a broad choice to potential volunteers. - Copies of opportunities made available to volunteers on request. - Records of information distributed kept on file in V.C.
2.5 The V.C. will respond to all enquiries within an acceptable timeframe.	- Automatic electronic responses set up to ensure volunteers who register on-line receive an immediate reply from the V.C. - Procedures documenting the timeframe and process of follow-up for both individuals and organisations is in place. - Detailed notes are kept in Salesforce on all contact made with volunteers to ensure continuity and clarity in dealing with each individual.

<p>2.6</p>	<p>The V.C. will ensure suggested placements are freely chosen and based on correct information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers are provided with, where possible, at least 3 volunteering opportunities (records of which are maintained by V.C). - Data cleansing of opportunities quarterly to ensure opportunities are current.
<p>2.7</p>	<p>The V.C. will communicate their (clear) understanding of the principles of volunteering and ensure these are communicated to potential and registered volunteers and registered organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of volunteering on file with clear policies in place that define what volunteering is. - Policy in place on working with not-for-profits - Written version of guiding principles.
<p>2.8</p>	<p>An adequate supply of brochures and information on volunteering will be available to individuals accessing the V.C. physically or virtually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains an adequate supply of its own up-to-date promotional material (i.e. leaflets, posters, website) outlining the services it provides and makes these available to all members of the local community. - Promotional materials using jargon-free language are available from the centre. - Promotional materials are available to download from the V.C.'s website. - Efforts are made to translate promotional materials into other languages.

STANDARD 3

The placement service will provide an effective and efficient follow-up service with volunteers and/or organisations.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
3.1	The V.C. will have a system for following up with volunteers to assess progress / outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminder systems set up in database to follow up with both volunteers and organisations. - Placement numbers / status are recorded. - Hours given to volunteering per annum are recorded.
3.2	The V.C. will have a system by which it records contact with individuals and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database record of all contact with volunteers and organisations. - Written procedures for recording contact. - Reports are generated of all contact annually.
3.3	The V.C. will have a response procedure for any complaints /negative experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A written complaints procedure is in place outlining response time to complaint. - Complaints / comments box on display in V.C. office. - Central records of complaints and outcomes recorded, including Minutes of management committee and staff team meetings (recording discussion of complaints and outcomes) are maintained.
3.4	The V.C. will monitor any feedback on satisfaction levels regarding its services and use this for learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. seeks and maintains all feedback from service users. - V.C. practice changes linked to feedback from volunteers / organisations.
3.5	The V.C. will ensure that standard procedures are followed for all service users when a request for a placement change is required (e.g. change in circumstances, unhappy with placement etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The procedure documenting the process of follow-up for both individuals and organisations is on file, including for inappropriate placement. - The V.C. will ensure quick action is taken to correct misinformation and inappropriate referral.

STANDARD 4

The placement service will ensure that the service it provides is accessible and non-discriminatory.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
4.1	The V.C. will be available for individuals to contact virtually, by telephone and in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. maintains a website which is advertised on all publicity materials. - The V.C. maintains telephone line(s) with answering machine indicating the times of opening and closure. - V.C. is staffed at the times advertised in publicity materials.
4.2	The V.C. will ensure that staff act and communicate in a non- judgemental and non-discriminatory manner and openly support and encourage equal opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy on equal opportunity. - Policy on non-judgemental and non-discriminatory language. - Staff briefed on relevant legislation.
4.3	Policies and procedures will be in place to ensure services are accessible and non-discriminatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal opportunities policy in place. - Complaints policy in place. - Data access policy in place and volunteers understand how to access their personal information. - Data information policy in place.

4.4	The V.C. will be promoted across all sectors of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted publicity and recruitment events (including press, presentations, outreaches etc.). - Record of strategic networking with other organisations.
4.5	The V.C. will ensure that it communicates clearly to individuals and organisations at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All publicity material (printed and virtual) will use clear, jargon-free language. - Where possible, publicity material will be available in more than one language. - Staff will offer impartial information using jargon-free language. - Training provided to staff on: advocacy skills, interview skills and equal opportunity legislation where funding permits.
4.6	The V.C. will be actively supportive towards clients with support needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Web site is compliant with disability codes - Information is clear and legible in clear large fonts. - Clients with literacy difficulties are supported when completing forms. - Staff familiar with literacy competency levels. - V.C. actively encourages volunteers to identify any support needs.
4.7	The physical location of the V.C. or, at minimum, access to its services will be accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. office is well signposted and, where possible, fully accessible. - The hours of operation will be convenient to service users. - V.C. publicity is kept in other public spaces. - V.C. is listed in local directories. - The V.C. undertakes an access audit. - Volunteer registration forms include question about access needs. - Access issues are discussed at management committee meetings
4.8	The V.C. will maintain statistics on sources of awareness of its services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains record of all contact made with it and reviews annually. - V.C. asks service users how they heard of VC and records information. - V.C. generates statistics and reports regarding awareness. - V.C. maintains media presence and record of this (e.g. press cuttings, newsletters, radio interviews).

