

# cultural volunteer ©

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## WELCOME!

**cultural volunteer (cv)** is a free e-news and information service for arts management professionals. **cv** is published six times a year and comes to you from Lynn Blackadder, arts management consultant, [www.lynnblackadder.com](http://www.lynnblackadder.com). You can choose to read **cv** in email or as a Word attachment. I hope you enjoy **cv**, but if you don't wish to receive future issues, please return this email typing 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

## IN THIS ISSUE ...

In this issue **cv** looks into **the implications for cultural organisations of the new Volunteering and Social Inclusion report**, we hear about **CSV's Make a Difference Day**, and we ask for your input into the consultation process for the **Excellence in Volunteer Management Programme** being developed by Volunteering England.

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## WHY YOU SHOULD READ **cv** ...

**cv is for** arts management professionals who currently involve volunteers in their organisations, and for those who don't, but would like to find out more about volunteers.

**cv aims to** raise awareness of the resource cultural volunteers represent, and how to utilise it effectively.

**cv actively campaigns** for the recognition and progression of volunteers working in arts organisations.

**cv can help you** to better understand the nature of volunteering and how it relates to your organisation.

**cv** will regularly bring to your attention useful information, resources and commentary on volunteering in the cultural sector. Experts on volunteer management will feature, and we will explore topics raised by you in future issues.

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## FEATURE: Lynn Blackadder on VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

In the last issue I highlighted the new report from the Institute of Volunteering Research: *Volunteering for All? Exploring the link between volunteering and social inclusion* (available from [instvolres@aol.com](mailto:instvolres@aol.com)). The report details the barriers to formal volunteering faced by individuals from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, disabled people, and people with a record of offence – all of whom have been identified as being under-represented in formal volunteering and as being at risk of social exclusion.

### Findings

The research found that fewer than half of the organisations surveyed said they had enough volunteers. At the same time, a majority said that members of the above groups were under-represented among their

volunteers. The report lists a range of psychological and practical barriers to volunteering for these groups. Roughly summarised, these are:

#### *Psychological*

- The image problem: volunteering is perceived as an activity only undertaken by mainstream groups, which puts other people off.
- Volunteering is still seen as a 'helper and helped' power relationship, rather than encouraging and acknowledging individual contributions.
- A lack of understanding of what volunteering is and how it might affect potential volunteers' lives.
- Misconceptions of how much time is required to volunteer.
- Lack of confidence.
- Other people's negative attitudes can inhibit people from excluded groups.
- Fear of losing benefits.

#### *Practical*

- Lack of information on how to volunteer.
- Over-formal recruitment and selection procedures, and delays in the process.
- Physically inaccessible environment.
- Organisations' failure to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses.

#### **Tackling the issues**

Many organisations have worked to overcome these barriers by: setting up friendly and targeted recruitment campaigns; working with community support agencies; developing individuals; creating an inclusive environment by giving staff diversity training; and recognising individual capabilities not disabilities. This positive action results in individuals addressing various aspects of social exclusion through their volunteering, including:

- Reduced isolation.
- Gaining confidence and skills to change their environment and themselves.
- Getting involved and contributing to society, thereby enhancing self-worth.
- Developing vocational and interpersonal skills.
- Improved access to employment.
- Challenging stereotypes, bringing people from different backgrounds together.

The report concludes that volunteering is an effective way for many people to alleviate the symptoms of social exclusion, and can help to address some of the causes.

#### **Relevance to cultural organisations**

Government and other funders continue to emphasise the power of culture in combating social exclusion. And there is no doubt that volunteering can broaden people's life experiences and help improve personal situations. However, managing volunteers properly is resource intensive – especially if they have special support needs. And some organisations might feel – perhaps rightly – that whilst they are keen to expand access and reach new audiences, this does not extend to setting up programmes to develop individuals.

The people in the report described as excluded (BME groups, disabled people and people with a record of offence) are under-represented in the cultural workforce – paid and unpaid – as the following statistics demonstrate:

- Only 3% of senior management are from BME groups (Arts & Business, 2003).

