Pathways into employment in the voluntary and community sector
An evidence review

Report for the UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Hub

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‘Volunteering gives you the competitive edge’
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‘For the conscientious career hunter nothing compares to the voluntary sector’
John Plummer, quoted in Working for a Better World,
UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Hub

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the evidence base about pathways into employment in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the UK. It is based on an assessment of research on individual career pathways into and out of the sector. Despite the limitations and patchiness of the evidence there is support for the assumption that experiences of engagement in an unpaid capacity are likely to lead to experiences in a paid capacity within the sector. Evidence also exists of a number of other routes into the sector, and the factors that either promote or obstruct these pathways.

Is voluntary action a pathway into paid employment in the sector?
The evidence confirms the importance of the skills and experience gained through volunteer activities in successfully gaining paid employment. Many of the studies provide case studies based on the experiences of job seekers from deprived urban or rural communities, and in particular from refugee communities. Statistical evidence is harder to find.

What other pathways are there into paid employment in the sector?
The three pathways considered in detail were employment/training placements; graduate programmes and career entry programmes; and career moves from the public or private sectors into the VCS. Although the sector is a major provider of employment and training placements, as with volunteers, there is limited statistical evidence on the numbers getting jobs in the sector. Training courses by the VCS and placement opportunities geared to the needs of graduates are effective in raising awareness of the sector’s employment opportunities. But evidence suggests that the most significant pathway is career moves from the public and private sectors.

What are the factors that influence and shape individual pathways?
Volunteers who move into paid employment in the sector are pursuing social benefits as well as personal goals.

Organisational factors that ease this transition are:
- the contract culture and associated merging of volunteer and paid work,
- the way employment support services are coordinated,
- the attitudes of employers to recruiting volunteers.

The main obstacles to moving into paid work are:
- the temporary jobs often accessed by volunteers,
- the lack of promotion of jobs by volunteer agencies,
- the type of unaccredited and generic training offered,
- the active discouragement by government support agencies of voluntary work as a route into paid work.

The evidence supports the assumption that career moves by those already in work are motivated by perceived values embedded in the sector or within specific fields of activity. In addition they are influenced by how services are organised, working conditions, and scope for innovation. Furthermore government policy indirectly influences choices through its funding and policy frameworks in support of job seekers, workforce skills and infrastructure development.

Implications
In order for the UK Workforce Hub to more effectively promote the sector as a career there is a need for further information, quantitative and qualitative, on career moves into and within the sector.
1. BACKGROUND

This report, commissioned by NCVO on behalf of the UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Hub, reviews the evidence base for pathways into employment in the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

It seeks to clarify the link between voluntary action and paid employment within the sector, to test the often-made assumption that experiences of engagement in an unpaid capacity are likely to lead to experiences in a paid capacity within the sector; and to examine issues of motivation and access, identifying factors such as values, skills and institutional context that influence and shape individual pathways. The overall aim of this report is to inform the work of the UK Workforce Hub in promoting the VCS as a career option.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

Central Government policies that relate directly to this review are Sector Skills Agreements as developed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), initiatives directed at lifelong learning and employability, and ChangeUp which established the UK Workforce Hub. The Hub is about “helping all voluntary and community organisations to be great places to work and volunteer, better employers, embracing a culture of learning and development” with the objective that “more people choose to come and work in the sector” [http://www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk]. An obstacle to taking forward this along with other elements of the ChangeUp programme of work was noted by the Home Office in 2005 as being that “learning and best practice is hampered by lack of a strong evidence base” [Active Communities Unit (2005)].

3. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The review focuses on evidence showing points of entry and exit to employment in the sector with an emphasis on motivation, personal values, personal experience, and career aims seen from an individual’s perspective. Three themes have guided the evidence review:

Theme 1 Is voluntary action a pathway into paid employment in the sector?
Theme 2 What other pathways are there into paid employment in the sector?
Theme 3 What are the factors that influence and shape individual pathways - is an individual’s selection of pathways influenced by motivational factors such as ‘loyalty to the sector’ and its values and ethics, or is it loyalty to a specific focus of activity (such as social care) or to a specific type of job (such as IT); and to what extent is an individual’s selection of pathways influenced by employer initiatives, funding streams or government policy?

4. APPROACH

The Home Office inspired policy-based research method ‘rapid evidence assessment’ (REA), was used to carry out this literature review in May/June 2006. Twenty two studies drawn from the UK, North America, Europe and Australia, were assessed with a further twenty four studies considered for related contextual information. This REA approach confirmed that evidence in this field is limited and patchy, and in much need of further primary research to examine the main
assumptions made about pathways into the sector. Nevertheless the evidence base, limited as it is, is consistent with many of the assumptions made within the sector about current employment pathways. Furthermore it identifies factors that either promote or obstruct these career routes.

Note: The report summarises the key findings and implications of the review. These findings are backed up by the evidence which can be found in Appendix One. A brief summary of the key reports assessed by the review can be found in Appendix Two (referred to, for example, as [ref.1]). All other reports are referenced in the bibliography. Appendix Three outlines the REA approach used.

5. KEY FINDINGS

Is voluntary action a pathway into paid employment in the sector?
Current practice suggests the answer to this question is assumed to be yes. For instance government policy, in promoting job-readiness, recommends volunteering as a route into employment for members of disadvantaged communities and for school-leavers. Careers advisers advocate volunteering as a means of gaining relevant experience. And several employers in the national voluntary sector support volunteering explicitly as a form of supported access to paid work in their organisations.

There is however only limited research evidence to support all of this. Most studies identified are based on specific sections of the population, namely job seekers who are refugees, or members of deprived urban or rural communities. The evidence is anecdotal with much of it directed to what helped or hindered access to employment with little information on where they get jobs.

However even though this evidence does not reflect the diversity of the sector or refer to the experiences of former volunteers now employed in the sector, it is considered by this review to be relevant and supportive of the assumptions underlying current practice.

Statistical evidence is much harder to find. This in the main is a result of the VCS not being considered a mainstream employer for the purposes of government statistics and employment programmes. This creates a considerable gap in information that might otherwise allow accurate tracking of pathways in and out of the sector.

What makes volunteers want to work in the sector?
The studies reviewed show a spread of factors including age, life experience, employment status, personal vision and individual motivation as relevant to this question. Pat Gay in her study of job seekers [Gay, P. ref.1] distinguishes two types of volunteers - ‘Career Builders’ and ‘Job Hopefuls’. The Career Builders were “predominantly female and under thirty, strategic in their approach, and consciously accumulating expertise and experience”, and the Job Hopefuls were “older as a group, less clear in their vision but who nevertheless keep an eye out for opportunities that might lead to paid work”. A study of shelter volunteers in Chicago [Ferrari, J.R.] makes a distinction between the individual seeking societal benefits as opposed to self-gain. Understandably younger volunteers are more likely to be seeking career opportunities than older volunteers. Other studies show that volunteers who have been unemployed enter the sector with ideas of: ‘being normal’ [Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]; ‘rebuilding their lives’ [MacDonald, R. ref.7]; and working in a ‘safe environment’ [Archer et al ref.4]. And yet, in seeking paid work, motivation to help others seems to be the prime influence in choice of jobs. Until
obtaining paid employment volunteering, it is suggested, is seen by this group as the next best thing.

**What factors make it easier for volunteers to get jobs in the sector?**

Self-evidently the personal, motivational and circumstantial factors indicated above can play a part in easing, or complicating an individual’s pathway into employment in the sector. But there seems little doubt that simply being a volunteer is a prime factor in making this pathway easier [Gay, P. ref.1]. Further to these individual factors, studies have identified specific organisational factors which also ease the pathway into paid employment in the sector.

**The contract culture**

The demands on the VCS of meeting contractual obligations have led to the creation of a more work-like environment for volunteers. Many studies have commented on this change highlighting “*increasingly formalised structures involving for example selection, appraisal and training*” [Hardill and Baines ref.6]. Studies suggest that as work done by volunteers is becoming closer to that done by paid staff, convincing an employer of a volunteer’s employability can be made easier [Gay, P. ref.1]. Shadowing and mentoring opportunities in particular provide a flexible route into employment. This may however require having to first accept only temporary or low paid positions.

**The merging of volunteer and paid work**

Some studies have identified individuals who undertake both a paid and voluntary role in their organisation. This has been observed in some sub-sectors such as counselling [Bondi, L. ref.9], and may also apply to the sports sub-sector. As funding levels have fluctuated the boundary between volunteering and paid roles have had to move in response. While this lowers the threshold between volunteers and paid staff, and may in some ways be seen as making the transition into paid work easier, it would be important to see how such situations play out in the long term, and whether the aspirations of individuals were to be satisfied.

