

Usual Suspects?



HIGH IMPACT VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer Centre Westminster's (VCW)

Youth Volunteering Project : Social Impact Report



Volunteer Centre
Westminster

transforming lives
through volunteering

Headlines

- We unleash individuals through volunteering. Almost half of the volunteers we surveyed for this report, said that volunteering changed their ideas about what they could do. Almost all of the volunteers we surveyed did something they had never done before.
- The quality of individual's experiences hold the key to 'transforming lives through volunteering'. If young people are challenged in a supportive environment to realise their potential and contribute fully, volunteering can lead to learning, skills and jobs.
- Engaging disadvantaged young people is more time-consuming, and involving them as volunteers is not the easiest route for organisations. However, we found that volunteering makes the biggest impact when it reaches people who do not access it easily – especially during the transitional time in their life when they enter adulthood.
- The people volunteers meet can also change their lives. Some of them become friends, mentors and CV referees. They provide vital support, experiences and networks for young people in difficult times.
- People often believe that volunteering is 'not for people like me'. We work to break down the barriers to volunteering and help more young people to contribute to society. Anyone can volunteer, including people who are looking for a job, who just have a few hours to spare each week or who are refugees or asylum seekers.
- Volunteers can give a tremendous amount to any organisation they work in, particularly when supported to make a difference. Our network of organisations and good practice sessions have strengthened organisations by providing vital help day to day, improving the atmosphere, improving outcomes for clients and creating wider community reach.
- Volunteering spreads out to the people volunteers are in contact with. In families or communities where volunteering isn't common, or where no one has volunteered before, this has a particularly strong impact.
- The combination of wonderful volunteering experiences and relationships and useful skills and learning, means that once they volunteer once, they are more likely to become volunteers for life.



Introduction

Volunteer Centre Westminster's (VCW) Youth Volunteering Project

Since 2007, we have been working with young people, organisations and community groups across seven central London boroughs, to create and develop innovative volunteering opportunities that reflect the passions, aspirations and career goals of 16-25 year olds.

We have helped 2397 young people access or learn about volunteering.

Young people can be passionate, committed and full of skills and talent. Give them meaningful tasks and you'll be impressed with the results. That's why we:

- run a youth action team that steers and champions our project
- offer guidance on creating roles for young volunteers and support organisations to design youth-led projects
- facilitate bespoke local partnerships across organisations
- create new tailored volunteering roles for young people and broker volunteering opportunities.



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Our social impact

Our question: What difference has our youth volunteering project made to young people and organisations in Central London?

Ensuring that our work is effective is absolutely central to what we do. So we work with our stakeholders to prove and improve our effectiveness – by asking our clients, by talking to our staff, by facilitating youth-led projects and by surveying our volunteers and partners to ask them what they think. We have worked with Red Ochre to provide this evaluation report. They have independently researched and reviewed our data and critiqued our effectiveness. You can read more about what they did at the back of this report.

Surveys: There are things we believe we offer young people, like a supportive organisation to work with and the opportunity for new skills and experiences. There are also things we are contributing to, like changing young people's perceptions of volunteering and impacting on communities and future generations. We talked to both volunteers and our partner organisations where we place and refer volunteers from - and surveyed them to find out more.

Social impact is about the social value for the individuals who we have helped in some way to volunteer. It is also about those organisations who benefit from the help of volunteers, and it is even about the wider world around the volunteers: their family, their community and others. In this evaluation we have started to look at those areas by providing anecdotal evidence and testimony as to those wider changes. This report covers our social impact between 2008 – 20011.



At a glance...

- We have helped **2397** young people access or learn about volunteering.
 - We have placed **870** young people into volunteering opportunities.
- We have created **12801** volunteering opportunities (**8262** 'taster' days, **4366** part-time opportunities and 173 full-time opportunities).
 - We have provided **339** organisations with good practice sessions.
- We have worked with **82** partner agencies (including Connexions, Youth Services, Youth Offending Teams, schools, colleges, and universities).
 - We have run **7** training and networking events, attended by **284** organisations.