- Only 2.95% of full-time employees are deaf or disabled, and only 4.3 % of volunteers are deaf or disabled (Shape, for ACE, 2004).
- Volunteers (in surveyed organisations) are predominantly white (97%) and able-bodied (8%) (*Volunteers in the Cultural Sector*, Resource, 2002).

There are many reasons for this. Practical barriers to inclusion include inaccessible physical environments, and the physical distance from some communities of arts venues. Organisational culture barriers can range from institutional racism and xenophobia to basic ignorance about the life experiences dealt with by people suffering social exclusion. For example: the restrictions of the benefits system; low education, skills and confidence levels; and no practical support (childcare).

Attitudinal barriers include misconceptions of the arts as impenetrably elitist, with Shakespeare, ballet and modern art as being only for 'posh' intellectual white people over 35 (*Arts—What's In a Word?* 2000). People from excluded groups may also suffer from a lack of self-confidence, poor personal ambitions, or a lack of understanding of appropriate behaviours for work.

This isn't the place to go into detail about the various initiatives that are trying to improve access to paid employment and professional development in cultural organisations for socially excluded and other under-represented groups (eg women). (However, if you're interested there's a good article by Yolande Beckles in the August issue of *Museums Journal* on recent attempts to diversify the workforce in museums, p.14.). But we can think about how to start along this road through volunteering.

### **Opening the doors to volunteers from excluded groups**

Organisations shouldn't be forced to run complex social inclusion volunteering programmes to justify their existence. However, from artistic programming to front-of-house operations, managers need to start thinking about the business and social benefits of having a diverse workforce – valuing the contribution of people from all walks of life. And this includes volunteers. Developing an inclusive volunteer programme is a first step on a path that will result in organisations becoming more representative of society and the audiences they are trying to reach.

Organisations need to start recognising that people, whilst labelled as belonging to an 'excluded group', are individuals not only with something to gain but with something to offer. They may need help to identify and unlock that offer, and organisations will have to challenge their own views and procedures in order to fully involve them. For example, people from excluded groups can train staff in diversity. And people who join as volunteers can develop into paid roles. This is a bottom-up approach, but a top-down approach is needed too. Organisations need to remember that most trustees are volunteers, and social exclusion applies at that level too (only 4% of surveyed Board members are deaf or disabled, *Shape*, 2004).

### **How do you do it?**

There is a raft of advice and guidance – as well as direct support – available from specialist organisations to help organisations reach and involve excluded groups. For example:

- **Nacro** is an independent charity working to reduce crime and to help settle offenders. They produce a range of useful good practice briefings such as guidance on recruiting people with criminal records. Find out more at [www.nacro.org.uk](http://www.nacro.org.uk) or call on 020 7582 6500.
- **Skill: The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities** have published a booklet called *Into volunteering: positive experiences of disabled people*. Find out more at [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk) or call 020 7450 0620.
- **Volunteering England** has a range of guidance on involving socially excluded volunteers, from asylum seekers to people with mental health problems. Find out more at [www.volunteering.org.uk/publications](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/publications) or call 0800 028 3304.

- **NCVO** has produced two publications concerning BME representation as trustees of charities and community groups. Find out more at [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk) or call 020 7713 6161.

### **A challenge for us all**

Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, recently advocated ‘the transcendent thrill of feeling, through chance exposure or patient study, the power of great art in any medium.’ To deny oneself this opportunity, Jowell said, ‘is a terrible waste of human potential’. People who are socially excluded don’t so much deny themselves these opportunities, as lack the knowledge and / or confidence to take the first steps towards them. Volunteering is one way of helping them to get there.

## **ONE DAY TO CHANGE THE UK! CSV Make a Difference Day – Saturday 30 October 2004**

CSV Make a Difference Day, now the UK’s biggest day of hands-on volunteering, takes place this year on Saturday 30 October. Make a Difference Day is organised by the UK’s largest volunteering and training charity CSV (Community Service Volunteers). This is a great opportunity for arts professionals to attract new volunteers, gain publicity and build new partnerships with other organisations. Anyone of any age can take part including individuals, schools, companies and social groups.

