

**VOLUNTEER CENTRE MONITORING REPORT - 2006-2007.**

Report by Director for Sustainable Communities

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the progress being made by Volunteer Centre Western Isles in working towards their Development Plan for 2005/08.

COMPETENCE

- 1.1 There are no legal, financial or other constraints to the recommendation being implemented.

SUMMARY

2.1 The Volunteer Centre Western Isles is part of the National Volunteer Centre Network and they currently employ nine members of staff covering the whole of the Western Isles. In partnership with a range of local agencies including the Comhairle the Volunteer Centre Western Isles has produced a Development Plan for 2005 – 2008 designed to deliver the National Strategy for Volunteering in Scotland at a local level taking into account local needs. How they plan to deliver their services are laid out in a Workplan. Comhairle staff are represented on the Management Committee of the Volunteer Centre Western Isles.

2.2 The Centre works closely with the Comhairle's Department for Sustainable Communities to promote volunteering and to support volunteers. This complements the work of both Community Education and Community Support. In the last year the Volunteer Centre has produced a local "How to keep your volunteers" guide and introduced a Western Isles Award for Volunteering Excellence. The Youth Development Workers, who encourage volunteering with young people, and the development workers in Uist and Harris, work closely with the Comhairle's Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. In the last year 89 young people have achieved Millenium Volunteer Awards. The local Big Lottery Young People's Panel is now up and running.

2.3 Appendix 1 provides an evaluation of progress towards the outcomes identified in their Workplan for 2006/07. The Workplan for 2007/08 is available in the Members Lounge.

2.4 The Comhairle provide an annual grant of £22,000 to the Volunteer Centre Western Isles. This report provides a summary of progress towards meeting the outcomes of their Development Plan for 2005 – 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note the progress made and agree to the payment of grant of £22,000.00 for financial year 2007 – 2008.**

APPENDIX

Contact Officer

1. Volunteer Centre Western Isles Evaluation of Outcomes 2006/07.
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Background Papers:

1. Volunteer Centre Western Isles Workplan 2007/08 (Available in the Members Lounge).
2. Volunteer Centre Western Isles Annual Report 2006/07 (Available in the Members Lounge).

Evaluation – Did It Change, Was It Worth It, What Next?

The LEAP Framework focuses on the Evaluation of the Workplan as it has been the means of achieving the Outcomes. At the end of the Operational Year a process of engagement seeks to identify any evidence to indicate that change has come about. The range of Indicators of Achievement allow for judgements to be made about the Impacts of what was done as a result of carrying out the Action Plan. It also allows for an assessment of the relative merits of specific actions in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and equity.

Outcomes		Indicators of Achievement		Evidence of Achievement or Impact
1	Young people are enthused by, and involved in volunteering.	1A	20 talks/workshops given to young people at schools/colleges/ youth groups	21 talks/workshops held
		1A	Develop photo library of young people volunteering	Begun, photos collected Currently collection holds over 30 photos of young people involved in a variety of opportunities.
		1B	Work with Community Education to help deliver Duke of Edinburgh Awards.	Weekly school visits in partnership with Com. Ed. in Harris (10 Bronze, 4 silver achieved and 3 still working towards Gold) and support given as required in Uist.
		1C	70 young people have signed up for the MV Awards, and 20 have achieved their 50-hour award.	47 young people have achieved their 50hr, 11 their 100hr and 31 their 200hr certificates. 92 new participants signed up this year.
		1E	Promote and develop Big Lottery Young Peoples panels throughout the Western Isles	Panel up and running. Have encountered problems with travel arrangements and getting young people together for meetings and training from across the island chain particularly where ferry journey require overnight stays. (Religious observance of Sundays has also proved a problem).

2	Barriers to volunteering are being dismantled and the opportunity gap is closing.	2C	200 volunteers recruited and matched	268
		2D	50 articles on volunteering featured in local media	56 articles published
		2E	Promotional material created to target immigrant workers	Research underway, funding sourced. Attended immigrant workers working group meeting to discuss local research, make contacts and inform plans.
		2G	Work with Local sports council to encourage sporting organisations to register with VC.	Contact made, meetings held. Training provided to sports clubs through sports council. Jan 07 – Brief meeting with Tony Wade to discuss training and promotion of VC to Sports Clubs. He will email short information paper to all clubs. (Nov 06) Sports council invited to join VSG and participate in Vol week activities for 2007. Provisional plans to hold joint recognition ceremony for volunteers to include sports volunteer of the year.
3	Volunteers are welcomed and valued and are given guidance, training and support by those organisations that engage them.	3A	Local 'How to keep your volunteers' guide produced.	Guide produced and launch held 2/3/07
		3B	VCWI good practice award for organisations developed and implemented.	Paper work devised and award launched 2/3/07
		3C	Groups registered with Volunteer Centre are contacted by the VC during the year.	23 health check meetings held. 250 organisations contacted by telephone, email or newsletter.
		3E	Volunteer support group established in all office localities.	Established and working to promote Vol week and MADD in Ness and Stornoway. Less formal support given in other offices to promote events.