Tessa Jowell, Minister for the Olympics, on Volunteer Centre Westminster's Youth Action Team (2009)

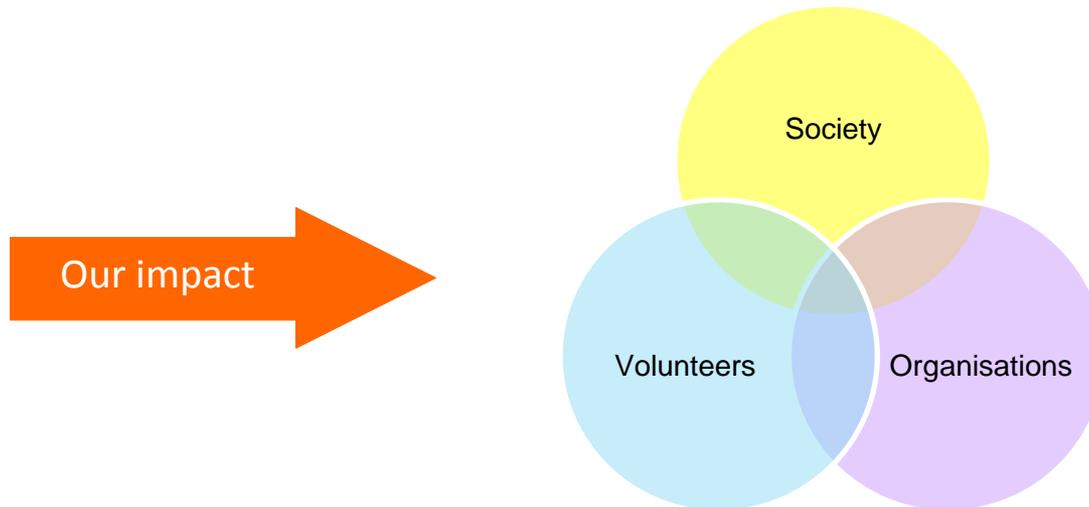
"They are a credit to your organisation...I was so impressed with the enthusiasm, engagement and opinions of the young people [including VCW's youth action team] present that we intend to consult with them on other Olympic matters and form a Youth Panel – a reflection of the value of their input."



What makes us different: Our approach

We work to provide meaningful youth volunteering opportunities with organisations. For us to have an impact and meet the needs we want to address, there are a number of things we do.

- We place young people in organisations where they feel supported and appreciated.
- We work with diverse individuals and organisations and target those who don't traditionally volunteer.
- We are youth-led through our Youth Action Team, and we facilitate youth participation projects.
- We have sustained impact by giving tailored advice and support.
- We educate partner organisations in how to use volunteers in a way that benefits them and the volunteer.
- We facilitate local partnerships across organisations and youth establishments.
- We know the organisations that can make a difference and have a bank of trusted contacts.



What makes us different: We are youth-led

30 young people involved in our Youth Action Team

29 young people involved in youth-led projects we created

We find that empowering young people to shape community activities and to act as role models is a highly effective way of developing youth volunteering. So we recruit groups of young volunteers to steer and champion our project, and to promote volunteering to their peers through youth-led projects that they design and deliver.

OUR REWARD & CELEBRATION TEAM

This group of young volunteers designed and organized all aspects of a superheroes-themed event that recognised youth volunteering in January 2010. Attended by celebrity hosts, young performers and 100 guests, the youth-led event was featured in the local press.

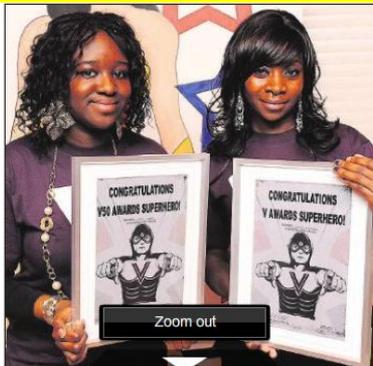
Heroines honoured

HEROIC volunteers Helen Wurrae (left) and Denoro Richards are rewarded for their efforts after contributing 150 hours of free time between them helping out in the community.

They were among hundreds of 16 to 25-year-olds recognised at the V Inspired Young Volunteer Awards at City University, in Northampton Square, Finsbury, on Saturday.

The ceremony, which had a special superhero theme, was hosted by MTV Base presenter Koko while Islington South and Finsbury MP, Emily Thornberry, was on hand to present the youngsters with their awards.

Among the good causes to have benefited from the nationwide V Inspired volunteering scheme is the Sue Ryder charity shop, in Essex Road, Islington. PHOTO: DIETER PERRY



Zoom out



Front page of Islington Gazette EC1, Feb 2010.

OUR YOUTH ACTION TEAM



Click [HERE](#) to watch our youth action team's promotional film on youth volunteering.

Meeting as a group every fortnight since April 2008, our youth action team have driven forward several initiatives to promote youth volunteering to their peers and to volunteer managers. In November 2010 this youth action team were trained in film production and independently created an exciting short film on volunteering.