### **Last Year**

In 2003, nearly 88,000 volunteers worked on over 4,500 projects. Across the UK, volunteers renovated children’s hospices, transformed women’s refuge centres, improved access to parks and community buildings for disabled people, tackled bullying, cleared rubbish off the streets and brightened homes for older people. This year 97,000 people are expected to take part in over 5,000 activities on (or around) 30 October. The focus is on time rather than money, so there is no financial contribution.

### **What Can You Do?**

What you choose to do is up to you. Here are just a few examples from last year:

- Friends of the Aldershot Military Museum maintained and restored the museum’s collection of vehicles to running condition.
- Volunteers at the Beamish Open Air Museum dressed in costumes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to deliver demonstrations on spinning and calligraphy. Volunteers were encouraged to share the history of the museum and their own experiences, heightening interpretation and intellectual access for visitors.
- Holyhead Maritime Museum involved young people in organising a day trip for elderly people.

Can you organise a similar event?

### **Take Action**

Every person who registers an activity gets a free Action Pack. The pack contains a t-shirt, waterproof tabards, thank you certificates, pin badges, tips and hints, posters and other goodies to help make your CSV Make a Difference Day activity a success.

### **Register**

To register or find out more call the freephone number on 0800 284 533 or visit [www.csv.org.uk/difference](http://www.csv.org.uk/difference).

## **CONSULTATION – EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

Volunteering England would like feedback from the cultural sector on their proposed Excellence in Volunteer Management Programme (EVMP). You can read it in full and download the feedback form at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=319>.

### **What is EVMP?**

EVMP is a holistic programme of support for those who manage volunteers. It aims to raise the profile, and develop the leadership, management and learning capacity of those who manage volunteers. This in turn will maximise the contribution that volunteers make to their organisations and ensure they enjoy a quality experience of volunteering.

### **Why do we need EVMP?**

The drive to increase the leadership and management capacity of volunteer managers fits with the wider drive to increase these capacities across all sectors of the UK workforce. Other drivers for the programme include:

- Organisations need motivated volunteer managers who are up to speed on leading edge thinking and practice in their profession, enabling them to deliver excellence in their management of volunteers.
- As Government seeks to increase the number of volunteers in England there is a demand for growth in the number of professionals who have the capacity, skills and knowledge to effectively manage and lead volunteers.
- Individual volunteer managers wish to build their capacity to perform their role to a high standard.
- Many volunteer managers report feeling isolated in their work and put a high value on the opportunities to network and benchmark their work with colleagues in other organisations.

### **Who is involved in EVMP?**

Through an advisory group and sounding board, volunteer managers and other strategic partners (academia, Government, companies and umbrella bodies) will lead the programme. Together with Volunteering England, they will ensure that the programme meets the wide ranging needs and interests of volunteer managers across all three sectors (ie private, public and voluntary) in both formal and informal volunteering contexts.

### **Consultation**

Let Volunteering England know what you think about the Excellence in Volunteer Management Programme by completing the feedback form on the site at <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=319>, or contacting Rebecca Davison directly at Volunteering England [rebecca.davison@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:rebecca.davison@volunteeringengland.org). Comments please by Friday 17 September 2004.

### **THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE 2005**

Nominate the unsung heroes in your community. If you know a group of volunteers who devote their time to helping others in the community and improve the quality of life and opportunity for others, nominate them for an award. The awards are made each year by The Queen, on the advice of the Home Secretary, following local selections and a final UK-wide selection. The annual close of nominations is 30 September 2004.

For information and a nomination form visit [www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk](http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk), email [gaward@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gaward@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) or call 0845 000 2002.

## **NEXT ISSUE**

In October **cv** will be looking at **Friends' organisations and how to manage them**, and we'll be finding out **how Islington Arts Factory survived a complete redecoration by a volunteer team of 30 new Deutsche Bank recruits** as part of their management development programme.

## **FEEDBACK**

**cv** is keen to respond to your interests and needs. If you would like to forward your news and views, comment on content, or suggest a topic for discussion, please email [lynn@lynnblackadder.com](mailto:lynn@lynnblackadder.com).

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