



### **Top trends in Volunteering:**

The NCVO Civil Almanac highlights that an estimated 14.2 million people formally volunteered at least once a month in 2015/2016. Rates of formal and informal volunteering are largely unchanged from the previous year. Mean hours of volunteering by regular volunteers remain stable, with regular volunteers giving on average 11.6 hours per month. The value of formal volunteering was estimated at a staggering 22.6 billion.

So all good news there then – except we know that the nature of volunteering is changing.

Here are some of the top trends:

#### **An ageing population:**

We know that the population of the UK is ageing and living longer, which means in the next 10 years there will be a dramatic shift upwards in the number of those with the time and energy to volunteer. By 2033 25% of the population will be aged 65 or over, a huge resource for voluntary organisations.

The Commission on the Voluntary Sector and Ageing was set up in 2013 to look specifically at this problem and in their March 2015 report they said that the voluntary sector is simply not ready to take advantage of this potential resource: They estimate that the value of volunteering by older people in the UK is expected to be worth more than 15b by the year 2020: That's a raft of spare capacity whose potential may remain unfulfilled.

#### **How do we maximize the potential of this generation?**

The Management Centre argue that volunteering impact can be achieved if organisations adopt the following basic principles:

- **Tackling Ageism:**

People are healthier, active for longer and view themselves as younger for longer. Only 6% of those aged over 65 see themselves as old. Organisations need to shift their perceptions of an older volunteer force and remove age based limits on the opportunities and services provided.

- **Enabling and empowering talent:**

Enabling and empowering volunteers within an organisation to use their knowledge and life-long experience is a vital and highly underused resource by most organisations. Widening the roles available to volunteers at all levels and offering opportunities for them to use their valued skills is vital.

- **Engaging the middle ground:**

There are fewer volunteers between the ages of 45 and 64. How can organisations engage this group for the longer term. Connections made with those aged 45 could see them volunteer into their 70's – that's 30 years of commitment and service.

### **Falling time commitment: The rise in micro-volunteering:**

Demand for short term volunteering opportunities is increasing amongst those still in employment. As people grapple with increasing work pressures and little spare time, Micro – Volunteering is on the rise.

In 2013, NCVO published a report on the potential of micro-volunteering within the sector: The report concluded that many aspects of Micro-Volunteering made it attractive, including the convenience and short term nature of the obligation, the immediate satisfaction achieved as a result of providing some form of support and the informality around the concept. The report also concluded that whilst Micro-Volunteering is on the increase, the voluntary sector is struggling to support the trend by providing roles and volunteering duties: So here's some questions:

- How can micro-volunteering work for your organisation?
- How could it best work for you and your potential volunteers?
- How can we change our practice to take advantage of a more fluid type of volunteer?

### **Virtual volunteering:**

With the increase in technology throughout our lives, a completely new form of volunteering has been created known as Virtual volunteering.

In contrast to traditional volunteering opportunities, where people come together to complete a task at a specific time and place, Virtual Volunteering requires only the internet, and the desire to support a particular cause.

*Help from Home* offers 800 actions that people can take part in. From Blogging to tweeting, from document review and policy work to graphic design and website testing: All of these are popular online activities that people all over the world are volunteering to take part in.

Most notably it has allowed people to have an impact in disaster relief through tangible actions beyond donating money.

*The Standby Task Force* came about as a result of recent disasters in Pakistan and Haiti. Online volunteers were able to collect and map thousands of tweets and images being shared online by those within disaster zones and then pass these on to humanitarian agencies working in the area. Volunteers have been instrumental in crisis mapping for the benefit of humanitarian organisations that have simply not had the resources to deliver a coordinated approach.

### **Decreasing red tape:**

Increasing regulation has been seen across all sectors, private, public and voluntary. Volunteering has not escaped this, from recruitment (DBS checks, applications forms, reference checks, interviews and mandatory training) to monitoring success (surveys, timesheets, reports and risk assessments).

It is this increase in bureaucracy that is seen as obstructive by volunteers: This is another reason why flexible Micro-Volunteering has become increasingly popular.

It is always worth questioning why the processes you have in place exist:

- Are they necessary?
- Can you tailor your approach to individuals?
- Is there any way to use technology and adapt this to your advantage?
- Can you adopt a more flexible approach to volunteering?

**Further Resources:**

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>

<http://www.ncvoforesight.org/drivers/trends-in-volunteering>

<https://www.energizeinc.com/a-z/library/85>

<http://www.cambridgecvs.org.uk/Volunteering>

<https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/volunteering/>

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/over-50s-volunteering>