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Our impact (part 1): We unleash individuals

870 young people placed into volunteering opportunities
12801 volunteering opportunities created (**8262** 'taster' days,
4366 part-time opportunities, **173** full-time opportunities)



According to our survey:

The volunteers we broker spend a range of time in their placements. Some survey respondents had volunteered for one day, others full time (five days a week for three months) and others volunteered over three years. **For 42% this was the first time they had ever volunteered.**

We place volunteers in a variety of roles. Some of those mentioned in our survey include:

- *Under 12s football team coach*
- *Entertainer booker*
- *Youth work at youth club*
- *City guide for Tour De France*
- *Working with horses at a city farm*
- *Office assistant*
- *Day service at a hospice*
- *Helped at Traffic Free Shopping Day in Oxford*



How?

1) Perceptions matter

48% of the young people we surveyed after finding a placement said that their volunteering experiences changed their ideas about what they could do.

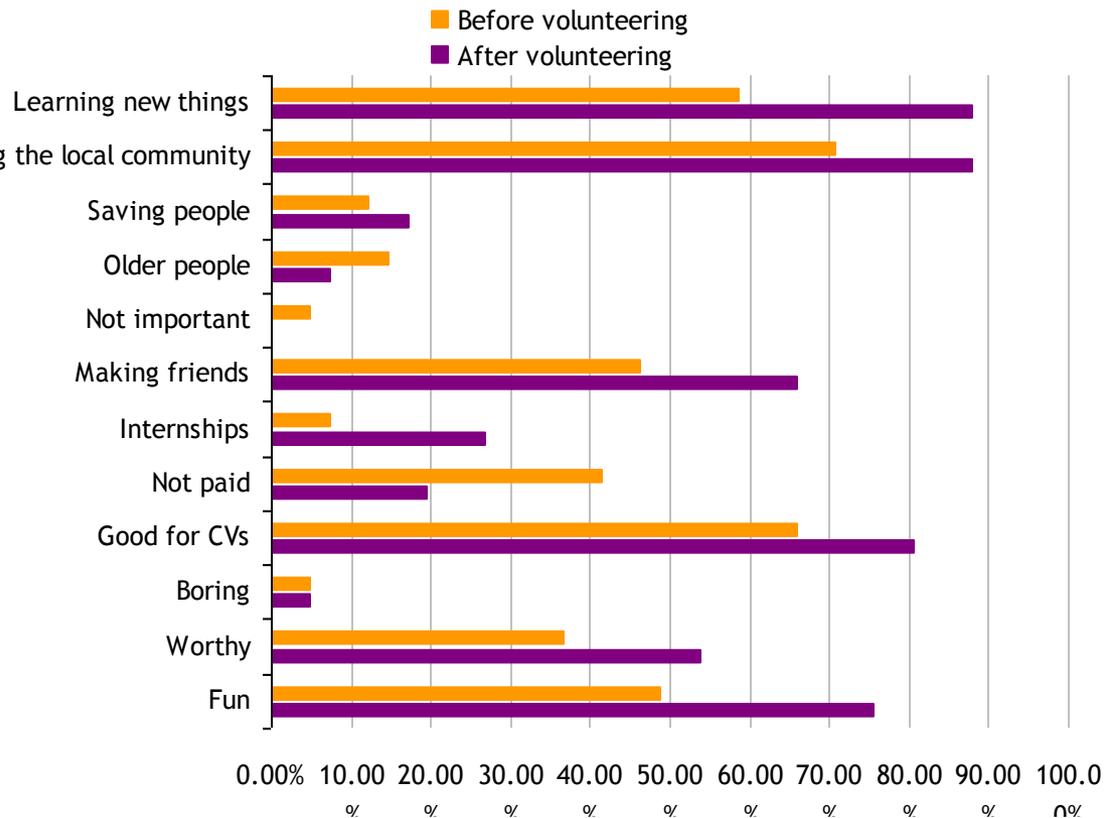
Perception is important. Sometimes volunteering is associated with particular activities or ways of being. We wanted to investigate this issue to see whether we were changing perceptions and what sorts of notions people have about volunteering. We found that people changed their mind about volunteering once they had done it. Overall they thought it was a lot more...

- fun
- good for CVs
- good use of time

...then they had imagined before. More than anything, respondents found that after volunteering they associated it much more with **'learning new things'**.

* **Disclaimer: Volunteering can occasionally be boring.** Two respondents (5%) indicated that they felt volunteering was boring before doing it, and two felt it was boring afterwards.

Perceptions of volunteering: before and after



How?

2) Our volunteering placements lead to learning, skills and jobs

Young people can be passionate and committed. We've found that volunteering work has the most impact when those young people are challenged in a supportive environment to realise their potential and contribute fully as a volunteer.