**Combined employment support services**

Support services such as advice, guidance, training, orientation and mentoring that are made available to volunteers and paid personnel seem to play a part in easing the entry of volunteers into paid employment. Self-evidently the distinction between volunteers and paid workers is reduced and the pathway eased. Studies have shown that where such combined services have been delivered by partnership working across sectors (e.g. health, housing, employment) future easing of the pathway from volunteering into paid employment has been evident [Archer et al ref.4].

**Attitudes of employers**

As a result of the professionalisation of volunteers it has become easier for employers to give an appropriate value to experience gained through volunteering. Clearly as attitudes of employers change, pathways into paid employment will be eased. At present though the evidence suggests a mixed picture. For instance some employers, where funding for induction training is limited, have tended to select candidates for posts who have the employment experience to ‘hit the road running’ [Ashley and Rauter]. Also where volunteers have been working in other countries employers have tended to consider such individuals ‘out of touch’ for UK based positions [Cook and Jackson ref.16]. This is against a background in which senior managers claim to support volunteer experience.
What factors make it more difficult for volunteers to get jobs in the sector?
While there is evidence that the ethos and working environment of the VCS does support the transition of volunteer into paid workers in the sector, volunteers can also experience a range of hurdles and barriers.

The sustainability and ‘ghettoisation’ of jobs
Some studies found that volunteers can get stuck in a series of temporary paid posts which are interspersed by periods of volunteer work, and with little opportunity to advance their careers [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2; Archer et al ref.4; MacDonald, R. ref.7]. Also lack of clarity regarding relevant qualifications has meant that pathways into local community-based organisations can often be hit or miss [NCDN ref.17].

The active discouragement by support agencies
For job seekers on benefits, the evidence from a number of reports is an experience of being discouraged from undertaking voluntary work [Gay, P. ref.1; Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]. The argument made by government employment agencies is that volunteering takes them away from actively looking for work. Whether this is a misinterpretation of the advice being given or not, it contradicts the belief by those volunteering that this type of work is invaluable to them being considered by potential employers.

The lack of promotion of job opportunities by volunteer agencies
Volunteers do not appear to be adequately informed about employment opportunities in the sector [Hirst, A. ref.3] or sufficiently encouraged to apply. It may be that the dilemma for organisations employing volunteers is that they are reluctant to lose experienced and committed voluntary workers [Gay, P. ref.1].

Unaccredited and generic training offered
Volunteers seeking paid employment have to compete with a highly skilled workforce. Several studies report that capacity-building training, which is generic and unaccredited, may not be of much assistance in helping volunteers to sell specific skills and expertise which will set them apart from others, and in particular those already in employment [NCDN ref.17; Corden and Sainsbury ref.5].

What other pathways are there into paid employment in the sector?
As well as volunteering providing a pathway into the sector evidence exists of a number of other routes. The three considered in detail were - employment/training placements; graduate and career entry programmes; and possibly the most significant namely career moves from the public or private sectors into the VCS. Temporary secondments and work placements were also of interest, but because the evidence was limited these have not been covered by this review.

Employment and training placements
The VCS is a major provider of employment and training placements. A number of studies identify how these programmes help trainees into jobs [Gay, P. ref.1; Erel and Tomlinson ref.2; Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]. Unfortunately these programmes, including the New Deal Voluntary Sector Option, do not provide statistics as to where most trainees get jobs. This lack of clear information, combined with the level of subsidies involved to produce results, may lead to the questioning of continued involvement in delivery of some government employment programmes [Cartwright and Morris].
Graduate programmes and career entry programmes
University developed graduate programmes have been shown to provide only a low level of awareness and understanding of employment opportunities in the voluntary sector [Nickson, D. ref.12]. The VCS has responded to this in a number of ways. Positive Action Training in Housing (PATH) has through VCS training placements provided career entry opportunities to members of black and minority ethnic communities within the social housing sector [Julienne, L. ref.13; Bowes et al ref.14]. Working For A Charity delivers training courses which offer information and advice to new graduates, career changers, and returners to work, on how to transfer their skills effectively into the sector and the challenges and management issues they will face.

Career moves between sectors
Evidence on career movement between sectors is mostly anecdotal, being based on case studies of managers and front-line staff [Dobson, R.; Eaton, L.; George, M.]. It shows a complex picture of a workforce influenced by factors ranging from economic recession [Clutterbuck and Dearlove] to government policy on social enterprise [Plater-Zyberk H. ref.19] and contracting out of public services [Wilson et al ref.11; Nickson, D. ref. 12]. Case studies of workers coming into the sector suggest that the perceived values embedded in the sector, or within certain specific fields of activity [Dobson, R.; Watson, D. ref.15; McKillop et al ref.18] are of primary importance in making their choices. How services are organised, working conditions, and the scope for innovation are equally important [Dobson, R; Eaton, L.]. These moves can be two-way if staff become disillusioned because career aspirations are not met and elect to move back into the public or private sectors [George, M.; Nickson, D.]. And there is also the possibility of head hunting of VCS management expertise by private and public sector employers [Batsleer, J.; Clutterbuck and Dearlove].

How does government policy/funding or employer initiatives influence choices?
As noted above government policy can influence career choices, either directly or indirectly, through setting the funding framework for supporting job seekers, workforce skills and infrastructure development. Evidence of government employment support programmes which undervalue volunteer experience suggest one pathway where better advice and information is required. Infrastructure organisations are funded to provide support into employment. But there is limited evidence on how such work links up with the Government’s programme of support for workforce development and in particular Sector Skills Councils.

VCS employers do influence the pathways into the sector in a number of significant ways through their recruitment policies, and through design and delivery of tailored support routes into employment for volunteers and graduates. However it’s difficult to see from the evidence to what extent government polices and VCS programmes on the ground are in practice influencing career choices at an individual level.

6. SO WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

With respect to policy
There is enough evidence to show that more purposeful policy objectives are needed in respect of creating and managing pathways into the sector both for volunteers and paid staff.

Where specific organisations have focused policy effort on issues of recruitment both for volunteers, and for qualified paid personnel, these efforts have been met with
success and have created benefits both for the organisations concerned and the individuals who have been part of these programmes. An example of a successful policy linked to the development of best practice has been around positive action in the social housing sector and the development of tailored training placements. Policies around employee volunteering, placement programmes, and volunteer linked recruitment have also proved successful.

What is clear from the evidence found through this review is that such policies need to be more wide-ranging, more prevalent, longer lasting, unified across the sector and, above all, more carefully monitored.

Further ways to address these issues would be:

- A review of HR recruitment policies across the VCS to identify best practice.
- A review of mechanisms that value and formally accredit volunteering experience.
- An engagement in the issues concerning Government employability policies and the role they have in promoting volunteering as a route into paid work in the VCS.

With respect to practice

Although the evidence is patchy, and largely lacking in statistical robustness, it is consistent with many of the widely held assumptions within the sector about what constitutes good practice in developing and maintaining viable pathways into the sector. This suggests that many of the current practices are probably well directed and therefore reasonably successful. In addition to this there is good evidence to support the validity of several new practice initiatives. These would include mentoring training and induction programmes that are held in common between volunteers and paid personnel, and the ensuring of a congruence of standards across operational personnel whether volunteer or paid.

However the lack of consistent monitoring of the outcomes of current practice - long standing or innovative - undermines consistency and prevalence, and may also at critical points leave the sector in a weak position when arguing for resources that would underpin the further development of recruitment good practice initiatives.

Key developments that would address these issues would be:

- The promotion of structured career schemes that provide paid work opportunities in voluntary and community organisations.
- The development of a code of HR good practice for employing organisations which addresses barriers and promotes enabling factors found to exist in career pathways.
- The extension of links with schools and higher education institutions to expand training placements based on volunteering opportunities in workplace settings particularly when such placements are a required element of course work.

With respect to research

This study has shown that there is a shortage of robust research data to support the assumptions made about the way the VCS works in terms of pathways into paid employment in the sector. In a competitive resource environment it may be that this shortage of hard data to accredit the role of the sector could lead to its contribution being significantly undervalued. Robust information is therefore required to inform
the promotion of the sector as a positive career choice by the UK Workforce Hub. Key strategies to address these concerns would be:

- Quantitative research into the level of movement from volunteering into paid employment, and from the public and private sectors into the VCS.
- The collection of longitudinal data on where employees in the sector come from and where they go to based on monitoring the HR records of large charities in the VCS.
- The assessment of the expertise/skills requirements of jobs in the sector in conjunction with intermediary bodies (such as temping agencies, head-hunters).
- Qualitative research into the contribution of transferable skills gained from volunteer work in accessing paid employment in the sector.
- Qualitative research into how gateways into/out of the sector operate in practice by charting individual career pathways.