STANDARD 5

The placement service will maintain a comprehensive and current web-based database of volunteers, organisations and volunteering opportunities, according to data protection legislation.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
5.1	The V.C. will have policy and procedures in place to ensure that data held on its database is used only for specific purpose of sourcing individuals and/or volunteer-involving organisations and contributing to an overall picture of volunteering as it occurs through VCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy on use of database agreed by V.C.I. is adhered to. - Staff members are familiar with the policy. - Data protection policy in place.
5.2	The V.C. will take responsibility for populating and utilising the database and ensuring its data is current.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All staff trained in use of database in accordance with agreed policy and procedures. - Retraining and support provided to staff on an annual basis and/or as database is developed. - Regular data cleansing of the database. - V.C.I. informed immediately of changes to staff for database login
5.3	The V.C. will ensure staff receive appropriate V.C.I. database training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff trained in use of database. - Advanced training provided to all staff members annually. - Staff informed of all new additions to database.
5.4	The database will be protected by limiting data entry access to designated people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Licensed users do not allow others to login to database using their login. - The database will be secured through password. -Staff do not disclose password.
5.5	The V.C. will contribute to the on-going development and maintenance of the database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular feedback provided to the Information Technology sub- committee regarding enhancements to database. - V.C. contributes, within budgetary allowances, to the on-going updating and/or maintenance of the database. - V.C. staff complete surveys/questionnaires issued by V.C.I. in relation to Salesforce.

5.6	The V.C. will ensure that procedures for use of the database are documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Copies of V.C.I. policy provided to each staff member.- Copies of the V.C.I. handbook for the V.C.I./Salesforce database provided to each staff member.
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CORE PRINCIPLE II: PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

STANDARD 6:

The VC will endeavour to provide up to date, timely and appropriate information and support for not-for-profit organisations wishing to involve volunteers

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
6.1	The V.C. will aim to maintain and/or increase the number of volunteer-involving organisations it supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New organisation registration targets set annually. - Database is utilised to maintain clear record of contact with registered organisations.
6.2	The V.C. will take a proactive approach to seeking out organisations within its geographic remit that are not yet registered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. develops and maintains a current directory of volunteer-involving organisations within its geographic remit. - V.C. proactively networks within its geographic area. - V.C. maintains good relationships with all its locally identified key stakeholders in order to elicit information on new or unknown organisations seeking to involve volunteers. - V.C. holds public events in more than one area within its geographic remit. - Where possible, the V.C. maintains outreach offices or clinics in different areas within its geographic remit. - The VC maintains links with local media sources to increase its reach.
6.3	The V.C. will ensure that timely, consistent advice is provided to organisations seeking information and that information is dispatched within a reasonable time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy and procedures in place detailing how information is provided. - Policy and procedures in place detailing timeframes for dealing with requests.
6.4	The V.C. will have defined guidelines and procedures in place regarding its work with organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies and procedures in place relating to V.C. engagement with volunteer-involving organisations. - Staff are familiar with all policies and procedures.

6.5	The V.C. will work to increase the volunteering knowledge base of the organisations it works with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- V.C. is available to meet with volunteer-involving organisations to assist them with best practice in volunteer management.- V.C. has an understanding of the varying capacities of the organisations it works with.- V.C. ensures dissemination of information and current trends in volunteering through various media.
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STANDARD 7:

The V.C. will promote best practice in volunteer engagement and provide training opportunities in volunteer management.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
7.1	The V.C. delivers the approved V.C.I. national volunteer management training programme a minimum of once a year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one member of staff is trained to deliver the approved V.C.I. training. - V.C. delivers training as 1 4 module programme. - V.C. delivers the most up-to-date version of the training. - The V.C. will endeavour to ensure that the individual attending the volunteer management training is the appropriate representative of the organisation.
7.2	The V.C. will participate in the V.C.I. Volunteer Management Training Quality Assurance programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each module evaluated by each training participant. - Copy of evaluation forms submitted to V.C.I. along with one copy of the Participant Register. - 6-month follow-up survey sent to training participants. - Annual volunteer management survey mass emailed to all V.C. registered organisations and other relevant contacts. - Trainers are reviewed by V.C.I.
7.3	The V.C. will support organisations in the development and implementation of good practice systems and procedures for the involvement of volunteers within their organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. assists organisations in development of their own policies and procedures - V.C. provides training in volunteer management - Volunteer involvement and management literature templates made available to organisations. - The V.C. will provide non-formal training and other support material to organisations. - The V.C. trainers will participate in and contribute to the Community of experts.

7.4	The V.C. promotes the approved national volunteer management training to its registered organisations and the wider community and voluntary sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.M.T. promoted on the V.C. website. - Recognition on V.C. website and other promotional materials that the training is part of the national V.C.I.V.M.T. programme. - Mass emails sent to organisation contacts through Salesforce database.
7.5	The V.C. provides other training relevant to the sector where time and resources permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. offers additional volunteer management training. - V.C. offers other training relevant to the sector, either independently or in collaboration with another organisation.
7.6	The V.C. will aim to meet with organisations when explaining best practice policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains and provides best practice templates to organisations. - V.C. records all meetings with organisations.
7.7	The V.C. will organise events for organisations to promote and educate on best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support events built into V.C. strategic plan and programme of activities. - Record of events in Annual Report.

STANDARD 8:

V.C.s will act as signatory for Garda Vetting to not- for-profit organisations who do not have access to Garda Vetting by other means.

Practice	Example Indicators
8.1	The V.C. will act as signatory to organisations seeking Garda Vetting as is appropriate.
8.2	The Volunteer Centre will exercise best practice principles of data management in delivering the Garda Vetting service, as per the V.C.I. Garda Vetting Service Agreement.

STANDARD 9

The placement service will work with organisations helping them explore and identify appropriate volunteer opportunities that meet the diverse needs of volunteers.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
9.1	The V.C. will aim to maintain/increase the number and range of opportunities.	- Targets of new volunteering opportunities maintained and/or increased each year.
9.2	The V.C. will work in partnership with existing and/or new partners to develop opportunities and increase participation.	- New organisation registration targets set annually. - New volunteer opportunity targets set annually. - V.C. has a strategic plan stating how and what targets will be met. - Strategic plan includes an environmental scan of local area. - V.C. has knowledge of other local plans (e.g. City/County Development Plan, Local Partnership plans etc.).
9.3	The V.C. will work to encourage volunteer-involving organisations to adhere to equal opportunity and diversity policies in development of volunteering opportunities.	- Equal opportunities box checked in Salesforce registration. - Equal Opportunities Policy in place.

CORE PRINCIPLE III: MARKETING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING

STANDARD 10:

The V.C. will inspire, motivate and stimulate interest in volunteering by positively promoting the benefits of volunteering in all its diversity.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
10.1	The V.C. will publicise a diverse range of current volunteering opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains current Salesforce database of volunteering opportunities. - V.C. holds a print out of the above in the VC office. - Opportunities also made available in local venues (e.g. libraries, county council offices, Citizen Information Centres, doctors' surgeries, local businesses, 2nd/3rd level educational institutions etc.)
10.2	The V.C. will endeavour to appeal to all sectors of society and a diversity of organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. proactively approaches organisations representing and / or working with all sectors of the community. - The V.C. will produce publicity material targeted at different groups of potential volunteers, where appropriate. - Variety of organisations (with respect to size, objectives etc.) registered with the V.C. - Registered organisations reflect local realities (i.e. urban and rural, advantaged and disadvantaged). - Where possible, publicity material is made available in more than one language. - V.C. distributes publicity material externally
10.3	The V.C. will have publicity materials specific to its own organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least one (jargon-free) pamphlet on specific services the V.C. provides to organisations, including opening hours, which is available in the office and to download from the V.C. website. - V.C. distributes publicity material externally.
10.4	The V.C. will have publicity materials relating to the network of V.C.s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step by Step guides available in the V.C. office and to download from the website - Collectively-produced publicity material available in the V.C. office and for download from the website - V.C. distributes publicity material externally