98 % of respondents in our survey did something they had never done before. When asked how often they did this while volunteering, 20% said all of the time, 53% often and 18% some of the time.

"I have always been shy of trying something new. This experience has allowed me to improve my communication skills and developed leadership skills. I feel that my confidence has improved and that I am not afraid to volunteer anymore."

For young people today, the challenges in accessing higher education and obtaining employment are significant.

58% of volunteers in our survey believe that volunteering contributed to helping them get a job or different employment. How has it helped them to do this?

- 78% because it improved their CV
- 26% because they got accreditation / a certificate for their volunteering
- 26% because they met someone who helped them with work

Others mentioned the confidence it gave them and that it directly led to paid work with the organisation they volunteered with.

"I learnt a lot of new skills which greatly improved my CV and it was very useful to talk about in interviews. I met amazing people as well who I still keep in touch with."



How?

3) Networks and communities widen the impact

Volunteering should help to bring people together, create cohesive communities and generate social capital. **85% of respondents enjoyed conversations with people from different backgrounds to them during their volunteering.** Because identity is fluid and relational, we asked them to tell us more. Some of them mentioned working with older people, some with people from different cultures or nationalities. For others, it was enjoying conversations with people who had new perspectives or different religious backgrounds.

“At the Archive and at Keats House, the majority of people were older and from different backgrounds. I felt like I learned a lot from the different people. For example...there were many people with backgrounds in History. Normally, I wouldn't be exposed to 'historians' and I think I benefited from meeting such a diverse range of people.”

“You make new friends with people you don't usually hang out with.”

“I met different age groups which was good as I was able to talk to someone older who had more experience than me.”

And whilst this was occurring, several respondents mentioned what they had in common as well.

“To me people are people, regardless of background. So I didn't have an eureka moment but I did enjoy in engaging with people I may never of had the opportunity to have appreciated before.”

“It's just nice to be around different people, you see that we're not at all completely different.”

How?

4) Volunteering for life

If volunteering is going to help us solve the problems we currently face in society and meet the needs that Volunteer Centre Westminster has identified, then we must ensure it can have a sustained impact beyond the initial volunteering period. There are many ways in which this could happen, but we have focused on three:

- 1) How volunteering spreads out to the people volunteers are in contact with. In families or communities where volunteering isn't common, or where no one has volunteered before, this has a particularly strong impact.
- 2) Ensuring that the volunteering experience is good enough, or valuable enough, that young people will volunteer again.
- 3) Ensuring that the contacts, skills and experiences volunteers gain are useful, to create a sustainable impact either in terms of jobs, skills or relationships.

76% of volunteers we surveyed have stayed in touch with one or more people they met during their volunteering. And almost 50% of those have stayed in touch with three or more people. Some of these people are now friends, others are contacts for CV referees and others are mentors.

97% of volunteers surveyed tell people they know (e.g. friends, family, neighbours) about things they have done whilst volunteering, with 32% telling them 'all the time', and 29% often. 85% think that people they know are interested in what they've done as a volunteer, with 21% of them interested all the time and 36% often interested.

As a result of volunteering, 48% of the volunteers we surveyed have already volunteered again and 35% have become more interested in their local community.



In their words, what's the best thing young people take from their volunteering experience?

What's the single best thing volunteers take from their experience according to our survey? The most common answers were confidence, skills and experiences. Here's what some of them said:

"I have learnt to be more open to other people"

"Life is all about learning and helping others"

"I had some great experiences, in particular speaking at a conference about 2012, introducing Tessa Jowell at the conference and speaking on a panel; seeing the Olympic park; and the marketing consultation I did with 2012 - just a great experience! Speaking at a few conferences really changed me and helped me with my confidence."

"Quick thinking"

"Being able to use creative ideas to fulfil an intention whilst making it interesting for all concerned."

"I have gained a new understanding of community"

"The different events I've taken part in give me a feeling for the type of career I would like"

"I learnt a lot of new skills which greatly improved my CV and it was very useful to talk about in interviews. I met amazing people as well who I still keep in touch with"



Case study volunteers: Tom

Tom Fearnley | Missing People

With a simple desire to help a charity and gain some work experience, Tom came to Westminster Volunteer Centre's youth volunteering team via his social worker. Tom, who lives in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea, had jobs in supermarkets in the past, but wanted some work experience in an office. Having lost an arm in an accident, he had found it difficult to work.

The youth volunteering team gave Tom several relevant options and he chose a position with Missing People, an organisation that offers a lifeline for people who run away and go missing and provides specialised support for those left behind.