7. **CONCLUSION**

The assumption that voluntary action is a pathway into employment in the voluntary and community sector is supported by the evidence, even though studies are partial in their focus and lack statistical data. For those already in employment the evidence supports the significance of career moves from the public and private sectors into the VCS. Such moves are driven by the perceived values embedded in the sector along with organisational factors such as the design of services and scope for innovation. The attraction of graduates and career changers to the VCS requires structured career schemes backed by HR recruitment policies. And finally to support the aim of the UK Workforce Hub to promote the sector as a positive career choice there is a need for further information, quantitative and qualitative, on career moves into and within the sector.
APPENDIX 1: THE EVIDENCE

Evidence on voluntary action as a pathway into paid employment
The evidence is based on a number of key studies, nineteen of which are summarised in Appendix One. Of these only three provide statistical data on where volunteers get jobs. However they do support the claim that volunteering can play an important role as an entry point to jobs in the VCS.

The first study ‘Getting into work’ is a follow-up survey of 249 job seekers in Camden and Bedford. Of 15 former volunteers who got jobs 13 did so with the organisation, or sister organisation, where they had been volunteers. [Gay, P. ref.1]

A second study 'Women refugees’ found that of a sample of 19 women who had successfully moved from volunteer work into employment in London, 58% were now working in the VCS. Furthermore 63% were still currently active in voluntary work even after gaining employment. [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2]

The largest study ‘Links between volunteering and employability’ is a survey in 1999/2000 of 1,911 job seekers. This study did not look specifically at the sectors where people got jobs. However it did look at the relevance of volunteering to success in moving into employment. 40% of the sample had volunteering experience. And 88% of those currently unemployed but looking for work believed that their volunteering experience would help them. However those in work chose to play down their volunteer work as the reason for getting jobs. Furthermore volunteers took longer to (re)-enter employment than non-volunteers, which might have been for positive reasons “as people wait to find their ‘ideal’ job”. [Hirst, A. ref.3]

Four further studies of volunteering as a pathway provide qualitative data derived from case studies:

‘Challenging barriers to employment’ looks at how refugees use volunteering as a way to get work – “volunteering provides networking opportunities, references and understanding of the employment system.” [Archer et al ref.4]

‘Volunteering for employment skills’ looks at how guidance support delivered by Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service helped people who were interested in using volunteering as a route into paid work. [Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]

‘Doing one’s duty’ and ‘Juggling unpaid and paid activity’ are seminar papers based on ESRC funded research into VCS organisations employing volunteers in the East Midlands which provide employment support. [Hardill and Baines ref.6]

‘Labours of love’ looks at how a community in Tyneside affected by mass unemployment used volunteer work to get jobs. [MacDonald, R. ref.7]

Finally three studies link volunteering to paid work within specific voluntary sector settings – student volunteering, social care counselling, and charity retailing.

‘Student community action’ looks at the origins of student social action organisations and the creation of temporary employment opportunities for students and for the groups they established. [Barr, A. ref.8]

‘Voluntary sector counselling’ looks at the employment situation of counsellors in the voluntary sector in Scotland, and the financial pressures on them. [Bondi, L. ref.9]
‘The charity shop volunteer’ looks at the pressures on the charitable sector to adopt commercial work practices, and to attract young people interested in career opportunities in the VCS. [Horne and Broadbridge ref.10]

Clutterbuck in ‘The charity as a business’ [Clutterbuck and Dearlove] provides case studies from the mid ‘90s of employer supported volunteering programmes aimed at attracting volunteers into VCS organisations. For example Age Concern England branches kept personnel records of volunteers and encouraged them to apply for internal jobs. Feed the Children employed staff who joined initially as specialist volunteers. And Greenpeace employed volunteers who agreed to work on basic administrative tasks for a minimum of three days per week for three months, before being eligible to apply for temporary jobs advertised internally. These types of programmes continue to be promoted [Volunteering England. Employer Supported Volunteering].

Evidence that volunteers want to work in the sector
Most of the evidence focuses on what motivates volunteers but does not look at whether this also motivates them to seek jobs in the VCS. The study ‘Getting into work’ [Gay, P. ref.1] provides a typology - Career Builders and Job Hopefuls. They are distinct in terms of their motivation for accumulating experience and skills through volunteering. Ferrari’s Chicago based study ‘Young and older caregivers at homeless animal and human shelters’ [Ferrari, JR] distinguishes between ‘personal-orientated’ and ‘other-orientated’ motivation. Not surprisingly younger volunteers are more likely to express personal skill enhancement. However like older volunteers they also express satisfaction at fulfilling “civic or social responsibilities”.

The following studies provide case studies of volunteers who are seeking work and who demonstrate ‘other-orientated’ motivation: “humanitarianism” [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2]; “doing one’s duty” [Hardill and Baines ref.6]; “labour of love” [MacDonald and Coffield ref.7]; “committed to the cause” [Watson, D. ref.15]; and “giving something back” [Cook and Jackson ref.16]. Other studies demonstrate ‘personal-orientated’ motivation: “fitting into society” [Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]; and “safer working conditions” [Archer et al ref.4]. There is however considerable overlap between pursuit of personal career and of social goals.

Life experiences influence why volunteers chose to work in the sector. The VCS can provide a safe place to work. The study ‘Challenging barriers to employment’ [Archer et al ref.4] found that for refugees and asylum seekers working in their own community (in the VCS) “was ‘safer than working in mainstream society.” Another study featured in an article by Cornell in 2003 ‘My name is Antoinetta’ [Cornell, D.] describes the origins of the UNITY cooperative in New York. Members were mostly immigrant women, and for them a workers’ cooperative provided an alternative to dangerous and exploitative wages in the private sector.

The study ‘Doing one’s duty’ [Hardill and Baines ref.6] found that the overriding motivation for volunteers seeking employment in the VCS is a search for belonging: “Work for them provides appreciation, recognition, some control, some self-expression, and often a real sense of security.” As most of the studies on volunteer motivation are based on deprived sections of the community it is not surprising that the value that work in the VCS provides to the individual is paramount to these client groups.
Evidence on what makes it easier for volunteers to get jobs in the sector

**The contract culture**
The study ‘Getting into work’ [Gay, P. ref. 1] found that “Volunteers are expected to deliver more and more complex services. By extension this may work in favour of volunteers who, being able to talk about these experiences could be expected to impress job interview panels and the depth of experience would be helpful in the paid work context.”

**The merging of volunteer and paid work**
A number of studies examine whether on-the-job experience makes it easier for volunteers to get jobs in the sector. The study ‘Labours of love’ [MacDonald and Coffield ref.7] describes paid work which may verge on being exploitative and which they referred to as ‘fiddly jobs’ - part-time or sessional jobs that volunteers did as an off-shoot of their volunteering. A study of trade unionists in the late 80’s is reviewed by Margaret Harris ‘Managers of Discontent’ [Watson, D ref.15]. She argues that merging volunteer and paid employment is a common feature of jobs in the VCS, and that Watson’s interview material paints a picture of chronic overwork (both volunteer and paid) because of conflicting organisational goals.

The study “The changing landscape of voluntary sector counselling” [Bondi, L. ref.9) talks about a ‘mixed economy’ within the voluntary sector. She cites an example of a VCS agency which requires their counsellors to deliver on a voluntary basis a number of hours unpaid in addition to their paid work. As the cost of funding training is passed onto the volunteer counsellor by their employing organisation, Bondi found that counsellors are increasingly turning to paid jobs in the sector. There is anecdotal evidence that this is also relevant to the sports sector where VCS sports clubs can no longer subsidise additional training requirements for volunteers being set for the industry.

**Combined employment support services**
The study ‘Women refugees’ [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2] identifies the important role that ‘gate openers’ play in supporting volunteers into jobs. Their effectiveness as gate openers depends on their understanding of the specific circumstances of their individual client group, as well as of the mainstream labour market. The study ‘Challenging barriers to employment for refugees and asylum seekers’ [Archer et al ref.4] identifies the added value of providing three month work placements with support given both to the worker and to the prospective employer.

**Attitudes of employers**
The evidence from several studies is that employers do not always give an appropriate value to volunteer experience. The study ‘Women refugees’ [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2] notes local knowledge and insight into specific experiences of clients are not usually prioritised for jobs within the ‘mainstream’ or generic voluntary sector. Another study by Ashley ‘Community groups as employers research’ [Ashley and Rauter], which looks at reactions to employing volunteers by prospective VCS in rural parts of Wales, found that “where possible voluntary organisations aimed to recruit staff with sufficient skills and experience to start work with very limited preparation time…Volunteers were not commonly seen as potential employees by the organisations for whom they volunteered”.

Employers also have contradictory views when it comes to returned volunteers. A study by Cook ‘A route to professional development’ [Cook and Jackson ref.16] looks at managers’ attitudes to returned VSO volunteers. Although 88% of employers
claimed that they would employ a manager recently returned from volunteering abroad, when questioned further they mentioned possible drawbacks such as “being out of touch; and losing certain technical skills, which was referred to as ‘skills fade’”. This was particularly the case with the public and private sectors, but may or may not also apply to the VCS.