10.5	The V.C. will deliver a variety of positive messages about the benefits, diverse nature, potential and possibilities of volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. undertakes targeted publicity campaigns - V.C. publicises good news / inspiration stories via internal and external media (i.e. own website, newspaper, radio etc.) - V.C. collects and disseminates case studies via local media. - V.C. collects and disseminates case studies specific to events (G.I.A.S. etc.).
10.6	The V.C. will make full use of the latest technology to promote its work including the use of a dedicated V.C. website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains an accessible, current, user-friendly and informative website including opening hours, contact details, links to other V.C.s and V.C.I., Salesforce registration forms for volunteers, organisations and volunteer opportunities etc. - V.C. inputs all relevant information about its work into a database. - V.C. generates statistics and reports and uses these to promote services and achievements. - V.C. presents on its work to stakeholders.
10.7	The V.C. will actively work to dismantle the barriers to volunteering both real and perceived.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. seeks media presence to correct misconceptions about volunteering. - V.C. works proactively with stakeholders to open access points to volunteering for all sectors of society. - V.C. actively engaged in influencing policy to ensure 'volunteer friendly'

STANDARD 11:

The V.C. will position itself in its local community, highlighting its unique selling point as an expert on volunteering.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
11.1	The V.C. will have an understanding of its local context whilst also being cognisant of the regional and national context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains up-to-date awareness of locality via local development and partnership plans etc. - V.C. maintains up-to-date awareness of the policy context in which it operates (e.g. National Development Plan; Social Partnership Document; other national policy documents). - V.C. keeps current with general statistics relating to its geographic remit available from the Central Statistical Office and other sources. - V.C. uses its own and other data to decipher local trends.
11.2	The V.C. will be recognised as part of a national programme of volunteering through the use of the national volunteer logo on all its publicity material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. will adhere to the agreed policy of the use of logo on all its publicity material.
11.3	The V.C. will ensure it is accessible as a source of information on issues relating to volunteering locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. digests statistics and trends relating to volunteering and reproduces it in an accessible format. - V.C. proactively disseminates information about volunteering and trends in volunteering locally via outreaches and various media, through promotional activities and events, and in collaboration with stakeholders.

11.4	The V.C. will promote itself and its services locally, highlighting the role the VC plays in the development of volunteering opportunities and placement of volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. makes regular comment to local media. - V.C. promotes itself through outreaches. - V.C. participation on local committees as expert on volunteering. - V.C. proactively networks with local stakeholders.
11.5	The V.C. will pro-actively develop strong and positive relationships with as many relevant stakeholders as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. maintains regular communication with stakeholders. - V.C. involvement in local area committees and other sub-structures. - V.C. seeks invitation to events locally. - V.C. regularly updates list of stakeholders.
11.6	The V.C. will document marketing strategies / approaches for itself and with other stakeholders, including other V.C.s.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing approaches form part of strategic plan. - V.C. actively engages with G.I.A.S. - V.C. marks important events (e.g. International Volunteer Day). - V.C. explores regional strategy possibilities with other V.C.s and/or stakeholders.
11.7	The V.C. will endeavour to promote itself as an element of the national volunteering infrastructure and, where and when appropriate, describe that national infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. makes clear its membership of a national network of volunteer centres in all publicity material and on its website. - In media correspondence, V.C. acknowledges its membership of a national network of volunteer centres. - V.C. acknowledges VCI and www.volunteer.ie in all publicity material and on its website. - V.C. logo appears on all documentation and posters to increase brand awareness.

STANDARD 12:

The network of V.C.s, in partnership with V.C.I., will work to develop the national volunteering infrastructure.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
12.1	The V.C. will work independently, collectively and in collaboration with V.C.I. to promote volunteering and raise awareness of volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. participates at network level. - V.C. participates in regional / national promotional events (including GIAS). - V.C. flags opportunities for collaboration to other V.C.s, V.C. networks and/or V.C.I.
12.2	The V.C. will promote its work and services, as well as the work and services provided by other V.C.s and V.C.I. to increase the knowledge base of volunteering in Ireland.	<p>Staff up-to-date with present volunteering infrastructure, including number and location of other volunteer centres and volunteer development agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff up-to-date on volunteering policy context in which they operate. - The V.C. will make clear how to access and utilise the volunteering infrastructure for organisations and individuals especially through their website. - A V.C. will endeavour to have a local media presence. - V.C. distributes regular press releases. - V.C. engages with agreed regional / national public relation plans. - V.C. utilises data collected locally to promote volunteering and to make recommendations for regional / national press campaigns
12.3	The V.C. will work independently, collectively and in collaboration with V.C.I. to develop and deliver services on a sub-regional basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. meets regularly with V.C.I. and/or regional V.C.I. network (at least once per annum). - V.C. utilises regional email links. - V.C. makes recommendations to sub- and/or regional plans. - Participation in regional / sub -regional network.