Tom has now been volunteering for four months and provides administration support. When he first started, Missing People discussed with him what tasks he might be able to do, what he knew and was interested in and they decided together which jobs would be most appropriate. As Tom says, *"it was a helpful way of doing it and they're just nice people there."*

Having a supportive environment has made it easier for Tom to contribute, and for Missing People it has meant an extremely valuable asset to the team. Tom helps with a variety of tasks, including the newsletter, printing, incoming mail and he has learnt how to use Excel and help with data entry.

"This was the first time I volunteered. I was a bit nervous about not doing the job properly but they were great – really friendly and if you've got a problem you can go to them and they will help. They showed me how to do things so that I can just get on with the job really."



Case study volunteers: Tom

For Tom, volunteering is a way to help other people and himself at the same time. He has found that he has learnt practical new skills, met new people and contributed to an organisation doing valuable work. This has meant that as well as helping out a charity and gaining work experience, a positive, supported volunteering placement has also shaped his future.

“I hope it will all lead to more office work. I’m going to university in September to do film and screen writing. I used my experience at Missing People in my application so I think it helped me to get on the course. I hope to continue volunteering at university – either at Missing People or somewhere else. Maybe one day a week or whatever I can give.”

The Missing People view

“Missing People’s 70 active volunteers make a massive difference to the work of the charity. We couldn’t run our services without them and every role no matter how big or small is valuable. We appreciate the skills and knowledge that volunteers bring with them, along with their enthusiasm and commitment. Tom is a great example of this and a pleasure to have as part of our volunteer team.”

Chloe Swinton
Services Volunteer Leader
Missing People
www.missingpeople.org.uk



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Case study volunteers: Holly

Holly Tinsley | Whizz Kidz

Holly has always liked helping people, but as a full time carer for her Grandmother was finding it difficult to make time for other things. Holly went to Connexions and was advised that volunteering might be the way forward, both to make her job ready and to give her the opportunity to meet new people. Up until that point, caring for her Grandmother meant that Holly wasn't able to make plans or think about working.

With the support of her uncle, Holly went to the Volunteer Centre in Wandsworth to speak to a youth volunteer advisor and explore her options. She decided to volunteer for the Blue Peter Christmas Card Appeal for Whizz Kidz over the summer, to give her a taster of volunteering. She then went on to volunteer with a friend at the Sutton Ecology Centre, and also helped out for a session in a local Oxfam shop.

Holly found that volunteering helped her build the confidence she needed to start looking for work. A couple of months after volunteering for Whizz Kidz, Holly went into a local retail shop and asked about current opportunities. She received an interview, was successful, and now works at Robert Dyas five mornings a week.

“Apart from helping my Nan, I hadn't really done any kind of work. Volunteering wasn't exactly shop work but just working at anything helped. Before I just didn't have a concept of working because I've never really done it.”



Case study volunteers: Holly

Volunteering also encouraged Holly to build her confidence and talk to new people, both younger and older. The support she received from family and friends along the way was also key. *“My mum was really pleased...And she really thinks it has helped me with my confidence and she is so pleased I got this job. There’s actually hope!”*

Volunteering with friends gave Holly the support she needed to talk to others. But she was also clear about what she hoped to achieve through her volunteering: *“I just felt, if I don’t do volunteering, I won’t have anything on my CV and it will really help with my confidence. I just felt I had to do something.”*

So what does the future hold? Holly is adjusting to her new job and enjoying this time to make new friends and build her skills. She would love to volunteer again in the future, though. For her, the best thing about volunteering was ‘getting to help people’. Holly could see the real difference her help was giving to others, and it also gave her the confidence to go out and find paid work.



Our impact (part 2): we work with organisations that really know how to involve volunteers

We provided **339** organisations with good practice sessions

We have worked with **82** partner agencies (including Connexions, Youth Services, Youth Offending Teams, schools, colleges and universities)

7 training and networking events attended by **284** organisations

Volunteers can give a tremendous amount to any organisation they work in, particularly when supported to make difference.

- 90% of respondents in our survey agreed or strongly agreed that they felt appreciated for the contribution they made as a volunteer.
- 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by the organisation they were working with to make a contribution.

Part of this is knowing the organisations – and the ones with the strength – to support hard to reach people. These organisations can make the most out of volunteering for both the volunteer and for the organisation themselves. Volunteering is not necessarily a positive for all involved. It takes the correct support, placement and “know how” to manage the volunteers and at the right stage of an organisation’s development.

We asked our partners, what sort of roles do you place young people in?

- *ChildLine volunteer counsellor*
- *Residential weeks working alongside special needs young people on adventure holidays*
- *Police Cadets*
- *Administration*
- *One-off volunteering days in local faith buildings - mostly Churches and Cathedrals*
- *Fashion, art, design*



How do the organisations we work with support volunteers?