Evidence on what makes it more difficult for volunteers to get jobs

The sustainability and ‘ghettoisation’ of jobs
The studies that refer to this are those exploring the experiences of volunteers from refugee or deprived communities [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2; Archer et al ref.4; MacDonald, R. ref.7]. Archer quotes one volunteer: “The side effect is you are trapped in your own community and you don’t improve at all”. This also applies to local voluntary and community sector jobs. There is a felt lack of clarity regarding what are the relevant qualifications [NCDN ref.17].

The active discouragement by support agencies
Several studies report problems for job seekers balancing benefit requirements with gaining work experience through volunteering. Pat Gay in 1998 and Corden and Sainsbury more recently in 2006 [Gay, P. ref.1; Corden and Sainsbury ref.5] note concerns volunteers have about taking on volunteer work as a way of gaining experience for job applications based on comments made by JobCentre Plus / Employment Services staff.

A study which looks at the barriers to employment faced by homeless young people ‘No home, No job’ by Off the Streets and into Work (OSW) [Singh, P.] finds similar problems with having to attend the formal training required in order to be eligible for benefits. Volunteering in comparison was seen as a more valuable opportunity to gain relevant work experience.

The lack of promotion of job opportunities by volunteer agencies
One study suggests that jobs may not be adequately advertised among job seekers temporarily employed as volunteers. Hirst in ‘Links between volunteering and employability’ [Hirst, A. ref.3] finds that of a sample of over 700 “fewer than 30% of volunteers reported that they had heard about employment and/or training opportunities during their volunteering activity.” As Gay notes [Gay, P. ref.1] moving volunteers into employment poses a dilemma for volunteer coordinators: “The prime concern of voluntary services managers remained making the best use of the volunteer and hopefully keeping them for some time… the better the unemployed volunteer, the quicker the turnover.”

Unaccredited and generic training offered
A study of VCS workers and volunteers in local regional and national organisations ‘Northumberland Voluntary and Community Sector’ [NCDN ref.17] finds lack of clarity in the VCS about specific qualification requirements: “The progression routes are not straightforward and the sector appears to need some form of system to recognise peoples’ prior learning and experience in order to give it a more formal value or to enable people to consolidate different courses into a recognised qualification.” This is supported by Corden’s study which finds that accredited training is felt to be critical to getting paid employment [Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]. But in the experience of Erel training histories are more influenced by which courses are free [Erel and Tomlinson ref.2].
Evidence of other pathways into paid employment in the sector

Employment and training placements
Three studies which deal with VCS employment and training programmes are: ‘Getting into work’, ‘Women refugees’ and ‘Volunteering for employment skills’ [Gay, P. ref.1; Erel and Tomlinson ref.2; Corden and Sainsbury ref.5]. A further study [Gregory et al] reports on a small scale training programme in Wales for Black and Minority Ethnic women delivered by Cardiff University. 13 were enrolled, 9 completed the course including accreditation at first year undergraduate level, and 4 got jobs in the VCS. Being part of a peer support group was felt to be critical to moving into mainstream employment.

Other studies focus on the delivery of New Deal. Bambra et al’s study ‘Does welfare-to-work work?’ [Bambra et al] exposes flaws in the evaluation of government funded employability programmes. She and her colleagues undertook a systematic review of the evidence of UK policy initiatives, none of which gave details on programmes delivered by the voluntary sector. Richard Dorsett’s study ‘The New Deal for Young People’ [Dorsett, R.] compares programmes in terms of unemployment exit and job entry. He found that the Voluntary Sector Option out performed the environmental task-force option and also the full time education and training route, though the Gateway (intensive job search) was even more effective. An unofficial estimate of the success rate of the voluntary section option in Scotland has been in the region of 20% moving into employment in the voluntary sector [SCVO, Evaluation of New Deal (unpublished)] The final study ‘Charities and the New Deal’ by Cartwright and Morris [Cartwright and Morris] assesses the cost of delivering the Voluntary Sector Option. They find it requires match funding from both the European Social Fund and the Single Regeneration Budget to meet the real costs of the programme. Cartwright suggests that the sector is subsidising these programmes out of its own funds and is taking on trainees which the private sector, aware of profit margins, would not consider.

Graduate programmes and career entry programmes
Several studies come from America about university graduate programmes tailored to the needs of the VCS. Jonathan Howland published in 1997 ‘The Health and Housing Fellows Programme’ [Howland et al] which was established by a Consortium of Universities in America in 1994 in conjunction with the Peace Corps with funding by AmeriCorps. There are no details on whether the programme attracted Peace Corps volunteers into VCS posts as against the stated objective of promoting careers in public health and housing.

A study from the UK by Stephen Fallows ‘Transition from student to employee’ [Fallows and Weller (2000)] evaluates the Luton Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme, which was developed between 1996 and 1998 along with a number of development projects funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), designed to overcome graduates’ lack of on-the-job experience. The VCS provided placements along with other Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Feedback from graduates was that “from hindsight they could have done more to develop their employability skills, through taking up voluntary work” than taking part in this programme. Following the review by the government in 2003 of funding for promotion of graduate apprenticeship programmes, questions were raised about its added value, and how far the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) would be able to support further development of such apprenticeships. Public funding was withdrawn. The study ‘Something to Believe In’ [Nickson, D. ref. 12] examines why graduates fail to
see the VCS as a career option, and comes to the conclusion that it is important to develop tailored graduate programmes.

In contrast to initiatives by the academic sector, the VCS in delivering training and placement programmes appear to have been more effective in promoting the VCS as a career destination. Working For A Charity delivers training courses which offer information and advice to new graduates, career changers, and returners to work, on how to transfer their skills effectively into the sector and the challenges and management issues they will face. In May 2000 it carried out an evaluation of its programmes over the previous ten years. They found that 48% of former trainees were currently working in paid VCS jobs, and a further 25% were currently volunteering in the sector. Including those who had previously been employed in the sector, but were not currently doing so, 59% had at some time had paid work in the VCS.

Two studies look at career entry programmes, developed by the VCS, which link employment to qualifying academic training. ‘Examining the experience of Positive Action Training in Housing (PATH)’ [Julienne, L. ref.13] compares the experience of ex-PATH trainees and non-PATH black housing workers and placement providers. This positive action programme in the social housing sector (housing associations and local authorities) has been running in the UK since 1983. She found that 75% were still employed in the housing sector, but did not provide a breakdown on the proportion of these represented by workers in the VCS. At the time of the study the number of graduates entering the programme had increased to 45% suggesting this is an effective graduate route. The second study on the Scottish PATH programmes ‘The experience of black and minority ethnic housing staff’ [Bowes et al ref.14] looks at the experience of 30 BME workers of whom 13 had completed PATH traineeships. Most BME workers started in housing associations but at the time of the interviews only 20 were still employed by housing associations. However almost all were intending staying in the social housing sector and 23 had moved from another profession into housing.

**Career moves between sectors**
Clutterbuck commented in 1996 in ‘Charity as a Business’ [Clutterbuck and Dearlove] that “the political and social landscape of the latter part of the 1990s will involve much greater overlap between the three sectors, making it easier for individual careers to span private, public and voluntary organisations.”

Statistics derived from the Labour Force Survey indicate considerable growth in VCS jobs. Much of the evidence on career moves which were identified by this review however tend to be anecdotal as well as being dated, and provide only partial information. The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) as part of their funding agreements are required to assess the skill levels and training needs associated with their sector, and therefore potentially could be expected to provide evidence on movement between the sectors (within their own industries). However an initial trawl of websites of the 15 SSCs covering 70% workers in the VCS only provides one relevant study. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) commissioned a pilot study entitled ‘Career Pathways in Scottish Social Services’ [Wilson et al ref.11]. The sample is partial as there is only limited coverage of local authorities and levels of posts. However one finding of note is that one third of their sample reported plans to look for a move in the near future, with just under a half looking to work in the voluntary sector.

In the mid-90s the health and social trade journals ran a series of articles on the impact on the workforce of best value and the contracting out of public services
based on case studies of senior managers in the voluntary sector who had moved out of the public sector [Dobson, R. ‘Jobs to trust’ and ‘Fresh fields’ in Community Care; Eaton, L. ‘A breath of fresh air’, Health Service Journal; George, M. ‘Where the grass is greener’].

Related to this is a study from Europe by Bode based on the growth in Germany of jobs within specific sub-sectors of the VCS as a result of public policy and economic drivers [Bode, I.]. Bode identifies the impact of the market economy in Germany and what he describes as ‘disorganised welfare capitalism’. The parallel in the UK would be the growth of social enterprises.