CORE PRINCIPLE IV: ENSURING GOOD PRACTICE WITHIN VOLUNTEER CENTRES

STANDARD 13:

The V.C. will have effective and efficient management systems in place that are responsible for the governance of the V.C. and work in its best interest.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
13.1	The V.C. will have an elected management committee or board of directors which will meet regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written procedures exist for the election of management committee / board. - The management committee / board ensures the V.C. is compliant with all legal, statutory and service agreements. - Written procedures exist for the rotation of members of management committee / board. - A named management committee / board of directors is in place. - Meetings of management committee / board occur regularly (at least 4 per annum). - Minutes of meetings are archived
13.2	The V.C. will have a clearly defined structure for its effective and responsive management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. has a clear and identifiable staffing structure with a named manager. - There is a defined method by which the manager and staff can feedback to the management committee/board and all staff members are familiar with it.
13.3	The areas of responsibility for both management and staff will be clearly defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each member of the management committee / board is issued with a written description of their role and responsibilities. - All staff members are issued with a written job description of their role and responsibilities. - An annual work plan is prepared with tasks assigned to named

STANDARD 14:

The V.C. will provide its staff and volunteers with sufficient orientation and training to meet the skill requirements necessary to provide an effective service.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT		PRACTICE EXAMPLES
14.1	The V.C. will maintain an up-to-date staff handbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A named person will be responsible for the development of and updating of the staff handbook. - The handbooks will reside in a visible and accessible place for easy access and reference by all staff. -The handbook will be reviewed and updated regularly.
14.2	The V.C. will have in place an up-to-date volunteer policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A named person will be responsible for the development of and updating of the volunteer policy. - The policy will reside in a visible and accessible place for easy access and reference by all volunteer -The policy will be reviewed and updated regularly
14.3	The V.C. will allocate time and adequate budget to provide training and education to staff, volunteers and management committee / board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. has a training policy in place. - Training needs of staff and management committee / board are identified through needs analysis. - Staff and management committee / board members are advised of training opportunities.

STANDARD 15:

The V.C. will have an administrative system that will operate efficiently and is compliant with current best practice and up to date with legal requirements.

Practice	Example Indicators
<p>15.1 The V.C. will hold confidential personal records for each staff member and volunteer and include emergency telephone numbers, next of kin and any other information the V.C. may need to know in the event of an emergency, illness or an accident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A form exists to capture all relevant information. - Staff members/volunteers complete the form as part of their commencement with the V.C. - The completed form is held in a secure place with the individual's personal file.
<p>15.2 Confidential records will be kept in a secure place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This means storage method is written into the V.C.'s Policy and Procedures document and comply with data protection legislation.
<p>15.3 All staff will have the right to consult their own records and be aware of this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. has an access policy in place. - All staff are aware of the access policy.
<p>15.4 Adequate records will be maintained for all staff in accordance with current employment legislation including; commencement of employment; attendance records, annual leave, sick leave & time off in lieu.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The V.C. Manager maintains a written and/or electronic record of the recruitment process for any positions. -Details on individuals' employment and attendance records are recorded on file for commencement of employment; attendance, annual leave, sick leave and time off in lieu
<p>15.5 The V.C. will have all required policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written H.R. policies and procedures, assessed by a H.R. specialist, are in place and have been signed off on by the management committee / board. - The staff handbook complies with employment law. -Employment policies and practices will be updated on a regularly basis.

STANDARD 16:

The V.C. will have an efficient financial management system to meet the requirements of funders and auditors, and to safeguard use of public monies.