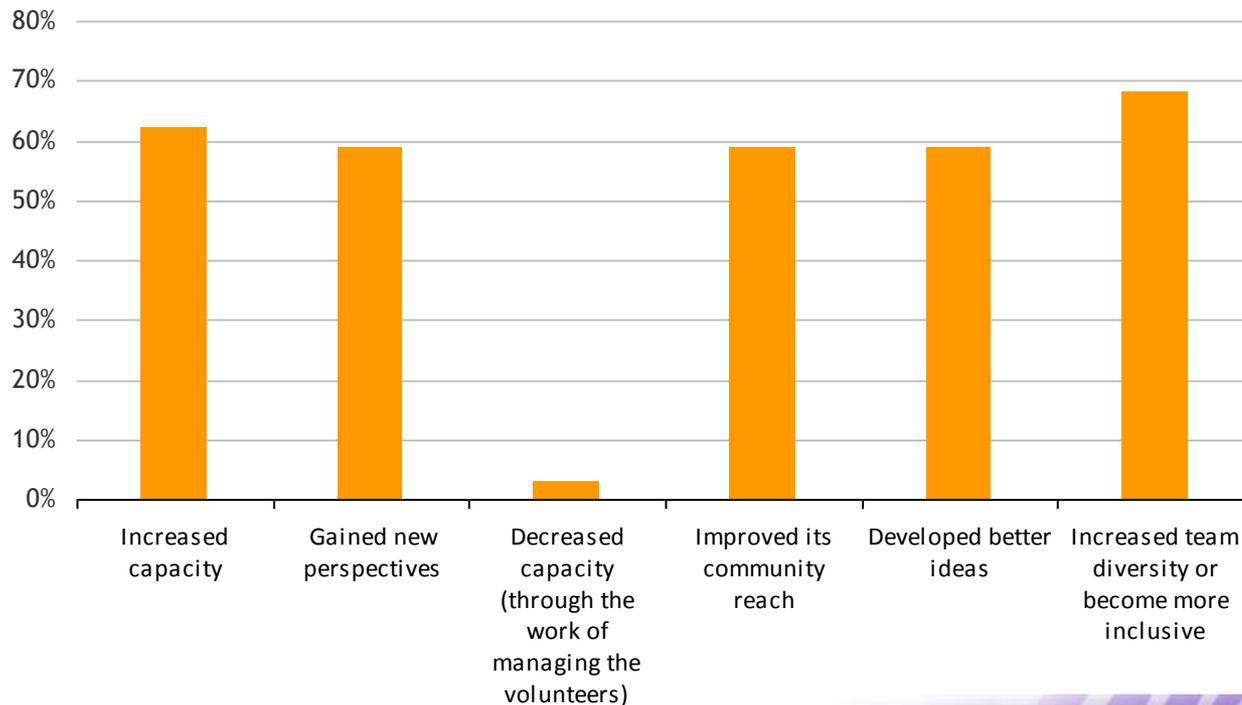
We asked the organisations we work with how they support volunteers. Here's what they said:



We help to strengthen organisations as well as volunteers

If involved in an ineffective way, volunteers can be a drain on an organisation or simply offer a poor return in the time and resources that need to be invested in managing them. This is a crucial point for organisations but particularly when resources are tight. We place young people in roles where they feel supported and appreciated and educate partner organisations in how to use volunteers in a way that benefits them and the volunteer. In this way, both the volunteer *and* the organisation are strengthened. In our survey, as a result of involving young volunteers, organisations reported a number of benefits:

As a result of involving young volunteers, has your organisation...?



98%, or all but one of our survey respondents said that they will work with young volunteers in the future.

98%, or all but one of our survey respondents said they would recommend Volunteer Centre Westminster's youth volunteering team to someone.



In their words, what is the best thing organisations take from young volunteers?

For some this is seeing the changes in the young people:

→ *“Better equipped young people who are now job ready.”*
“Seeing the difference in the young disabled people during their volunteering placement.”

For other organisations, this is the nature of the volunteers and what that means for the organisation:

→ *“Greater energy and enthusiasm!”*
“New perspectives on our current workload, plus vital help in day-day.”
“It has enabled us to utilise current skills young people have and help them to also develop new skills.”

This also leads to changes for staff: →

“The difference it can make for young people's experience and confidence, and the equivalent for staff who work with them.”
“Their enthusiasm and positivity as well as their openness to change has been vital during a time of uncertainty and change at ChildLine.” *“This has a positive impact on the whole volunteering body here at ChildLine.”*

And can also lead to actual improvements in outcomes for the organisations themselves: →

“Improved outcomes for our client group.”
“The dynamic and diversity of the whole volunteer team has improved a lot and we can see the changes both with our staff and clients as well.”