The final study ‘Something to Believe In’ [Nickson, D. ref.12] looks at reasons for recruitment and retention problems in the VCS. This includes: a tight labour market, competition with other voluntary organisations, local authority and other sectors such as retail, expectations of what the job involves, the nature of care work, lack of qualified applicants for certain posts, uncompetitive pay, unattractive working patterns and delays in recruitment due to new legislative requirements. A way of tackling this is identified by Clutterbuck in ‘the charity as a business’ [Clutterbuck and Dearlove] namely temporary secondments which are a popular way for companies and public sector organisations to support the voluntary sector.

Evidence on what makes graduates want to work in the sector
Dennis Nickson’s report ‘Something to Believe In’ [Nickson, D. ref. 12] notes that graduates are looking to cut their teeth in their first job. He argues that “skills, such as research, strategic thinking, project management, fundraising and public relations, which are routinely developed by graduates in voluntary organisations, are highly desired by employers both within and outside the voluntary sector”. But based on interviews with undergraduates and career advisers in a Scottish university, he found lack of awareness that the sector offers such opportunities.

Evidence on what makes workers want to move from the public or private sectors into the VCS
Hardill argues that perhaps the idea of a career is an outmoded concept given that in the modern world “individuals build their own careers often involving a range of employers/occupations/experience” [Hardill and Baines ref.6]. The articles on career moves by senior managers and front-line staff from the public into the VCS (noted above) identify a range of reasons why staff move from the public sector into the VCS.

Firstly, career development and working conditions: “Career structures are good if not better than in local authority mental health services; training in the voluntary sector is good with most of the leading organisations offering in-house staff development and training programmes; and salaries are better than they used to be” [Dobson, R.].

Secondly, benefits in terms of how jobs are organised, for example the VCS can straddle the boundary problems that health and social services face: “There are big advantages to be found working in such a specialised organisation compared to a multi-functional social services department with competing demands on time and resources” [Dobson, R.]. Similar comments were made by health workers: “More people working in health care are moving into the voluntary sector, where they are given more autonomy than in the NHS.” [Eaton, L.]
Thirdly, job satisfaction in terms of felt social value: “People feel they are having more of an impact because projects are smaller and they can make a difference where they are working.” [Dobson, R.] And there is perceived freedom to experiment: “With the NHS no longer the secure environment that it once was, more people are choosing to move to voluntary organisations which give them a chance to try out ideas that would never see the light of day amidst NHS bureaucracy” [Eaton, L].

Certain types of organisations are attractive to particularly types of workers. Trade unions attract workers who share particular social values, in a similar way as faith-based organisations. Watson describes how trade unions demand a high level of commitment from their employees: “They have considerable self-investment in their work and are expected to have a deep commitment to the ‘cause’ and demonstrate this by working in the selfless and altruistic style more usually associated with voluntary participation in associations” [Watson, D (1988) ref.15]. Another example is the credit union movement, which is steeped in cooperative values, and attracts both volunteers and workers from all sectors. The study ‘Irish Credit Unions [McKillop et al (2003) ref.18] examines the reasons for the domination of credit unions in providing both full-time and part-time jobs to women, and why it has been a force for emancipation in Ireland. And social enterprises attract a particular type of individual. The study ‘Working from the Heart [Plater-Zyberk H ref.19] looks at what motivates twelve social entrepreneurs, some from the private sector. These are: “strong influence of socially-minded individual during youth; spiritual identity; experience as an outsider; pivotal life moment(s); entrepreneurial approach to challenges; pro-risk ‘opportunist’ tendencies; self-determination goals; vocal conscience and desire to be a ‘change activist’; part of a strong support network.”

Evidence of what makes workers in the VCS want to move back into the public or private sectors
The VCS may be attractive because of opportunities for developing specific expertise. But what also may be happening is that senior posts in the VCS may become indistinguishable from posts in the public and private sectors. This may result in disillusionment: “Although we are still doing new things and creating initiatives, most of which would not be possible in local authorities, we are being pushed more and more towards the local authority style emphasis on finance, costs of services and eligibility criteria” [George, M.]. Dennis Nickson’s aptly named study ‘Something to Believe In’ (see ref 12) notes that loyalty to the VCS is influenced by expectations: “Employees who stay the shortest in the organisation were those with unrealistic expectations of working in the care sector or people who were inflexible and unable to cope with the demands of the sector”.

An article by Julian Batsleer in 1995 entitled ‘Management and organisation’ [Batsleer, J. in Smith et al] suggests that highly mobile and experienced senior managers could be poached by the public and private sectors: Clutterbuck in 1996 in ‘Charity as a Business’ [Clutterbuck and Dearlove] supports this argument. Employers in the private sector have influenced career pathways into the VCS. “The voluntary sector is now established as a sector for high-flying professionals.” But this could change when the economic recession comes to an end. We would then see a move back of these ‘high-flyers’ from the VCS to the private sector.

Batsleer further suggests that there may be differences in the motivation of different groups of staff. He suggests that back-office workers are sometimes held at arms length from the rest of the organisation, and not infrequently treated with a mixture of suspicion and disdain. And therefore specialist staff such as, journalists, librarians,
sales staff, researchers, fundraisers, secretaries, print and design staff, trainers, and lawyers may be particularly liable to move out of the VCS. These occupational groups may be loyal to their ‘career system’ (i.e. profession) rather than to the VCS as such, and will pursue career moves readily between sectors: “all construct their careers, allegiances standards of practice and formal and informal working relationships around what is appropriate in their respective constituencies and areas of operation.”
APPENDIX 2: SYNTHESIS OF KEY REPORTS

Index

1 Pat Gay (1998) Getting into work
2 Umut Erel and Frances Tomlinson (2005) Women refugees
3 Andy Hirst (2001) Links between volunteering and employability
5 Anne Corden and Roy Sainsbury (2006) Volunteering for employment skills
6 Irene Hardill and Susan Baines (2005) Doing one’s duty
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15 D. Watson (1988) Managers of discontent: trade union officers and industrial relations
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17 NCDN (2005) Northumberland voluntary and community sector
19 Helena Plater-Zyberk (2005) Working from the heart
Ref. 1  | Getting into work: The role of volunteering in improving employability
---|---
Author(s)  | Pat Gay
Date  | November 1998
Methodology  | Comparative study following-up previous research in 1983 by the Policy Studies Institute’s (PSI) of registered job seekers in five areas of Scotland and England, ‘Voluntary Work and Unemployment’. Fieldwork carried out in Camden and Bedford in 1997/98 – postal survey of 249 job seekers; follow-up postal survey of 30 active volunteers; 21 interviews with current and ex-volunteers, 15 of whom were in paid work; interviews with voluntary services managers from 17 voluntary sector organisations in the two localities.

| Statistical findings | Of 15 former volunteers who had got jobs 13 had got jobs with the organisation or sister organisation where they had been volunteers.

Findings from qualitative research | Motivation combined with the right kind of support helps volunteers get jobs in the sector:
“There is no question that voluntary work enhances employability for certain people and in certain circumstances. These circumstances have been identified as personal factors, decision making and stage in the lifecycle on the one hand, and the existence of opportunities in the voluntary sector on the other. The coming together of these circumstances creates a critical mass which results in unemployed people improving their job choices.”

Feedback on why applicants are successful is rarely given or requested:
“There is no direct evidence that employers were impressed by the volunteering background of the applicants, but given that the majority had been successful in getting the jobs that came up in the organisation they had volunteered in suggests they were.”

A typology of volunteers in the VCS:
Career Builders – “The majority of this group had taken up voluntary work with the intention of improving their job prospects and had been largely successful in moving into the work of their choice. One had taken a job in the same office where she had originally volunteered and four had gone to different branches of their respective organisations. Three had been successful in getting the kind of work they wanted in unrelated organisations.”

Job Hopefuls – “They had all moved into work in their own organisations and one was expecting to do so shortly. Their record of moving into paid work was also impressive although they had been thinking of maybe getting a job rather than embarking on or making a change of career. Typically, they had enjoyed the work as a volunteer, become competent in a particular area and were well placed to get paid positions when they became vacant or new ones were created.”

Work done by volunteers is often identical to that of paid staff:
“A spin off has been to create the atmosphere and conditions where volunteers are expected to deliver more and more complex services. By extension this may work in favour of volunteers who are seeking to improve their prospects for paid work - being able to talk about these experiences could be expected to impress job interview panels and the depth of experience would be helpful in the paid work context. What emerges is that all or any of this work would be directly transferable to a paid work setting and confirms the view taken by the career builders that the work they would undertake was relevant to their future and the job hopefuls would see that progress was possible or even likely.”