Practice		Example Indicators
16.1	Each year the Board will approve an annual budget.	- A detailed budget of all expected income & expenditure will be prepared for the purpose of planning and sourcing funding.
16.2	The management committee / board will receive regular financial reporting.	- Each management committee/board meeting will include 'budget and finances' as an agenda item. - The management committee/board will have policies regarding limits of expenditure; signatories to accounts; and acceptance of grants.
16.3	The management committee / board will appoint a manager to manage the day-to-day accounting and finance of the V.C.	- The V.C manager or another appropriate person as decided by management committee / board manages the daily accounting procedures of the V.C. - The Manager will have access to bank statements and other relevant documentation, or overseas an appointment that
16.4	All monies received and expended will be documented and receipted, and accounts will be audited at year's end by an external auditor.	- The person responsible has a procedure for recording and documenting all payments made; cheques written; invoices received; grant aid received; donations received etc. - Originals of any receipts; invoices etc. are kept on file for a reasonable period of time. - Originals of all Bank documentation are kept on file for a reasonable period of time.
16.5	Sufficient resources will be allocated to ensure proper financial management and reporting.	- Sufficient funds have been allocated to employ a qualified accountant to audit the accounts.

STANDARD 17:

The V.C. will plan and evaluate its service to meet best practice standards and to ensure effective outcomes for service users, staff and the wider community.

Indicators of Achievement		Practice Indicators
17.1	The V.C. will have a work plan in place outlining service delivery objectives and strategies.	- A one-year work plan is in place outlining targets and actions.
17.2	Best Practice framework and standards will be monitored via this document.	- V.C. works in line with the nationally agreed and recognised Quality Standards framework. - V.C. avails of the tools and support available to monitor their own standards. - V.C. self-assess as required by the peer review process.
17.3	The V.C. will have a strategic plan in place.	- A strategic plan is in place against which work is assessed. - The strategic plan is reviewed regularly. -All stakeholders will be appropriately involved in the development of the plan
17.4	Work plans will be monitored through evidence based performance indicators.	- Monitoring and evaluation (in the form of this document) is an intrinsic part of the work plan. - Staff meet to go through this document completing the section relevant to their role.
17.5	Procedures will be in place to review the placement service.	- V.C. statistics are reviewed annually and compared with previous years to ascertain trends. - Comment boxes available to all service users. - Service users (organisations and individuals) are surveyed. - <u>Formal evaluation process undertaken annually.</u>
17.6	Review and evaluation processes will be documented.	- A document exists to capture the information that comes forth in the evaluation process. - A record is maintained of all evaluations.

STANDARD 18:

The V.C. will work with V.C.I., other V.C.s and other volunteer development agencies to develop and maintain standards of service delivery to the community.

Practice	Example Indicators
18.1 The V.C. will agree to observe V.C.I. conditions of membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay membership fees. - The management committee / board and all staff adheres to the memorandum of understanding' as per the criteria of V.C.I. membership. - The V.C. adheres to quality standards document.
18.2 Local V.C.s will attend network, placement and outreach forum, regional and other sub-structure meetings in line with the agreed terms of reference of those sub-structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance at all network meetings is noted by the V.C. - Where necessary, apologies (with reasonable cause) are sent in advance.
18.3 V.C.s will share innovative programmes amongst V.C. network members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An electronic copy of all work carried out in relation to the core activities of a V.C. are kept on file. - V.C. staff share information through attendance and participation in network events (e.g. V.C.I. newsletters; network meetings updates; emails etc.).
18.4 Current trends and issues will be documented and discussed with the V.C. network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. staff participate in network meetings and discussions noting current trends and issues that may have become apparent in particular areas.
18.5 Timely responses will be made to requests from V.C.I. and other V.C.s.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - V.C. staff respond in a reasonable length of time to requests from other V.C.s.
18.6 Staff will keep themselves informed and up to date with all V.C. policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction of staff includes familiarisation of all V.C. and where relevant V.C.I. policies and procedures. - Review of policies and procedures at staff meetings.

Appendix 10 – Generic Skills Schedule

Generic Skills Schedule for Post graduate Researchers

Overview of research methods Dr Orison Carlile 10th November 2010
Framing the research question/proposal Dr Anne Jordan 17 November 2010
How to do the literature review Dr Anne Jordan 8th December 2010
Academic writing: Clarity and Punctuation Dr Mary Holden 26th January 2011
The avoidance of Plagiarism Dr Sean Moran 2nd February 2011
Collecting and managing data/information Dr John Nolan 23 February 2011
Overview of research methods Dr John Wall 19th October 2011
Referencing for Research Library Learning Centre 26th October 2011
How to do the Literature review Tom Egan 9th November 2011
Poster event lunch time event by John Nolan 2010
Presentation at research day 17 May 2010

The end