Impact stories: Our work with museums

Case study 1: Youth Volunteering at London Transport Museum

Stories of the world project

Over 250,000 people visit London Transport Museum (LTM) each year and immerse themselves in the capital city's transport heritage. What they may not know is that one of the ways in which the museum conserves and explains this heritage is through the work of young volunteers.

LTM aims to give young people a voice in how the museum works, and how it can be made better for everyone. Creating new volunteering opportunities for young people is an important part of this work. One particular project in which this happened is Stories of the World. Since November 2009 this has involved getting young people together with curators, film makers, artists, and musicians to explore how we all track our journeys in London, through maps, stories, objects and memories. The Stories of the World volunteers were recruited to design and deliver LTM's workshop activities at the FUSE youth arts festival in summer 2010, capturing festival goer's memories related to the Tube Map to add to the museum's collection.

Although LTM did not specifically target young people not in education, employment or training, they did try and create an offer that would appeal to young people not previously interested in museums.

"We wanted to look at Youth Volunteering in a new way, creating a project-based model that benefited both sides. Vinvolved have been a important part of supporting that process. We are trying to create progression routes into paid work for young people, but the museum can only do so much. Vinvolved have helped us signpost young people to further opportunities to develop their CVs through volunteering and other community projects." Steve Gardam, London Transport Museum

Putting young people at the heart of decision-making in Stories of the World is one the central aim of the programme, and they made sure that volunteers were involved in setting out their own expectations and responsibilities from the very start. The activities the volunteers ran at the FUSE festival were from their own ideas, only guided in terms of practical logistics by LTM's professional staff. For the festival goers, museum and volunteers, the project was a big success.



What did the volunteers say?

“...We had asked for a little contribution [for festival goers] to give us memories which related to the tube map. This has helped the museum to gain understanding of ways to improve the museum and attract young people. By giving up our time, we had helped young people as well as all ages as well as the museum.” **Mohammed Haq**

“We did a range of activities to build a strong team and develop social skills and confidence. Listening skills were developed through considering other people's thoughts and ideas... I also gained project management skills when I worked at the festival as was responsible for the different activities at different times and I had to ensure it was organised.” **Shabana Begum**

Once finished, LTM also made sure that young voices were heard through to the end of the project, and could influence what comes next, via the evaluation.

“We evaluate our work with the volunteers, for their benefit. The young people we work with gain great experiences and we help them to tell others about this. Volunteering has a much greater impact for them, if they can communicate in on a CV or know how to tell a story about their experience. It is a very important part of the support.” **Steve Gardam, London Transport Museum**

What does this mean for the long term? LTM are aiming to build on their work with young volunteers, following up with more opportunities to develop skills and make a positive contribution, with volunteers moving into paid roles supported by appropriate training. Crucially, new youth volunteering projects will deliver within the museum, rather than at off-site festivals and events. The young people who took part in the Stories of the World project have all signed up to volunteer at the museum in future.



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Case study 2: Facilitated youth-led partnership

Creative volunteering partnership project

As well as running our own Youth Action Team, Volunteer Centre Westminster also support groups of organisations to partner with each other to facilitate youth-led volunteering projects. These projects are tailored to the partners' various organisational needs and to the needs of local young people.

In early 2010, we worked with CityZEN and Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) to design, deliver, and evaluate a partnership-based project, which offered local young people youth-led, AQA-accredited volunteering placements at Handel House Museum, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), and Keats House. The project was pitched at young people who had not normally considered volunteering before: it provided a unique opportunity to empower and accredit them, while at the same time working in partnership with the museum and archive sector to improve their offer to teenagers.



Young volunteer at LMA

How Did We Facilitate this Partnership?

- We consulted museums about their needs and created flexible volunteering opportunities that would respond to these in a youth-led way ([click here](#) to read about a placement at LMA).
- We created bespoke AQA accreditation for participating 14-19 year olds to work towards.
- We recruited young volunteers into the museum opportunities, and monitored their placements.
- We co-ordinated communication across the consortium of participating organisations to track the project's progress.
- We administered AQA certificates for volunteers who had completed their placements, and played a key role in delivering an end of project celebration event and evaluation report.



Our impact (part 3): We help more young people to contribute to society

Our work has shown that everyone can contribute. We emphasise that anyone can volunteer including those:

- who are looking for a job
- living in a hostel / temporary accommodations
- who are refugees or asylum seekers
- with a criminal record
- who have just a few hours to spare per week.