There may be opportunities for shadowing and mentoring, though this may also be a potential source of exploitation.
“The essence of the on-the-job experience was that volunteers could
Looking the part and experience of the organisational culture:

“An ex-volunteer, now in paid work wrote, ‘Voluntary work helps you to appear employable, by the way you dress and your busy behaviour, you have additional workplace-type experience, you can be widening your skills and you can choose something you think is worthwhile. For me: it strengthened my CV in a necessary area to get short listing in a new field: kept me alert to latest fashionable expressions and current issues in the area of work: gave me insights into workings of small charities’.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ref. 2</th>
<th>Women refugees - from volunteers to employees: a research project on paid and unpaid work in the voluntary sector and volunteering as a pathway into employment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Umut Erel, Frances Tomlinson, Working Lives Research Institute; and Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, London Metropolitan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>February 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Research undertaken for the London Development Agency with funding from the European Social Fund. Informal interviews and focus group with 35 refugee women about their previous occupations, and experiences in the UK of volunteering and paid work – mostly in the voluntary sector but also in the public and private sectors; 6 organisational case studies of refugee community organisations, refugee and mainstream agencies; Interviews with 11 key informants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistical findings</td>
<td>Of a sample of 19 refugee women who had successfully moved into employment, 58% had done so in the VCS. 63% were still currently active in their voluntary work even after gaining employment</td>
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| Findings from qualitative research | **Motivational factors:**

“While volunteering can provide a pathway into employment, most of our interview partners also saw volunteering as social commitment…one interviewee saw her volunteering as a form of ‘humanitarian’ work…Therefore it is important to recognise that social commitment and trying to improve their own employment prospects can often go hand in hand as a motivation to volunteer.”

**The role of ‘gate openers’:**

“These could be friends, advice and guidance providers, and often were volunteer co-ordinators. These gate openers were all the more effective if they had a good understanding of the specific circumstances of refugee women and their individual client, as well as of the mainstream labour market and thus could enable refugee women to make full use of all available opportunities”.

**Local knowledge can be under valued by mainstream recruiters:**

“Knowledge of refugee communities, of community languages and insight into the refugee experience are identifiable as advantages held by refugee applicants when applying for jobs within refugee organisations and refugee projects. However these attributes are not usually prioritised for jobs within the ‘mainstream’ or generic voluntary sector”.

**Generic training may not suit all applicants:**

“This often leads to a training history that is more influenced by which courses are available for free at the time than by the individual career progression and training needs of the women, so that training is not always used in a way as to help into employment.”
### Ref.3 | Links between volunteering and employability
---|---
**Author(s)** | Andy Hirst, Cambridge Policy Consultants
**Date** | October 2001
**Methodology** | 32,700 records were sampled from the Employment Service Evaluation Database (ESED) for July 1999/June 2000. Telephone interviews were undertaken with 1,708 and a further 203 people completed a postal survey. Comparison was made in July 2000 of the employment status of survey respondents, and further data collated based on JUVOS variables which have allowed investigation of labour market pathways over time.
**Statistical findings** | Of the 1,911 people who responded, 783 had had volunteering experience. Nearly three quarters volunteered for just one organisation, and in most cases this was for organisations outside of the public sector (20% volunteered for public sector organisations). Although nearly 70% were unemployed when they first began their volunteering activity, 54% were in employment at the time of the survey (9% in education or training and just over a third were still unemployed). 88% of those currently unemployed but looking for work believed that their volunteering experience would help them. In comparison 41% who were now employed believed that their volunteering experience had helped them to get their current job.
**Findings from qualitative research** | The study of job seeker volunteers found a high level of ongoing philanthropic motivation: "Choice of career is guided as much by non-financial aspects as financial. On moving into employment, a third had continued with their volunteering activity as before, with a further one in six continuing in a reduced capacity."
Job seekers with volunteer experience may be more selective in choice of jobs: "There is no discernible difference in employment outcomes overall between those who have and those who have not volunteered. Moreover, volunteers take longer to (re-)enter employment than non-volunteers. This may be because volunteering is obstructing a return to work in some way, for example by limiting time for job search. However, there is some evidence from our survey that this delay is for positive reasons as people wait to find their 'ideal' job."

### Ref.4 | Challenging barriers to employment for refugees and asylum seekers in London
---|---
**Author(s)** | Louise Archer, Sumi Hollingworth, Uvanney Maylor (IPSE, London Metropolitan University); Azar Sheibani, Ute Kowarzik (RAGU, College of London)
**Date** | September 2005
**Methodology** | Semi-structured interviews with 22 refugees and asylum-seekers, who had lived for at least two years in the UK and either held a work permit or had applied for one; recruited from client list of refugee organisations; semi-structure interviews with mangers and HR staff in 10 employing organisations (3 voluntary sector, 2 private, 3 public sector, 2 recruitment agencies); interviews with 10 managers and advisers from 7 organisations providing employment and training advice to refugees.
**Statistical findings** | Of the 11 men and 11 women 16 had degrees and 1 a masters degree. 8 (36%) were employed, 2 women and 6 men; and 14 (64%) unemployed.
**Findings from qualitative research** | The motivation of ‘being safe’ is very strong among refugees and asylum seekers: "This form of employment was ‘safer’ than working in mainstream society, particularly in terms of enjoying greater respect and protecting refugees from wider racism/s and disparagement about their abilities."
Tailored support:
“The provision of tailored job search support (for specific professions) seemed to be beneficial for refugees seeking employment in these sectors. Partnership working (between refugee/ community agencies and wider organisations) also emerged as a highly practical, useful and valuable way for supporting refugees into employment, particularly where these partnerships spanned sectors (e.g. health, housing, employment) and were conducted within a spirit of collaboration (as opposed, for example to consultation.”

Mentoring support and work placements:
“The success of these schemes may depend on the provision of sufficient levels of support to both refugees and employers, and an appropriate level of commitment and resourcing from employers (e.g. in terms of the time and support provided to places). It was suggested that longer placements (over 3 months) may be particularly beneficial.”

Jobs may be limited because of what is referred to as ‘ghettoisation’:
“The issue is in this environment you are safe, no problem, everybody has respect for you. But the side effect is you are trapped in your own community and you don’t improve at all. You are in the same place that you were about two years ago, ten years ago, and you are the same person and you haven’t any improvement”.

Ref.5 Volunteering for employment skills – A qualitative research study
Author(s) Anne Corden and Roy Sainsbury, SPRU, The University of York
Date 2006
Methodology Review of Volunteering for Employment Skills (V4ES) - a programme managed by Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service, with funding from the European Social Fund which offers advice and support to people who are interested in volunteering as a way towards paid work. Face to face interviews with a sample of 13 job seekers from Nottingham (8 women, 5 men), 7 of whom had done some volunteering or training arranged through V4ES during the past year; follow up interviews with 11 to discuss the report findings.

Statistical findings Qualitative study
Findings from qualitative research Lack of accreditation of work experience as a volunteer was felt to be detrimental in getting paid employment:
“When such (voluntary) jobs ended and the people concerned focused on getting paid work, they regretted very much that they had no formal certification from the volunteering, to demonstrate their capacities. In retrospect, they wondered if they should have stayed so long in the voluntary.”

Ref.6 Doing one’s duty: A case study of volunteering in a deprived community.
Juggling unpaid and paid activity: time, capacity and voluntary action
Author(s) Irene Hardill, Nottingham Trent University; Susan Baines, University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
Date 2005 (Previous study 2004)
Methodology This is based on two seminar reports on an ESRC funded project in a deprived community in the East Midlands -based on case studies of five organisations that employ volunteers. The first involved the collection of life-history data based on semi-structured interviews with 19 volunteers (6 employed), 8 local workers (5 of whom were existing volunteers and 3 former-volunteers) and 13 local stakeholders. The second study is a case study of one organisation involving in-depth interviews with 9 volunteers
(5 employed, 2 on benefits, and 2 full-time carers); and other observational data.

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<th>Statistical findings</th>
<th>Qualitative study</th>
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<td>Findings from qualitative research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career as a concept:</td>
<td>“The idea of the ‘career’ has been subject to reassessment. Indeed some writers argue that the career – implying a sustained narrative over a lifetime - is a traditional concept’ that makes little sense in the present day world of work...Individuals build their own careers often involving a range of employers/occupations/experience...Why people work and what they expect from work, and how much commitment they are prepared to put into work, varies from person to person, as indeed is what a person understands ‘work’ to be… There is evidence that in many contexts volunteering is becoming more work-like with increasingly formalised structures involving, for example, selection, appraisal and training.”</td>
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<td>Professionalisation makes it easier for volunteers to get jobs in the VCS:</td>
<td>“There is evidence that in many contexts volunteering is becoming more work-like with increasingly formalised structures involving, for example, selection, appraisal and training.”</td>
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<td>Other-orientated motivation feeds into personal-orientated motivation whether in work or ‘beyond’ the labour market:</td>
<td>“The emphasis on the role of volunteering in terms of job readiness overlooks those individuals ‘beyond’ the labour market (age, disability or care commitments). Volunteering can be a substitute for paid work contributing to personal identify, ‘giving time’ to the community as active citizenship, living the ethic of care.” (For those in work) “with an increased perception that work is riskier and more uncertain than ever, some individuals are searching for a place of belonging. Some have located that place in work. Work for them provides appreciation, recognition, some control, some self-expression, and often a real sense of security.”</td>
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Ref.7 Labours of love: voluntary working in a depressed local economy

Author(s) Robert MacDonald, School of Human Studies, University of Teeside; Frank Coffield, University of Durham

Date January 1996

Methodology Fifty-two interviews with professionals involved in local employment and welfare issues in Tyneside. Ethnographic interviews with a core sample of 214 men and women recruited through local volunteer bureaux and a snow-balling methodology; the majority were over 40 years old; none were in formal employment but all were involved in some form of non-standard work.; 56 had extensive experience of voluntary work; predominantly, working class. Supplemented by interviews with Prince of Wales sponsored pilot (Volunteers) and people who had left Employment Training (ET) to undertake voluntary work through Community Opportunities, sponsored by the local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

Statistical findings Qualitative study

Findings from qualitative research Range of motivations - for some it was paths into employment: “Voluntary work was a strategy for finding ‘real’, paid employment away from heavy industry. ‘So it’s work experience and it’s good for a reference. You’re giving something and getting something back.’…‘but age-ism denied (many of the older women) the opportunity of new employment ‘I need something to occupy my time. I just wish it was a paid job. I would take a paid job tomorrow if I could get it’.” Mixing paid and volunteer work: Some of the fiddly jobs were an off-shoot of the volunteering, purely on
the level of it’s who you know, not what you know. If you’re doing voluntary work somebody might say ‘oh you do a bit of van driving would you come and do this? This can be another bonus, although the money you get paid is usually very, little’. A young volunteer care assistant had also occasionally been paid for some of her work. Again this payment was pitiful reward for her voluntary labour. With Income Support her weekly income amounted to less than £70 per week for this voluntary/fiddly job. For this she worked over 40 hours per week in irregular and unsociable shifts and had to carry out dirty and unpleasant tasks.”

Ref.8  Student community action
Author(s) Alan Barr, published by National Council of Social Service
Date 1972
Methodology Case Study – Participant research case study of Birmingham University Campus community action (RAG) weeks (1968/1969); conference debates within NUS and National Working Party on Student Social Action (1968-1970); and student community action work initiated over this period throughout the UK
Statistical findings Qualitative study
Findings from qualitative research Creation of small scale routes into employment in the VCS: Create some posts in support of student volunteering at an institution or regional / national level e.g. Cardiff, Manchester. Biggest impact may have been creation of community-based projects.

Ref.9  The changing landscape of voluntary sector counselling in Scotland
Author(s) Liz Bondi, The University of Edinburgh
Date 2005
Methodology Postal survey of voluntary sector counselling services in Scotland in 2001, and follow-up interviews with approx.100 people service managers and counsellors from two urban and two rural areas.
Statistical findings Qualitative study
Findings from qualitative research The mixed economy and financial drivers on volunteers to limit themselves to paid work: “A “mixed economy” is now in evidence within the voluntary sector: in 2001, two-fifths of voluntary sector counselling services in Scotland reported that all counselling was delivered by volunteers, a quarter reported that all counselling work was paid, and one third reported that the counselling was delivered by a mixture of paid and unpaid counsellors”. Paying for training: “Traditionally, voluntary sector organisations have provided counselling training free of charge to people they recruit, who are expected to give their time as volunteers in return. This kind of arrangement has come under enormous pressure and has partially broken down. As counselling training courses began to develop in the education sector, some voluntary sector organisations sponsored their volunteers to train. However, the dominant trend has been for an increasing proportion of the costs of training…to be passed on to the trainees themselves. The capacity of the voluntary sector to cover the costs of training has come under increasing pressure as minimum standards of training have risen, and, not surprisingly, the more that trainees have paid for their own training, the more they have sought payment for their counselling work”.

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### Ref.10  The charity shop volunteer in Scotland: greatest asset or biggest headache

**Author(s)** Suzanne Horne, Adelina Broadbridge, University of Stirling  
**Date** August 1994  
**Methodology** Postal survey of 58 charity retail shops in Scotland – 810 volunteer respondents, of which only 14 male.  

**Statistical findings** 48% of volunteers had experienced some personal association with the charity cause. A further 28% chose the charity primarily because they believed it to be a worth cause, 8% in response to an appeal, 6% because lonely at home had time to spare of lived nearby.  

**Findings from qualitative research**

**Changes in demand for volunteers:**  
“(Volunteers) were most likely to have a particular association with the nature of the charity concerned. Persons under 45 and students have less personal experience with the concerns of the charity than older volunteers…The charity retail sector as a result of changes in technology seek a different age profile for their workforce which is more suited to achieving commercial goals. They are clearly not attracting young unemployed people who could use their voluntary experience to learn and develop new skills which in turn might help in gaining paid retail employment.”

### Ref.11  Career pathways in Scottish social services. A pilot study

**Author(s)** Mike Wilson, Moira Walker, Kirsten Stalker, University of Stirling  
**Date** June 2003  
**Methodology** 2 local authorities and one umbrella voluntary organisation completed personnel information on 612 social care staff; an extended self completion questionnaire was completed by 65 social workers and a questionnaire by 6 staff who had left the agency within the last year.  

**Statistical findings** 31 worked in the voluntary sector and most had started working in the public sector. 34% reported plans to look for other work in the near future, half expecting to say in local authority social work, under half looking to work in the voluntary sector, and the rest wanting to move out of social work. In particular Children and Family staff were more likely to want to leave 40% compared to 14% in community care.  

**Findings from qualitative research**

**Profile of sample of 31 voluntary sector social workers:**  
“Overall the voluntary sector workforce was a relatively stable group, average time in previous posts being just over three years. Most has started out working in local authority settings and had moved over to the voluntary sector.”

### Ref.12  Something to believe in

**Author(s)** Dennis Nickson, University of Strathclyde  
**Date** 2005  
**Methodology** Part One - seven case studies of member organisations of the Scottish Voluntary Sector HR Network. 137 interviews with HR Directors, employees and managers on the topic of recruitment and retention of VCS workforce in the social work, housing and health care sector. Part Two - explores supply issues and focuses on the misconceptions of employment in the voluntary sector amongst graduates.  

**Statistical findings** More than 75% of managers in the study had problems recruiting care workers and filling other specialist posts.  

**Findings from qualitative research**

**Supply issues - perception among undergraduates and career advisers of the VCS as a place to work in:**  
“There is no doubt that skills, such as research, strategic thinking, project management, fundraising and public relations, which are routinely developed by graduates in voluntary organisations, are highly desired by
Pathways into employment in the voluntary and community sector - An evidence review

Employers both within and outside the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector is also a meritocracy and graduates can aim to cut their teeth in their first job before seeking upward mobility based on the experience they have gained. The lack of awareness amongst many graduates of the opportunities in the sector means it needs to market itself better to graduates. Organisations need to be proactive in establishing links with careers services in the universities

**Reasons for recruitment problems:**
A tight labour market, competition with other voluntary organisations, local authority and other sectors such as retail, expectations of what the job involves, the nature of care work, lack of qualified applicants for certain posts, uncompetitive pay, unattractive working patterns and delays in recruitment due to new legislative requirements.