The young people we have worked with have consisted of:

- 70% BME groups
- 40% NEET
- 15% with disability
- 8% lone parents
- 5% care leavers
- 5% young carers

This evaluation provides an insight into the wider social impact of our volunteer work. However, we think our work contributes to wider changes in society as we are:

- providing vital support, experiences and networks for young people
- laying the foundations for generations of volunteers
- helping to foster pro-social behaviours
- contributing to diversity in the workforce.

We know that volunteering can be life changing for individuals. At the same time, when looked at as a whole, volunteering often means many small steps that come together to help to contribute to a stronger society.

“The young people have lots of energy and ideas which are fresh, and they adapt very quickly to change. They are the future and volunteering is the stepping stone for their futures” – Volunteer manager.



What we've learnt and where we can improve

- 93% of organisations we surveyed had worked with young volunteers before contact with VCW's youth volunteering team. This demonstrates the importance of having established organisations who are experienced in supporting young volunteers. However, it also means that we need to work smarter in the future to find organisations who have not worked with young volunteers before in order to increase the options young people have.
- The impact of volunteering is often associated with quantity. Numbers tell part of the story, but as this report shows, the quality of individual's experiences hold the key to 'transforming lives through volunteering', and this is what we are most interested in.
- Engaging disadvantaged young people is more time-consuming, and involving them as volunteers is not the easiest route for organisations. However, we found that volunteering makes the biggest impact when it reaches people who do not access it easily – especially during the transitional time in their life when they enter adulthood.
- We know that there are many organisations out there who are not using volunteers. Some are limited by their resources and others perceive too many barriers to successful volunteer involvement. We hope that this report will change their mind.
- Monitoring and supporting individuals' progress through their volunteering journey is not always easy, and keeping in touch with young people often requires flexible and frequent communication. Close ongoing partnership between volunteer brokers and volunteer managers can often help a young person get the most out of their volunteering opportunity.



About us

Volunteer Centre Westminster's youth volunteering team have been operating across central London for a number of years under the name **involved** Central London.

We have worked with a diverse range of 16-25 year olds by promoting youth volunteering, providing tailored one-to-one support into volunteering placements, and involving volunteers in our own youth-led projects. Alongside this work, we have partnered with a wide selection organisations and community groups to create and develop innovative volunteering opportunities that reflect the passions, aspirations and career goals of young people. Our work was carried out across the following seven boroughs: Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Southwark, Camden, and Islington.

Funding for this project will end on 31st March 2011. We are now seeking funders who would like to help us facilitate high impact youth volunteering in Westminster. If you are interested in supporting the continuation of our work with local young people, please get in touch.

Email: gareth.owen@volunteer.co.uk

Write to: Gareth Owen, Chief Executive, Volunteer Centre Westminster, 53-55 Praed Street, London, W2 1NR,
Telephone: 020 7402 8076.

For more information about our youth volunteering work please visit www.volunteer.co.uk/youthvolunteering.



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- Martin Cooper and Robert Foster from Red Ochre – for facilitating and writing this report.
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- v – for kindly funding this report





creating change by supporting change

Red Ochre evaluation statement

Red Ochre is a social enterprise that specialises in providing business support and evaluation to organisations that deliver social change. In order to do this report we:

- ran a theory of change ‘storyboard’ workshop with Westminster Volunteer Centre staff
- discussed impact and key measures with staff
- surveyed stakeholders including volunteers and partner organisations
- interviewed case study participants
- co-wrote the report.

Our evaluation has been guided by the following Red Ochre principles:

- Go beyond targets - numbers alone will not tell the whole story. Getting a fuller picture about the change you create will mean looking at *outcomes* and *impact* – for the individual, communities and economies (or the environment).
- Stories –Be clear about the link between your activities and the change that they are designed to bring about.
- Dialogue – deep listening, suspending our judgement and accessing our ignorance can have a transformative effect for both for the organisation carrying out the evaluation and the stakeholder.
- Materiality – What do stakeholders need to know about in order to make informed judgements, decisions and actions?
- Truth – Understanding the truth about what the organisation does and social action – internally for individuals and as an organisation.

In Volunteer Centre Westminster’s ongoing commitment to measure their impact, it will be important to continue to develop a system of outcomes for expected performance against key stakeholder issues based on robust data collection systems in the future.

www.redochre.org.uk



Usual Suspects? Look again!



Shourjya
Rotary Volunteer
@The Rotary Club



Kelly
Christmas Volunteer
@Whizz Kidz



Marie-Louise
Literary Support Tutor
@Springboard



Fatima
Volunteer Mentor
@Reachout