**Expectations are critical to those motivated to stay in the VCS:**
"Employees who stay the shortest in the organisation were those with unrealistic expectations of working in the care sector or people who were inflexible and unable to cope with the demands of the sector. Conversely people who stayed the longest tended to have the right personality and experience, and were willing to invest time and effort to ensure that service users have a positive experience."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.13</th>
<th>Examining the experience of Positive Action Training in Housing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Louise Julienne, L8J Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>March 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Five focus groups, discussions with placement provider representatives, 184 questionnaires and in-depth interviews with 32 ex-PATH Trainees and 31 non-PATH black housing workers in ‘social housing’ – housing associations or local authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical findings</td>
<td>Most PATH trainees had been either out of the labour market altogether or in low status. Nearly 70 per cent had not been in paid employment jobs before taking on their traineeship. Respondents were asked how their career progression had matched their expectations. More than 62 per cent indicated that they had reached a level equal to (46 per cent) or higher than (16 per cent) they would have anticipated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from qualitative research

**Added value of PATH programme:**
"The comparison of ex-PATH trainees and non-PATH interviewees revealed a broadly similar pattern between the two groups. Unsurprisingly, the former were more likely to identify positive action as a major supporting influence; the fact that they were more likely to refer to networking and key individuals as significant bridges also reflected the benefits of the scheme. Ex-PATH trainees had a readymade network with other ex-trainees, and the matching of trainees with ‘mentors’ is at the root of the PATH schemes’ modus operandi. Non-PATH trainees, on the other hand, were more likely to cite their experience of voluntary work as an important bridging factor to developing their career. Other important factors identified by both groups were personal characteristics, family support (particularly evident amongst male interviewees), and passion/satisfaction for the job."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.14</th>
<th>The experience of black and minority ethnic housing staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Alison Bowes, Sherry Macintosh, Duncan Sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>December 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Face to face and telephone interviews with 30 BME housing workers in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical findings</td>
<td>20 were employed by housing associations but now there was an equal split between local authority and housing association posts. 23 had moved from another profession into housing. 13 had been on the 3 year PATH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Findings from qualitative research | Most started within housing associations but moved into local authority posts. Traineeships were a particularly important route into housing for BME people. Almost all had decided to stay in housing and satisfaction levels were high. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. 15</th>
<th>Managers of Discontent: trade union officers and industrial relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>D. Watson, quoted by Margaret Harris in article entitled 'Working in the UK voluntary sector' published in 1990 in the Journal Work, Employment and Society  pp 133-134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Twenty-eight semi-structured interviews with trade union officers and industrial relations managers in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical findings</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings from qualitative research</td>
<td>Commentary by Harris: “The findings and analysis reveal that many of the theoretical and practical problems which arise in trade union work — problems which appear to interviewees to be distinctive to the industrial relations setting — are ones which have also emerged from studies in other parts of the voluntary sector…Many trade union officials have come up through the voluntary participation ladder. Some retain their union membership. Also many have been elected rather than appointed to their paid positions and this has major implications for their accountability and sense of job security…Not surprisingly, Watson’s interview material gives a picture of chronic overwork among trade union officials and unclear role boundaries. These are also seen to be a consequence of multiple and conflicting organisational goals; a phenomenon noted in other parts of the voluntary sector”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Ref. 16</th>
<th>A route to professional development: views from VSO volunteers and managers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Petra Cook, Nicky Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>A stratified sample of 5,000 individual Chartered Management Institute members to represent the employer sample, drawn across senior managers and across all sectors and sizes of organisation. 516 completed an online survey. A telephone survey with 100 returned VSO business and management volunteers, who had completed a two-year placement overseas. 20 follow-up qualitative telephone interviews split evenly between VSO returned volunteers and employers of potential or returned volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical findings</td>
<td>Qualitative study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings from qualitative research</td>
<td>Contradictory attitudes by employers: “Although 88 per cent of employers claimed that they would not be adverse to employing a manager who has recently returned from volunteering overseas, those questioned in more detail still mentioned possible drawbacks such as the difficulty of adapting to being back to the UK; being out of touch…Returned volunteers during the qualitative interviews mentioned that their experience on return to the UK also depended on the type of sector or job for which they were applying. Those returning or entering the international charity sector found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that their experience was viewed in a very positive light.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ref.17  
**Northumberland voluntary and community sector**  
**Author(s):** Northumberland Community Development Network, MET Ltd.  
**Date:** 2005  
**Methodology**  
Stage 1. Face to face or telephone interviews with 75 workers/volunteers VCS workers and volunteers in local regional and national organisations; In most cases interviewees had more than one “role” or paid job - some interviewees had employment outside of the VCS but volunteered within it. Stage 2, 40 follow-up interviews.  

**Statistical findings**  
44% did not require any particular qualification for their post and many cited that previous work experience was seen as a major factor in gaining employment within the VCS. Of the 56% that did require a specific level of qualification or specialist subject these included: degrees, social work diplomas, management skills certificates, sports coaching qualifications and basic youth work certificates.  

**Findings from qualitative research**  
**Accredited learning:**  
Both employees and volunteers in the voluntary community sector have a wide range of skills, levels of qualifications and experience, but often lack a comprehensive or clear qualification route or training for the skills that are required specifically in the sector. For many of the paid posts within the VCS there are no specific qualification requirements, although many different skills are needed. The progression routes are not straightforward and the sector appears to need some form of system to recognise peoples’ prior learning and experience in order to give it a more formal value or to enable people to consolidate different courses into a recognised qualification.”  

### Ref.18  
**Irish credit unions: exploring the gender mix**  
**Author(s):** D.G. McKillop (Queen’s University Belfast); R. Briscoe, O. McCarthy, M. Ward (University College Cork), and C. Ferguson (University of Brunei Darussalam)  
**Date:** September 2003  
**Methodology**  
Postal survey of 500 Irish credit unions - 195 useable returns; 39% response rate. Analysed by size of membership, and roles and gender of full-time and part time employees.  

**Statistical findings**  
Women dominate in terms of both full-time and part-time employment.  

**Findings from qualitative research**  
Women dominate in terms of both full-time and part-time employment:  
*When the credit union movement was formed in Ireland in the early sixties, it was a major boost to women and their advancement towards equality...The movement also gave some housewives the opportunity to show hidden abilities by working as volunteers and participating in business decision-making...women are more heavily represented than men in positions with a strong customer interface as the attributes needed for these positions match many of the 'labels' associated with females.”*  

### Ref.19  
**Working from the heart**  
**Author(s):** Helena Plater-Zyberk, Columbia Business School  
**Date:** Summer 2005  
**Methodology**  
Interview with 12 highly successful social entrepreneurs from across the UK  

**Statistical findings**  
Qualitative study  

**Findings from qualitative research**  
**The values that influence social entrepreneurs:**  
“…restlessness; strong influence of socially-minded individual during youth; spiritual identity; experience as an outsider; pivotal life moment(s);
entrepreneurial approach to challenges; pro-risk 'opportunist' tendencies; self-determination goals; vocal conscience and desire to be a 'change activist'; part of a strong support network.
APPENDIX 3: METHODOLOGY

The review involved a ‘rapid evidence assessment’ or REA. This is a research tool which increasingly is being applied to evidence-based policy. It is defined by Stuart Deaton as “a tool for getting on top of the available research evidence on a policy issue, as comprehensively as possible, within the constraints of a given timetable” [Deaton, S. http://www.gsr.gov.uk/new_research/archive/rae.asp]. It differs from systematic reviews only in terms of the degree to which the available literature (using electronic databases, print sources and the ‘grey’ literature) is comprehensively searched and sourced. “They should not be considered a definitive statement on what is known about a topic or issues. Rather they should be seen as the best provisional understanding of the evidence given the time and resources that have gone into them” [Deaton, S.]

The evidence review involved four stages – searching databases for potentially relevant material (using an evidence search strategy involving selection of key search terms); sourcing potentially relevant material based on information contained in abstracts; assessing the relevance of evidence against defined assessment criteria; and then assessing the selected evidence using the assessment pro-forma.

The scope of the review was pathways and access/exit points of volunteers and employees into and out of the VCS in the UK, North America, Europe and Australia. 186 reports dating from the 1990 onwards were sourced, using key search terms and abstracts, determining relevance, and then 22 studies which met the assessment criteria were reviewed. A further 24 studies and articles were sourced which did not meet the assessment criteria, but which provided relevant contextual information.

The following table summarises the parameters of the review.

| Review Questions | • Is voluntary action a pathway into paid employment in the sector?  
| Populations | • What other pathways are there into paid employment in the sector?  
| | • What are the factors that influence and shape individual pathways?  
| Population | • Employees in the voluntary sector by sub-sector / industry  
| | • Employees in other sectors – public/private  
| | • Volunteers in the voluntary sector by sub-sector / industry and by type  
| | • Volunteers in other sectors  
| Intervention: Individual Employment Pathways | • Of the individual volunteer  
| | • Of the individual employee  
| | • Initiated or promoted by the voluntary sector employer, groups of employers e.g. SSCs.  
| | • Initiated or promoted by government programmes e.g. lifelong learning, funded employment programmes.  
| Outcomes | Negotiated access to employment in the voluntary sector  
| Study dimensions | Studies from 1990 onwards (except where relevant evidence from earlier publications has not been superseded by more recent evidence)  
| | Studies from UK initially (extended to include Europe, Canada, USA and Australia)  


APPENDIX 4: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Studies reviewed in the Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)
Barr, A. (1972) Student community action, Plymouth, NCSS Publications.
Home, S. and Broadbridge, A. The charity shop volunteer in Scotland: greatest asset of biggest headache, Voluntas 5:2, 205-218
B. Other report references


Institute for Volunteering Research (2002) *UK-wide evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers Programme*, DIES.


Website references
The UK Workforce Hub: http://www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk/
Working For A Charity: http://www.workingforacharity.org.uk/

REA methodology