4	Through understanding the volunteering landscape the value and impact of volunteering can be measured, and then maximised by influencing policy development.	4A	Volunteer Centre works to national Standards Framework.	All staff aware of standards and work with them. Review planned for early next financial year.
		4B	Work in partnership with CVS's	Joint working with local CVS's on 7 local events. Shared resources with HVS.
		4D	Work of the VCWI is monitored and evaluated through monthly reports	Monthly reports produced by all staff, reviewed and collated by Stornoway office.
		4E	Methods of gathering feedback are identified and trailed.	Workshops, health checks, evaluation sheets and questionnaires used to gather feedback on volunteering issues.

	Outcomes		Indicators of Achievement	Evidence of Achievement or Impact
5	The volunteer Centre develops its staff, directors and volunteers to ensure continuous improvement, growth and development by applying the VC standards.	5A	Staff receive induction and are supported, supervised and appraised.	All staff and committee members appropriately supported through induction, supervision, training and appraisals.
5D		Information is successfully shared between all offices in the WI	Continued use of local 'e' bulletin as a way of disseminating information to all staff. More telephone conferences and less face to face team meetings were held this year, due to additional get togethers for training purposes and time constraints of travel between the islands.	
5F		Funding sourced for development worker in Stornoway office.	Additional income generated by new projects and pieces of work taken on by the VC this year. Draft applications created for sourcing new member of staff and proposals drawn up for use of this years extra income for the creation of a post for next year. Still looking for funding to continue post for more than one year. Final decision to be made early next year by committee.	

Evaluation (continued)

The final considerations for the Workplan are to identify any unexpected Outcomes or Impacts, both positive and negative, which resulted from the actions carried out by the Volunteer Centre. It is also to produce a statement on the progress towards achieving the Vision. The Evaluation will provide a starting point for a re-assessment of a new Local Picture, for highlighting new changes that need to happen, and for re-drafting the Vision for the next Operational Year.

[Bullet-point list of unexpected/other Outcomes or Impacts]

- Youth work has been very successful. Response to MV take up has been better than anticipated. Identified a need for under 16's award which has subsequently been developed. Also identified need to target NEET group. Development of promotional materials underway and partnership with Careers Scotland investigated for future work in encouraging youth volunteering. MV now established in Uist and Stornoway and YDW's have begun to promote in more in outlying areas.
- BLF Young Peoples panels have been set up and training achieved for some of those interested. Difficulties have been experienced when trying to get young people together for meetings and training. Issues over ferry times, free time outside of school, Sunday observance and unaccompanied minors travelling long distances the group of young people in Uist have been more involved than the other islands as a result. Young people enthusiastic about the panels and are enjoying being involved. Some disillusion over award by BLF of substantial grant after it was not supported by the panel.

- Keep Your Volunteers Guide was launched and was very well attended. Lots of interest in the support available from the VC and an increase in requests for support are expected.
- Western Isles Award for Volunteering Excellence (WAVE) developed and launched at event in March as a simple tool for developing good practice in VIO's. Good level of interest so far. Promotion to continue.
- Difficulties have been experienced with maintaining attendance of agencies at volunteer support group meetings. Agency representatives are all very busy. Looking into involving more of the new community development officers to fill the gaps. Rural offices have been less successful in implementing VSG's and have tended to take the lead on Vol Week and MADD celebrations themselves involving individual agency representatives on specific tasks rather than in planning stages.
- Better than expected response to RSVP knitting project for MADD.
- Leader+ funding has enabled the creation of a temporary support worker in the Stornoway office to assist with the implementation of VBay throughout the islands. This has been invaluable. Vbay still not up and running in Uist and Barra. Interest in Vbay from local VIO's has been good and has already generated additional work for the VC. Creation of a permanent development worker post in the Stornoway office is now a necessity.
- The profile of the VC has been raised throughout the Western Isles and one of the areas we are receiving more requests than usual is for training. Requests have been received for tailored short courses for their staff and volunteers.
- Much potential for development with Job Centre Plus. Contacts made and discussions held regarding how we can support each other generally and with specific reference to "Paths to Work" scheme.
- Work in sport is developing. Some areas with more success than others. Need more promotion to local sports clubs and groups of VC services.
- Attendance at migrant workers working group has informed planning for targeting volunteer promotion, contacts have been made and information gathered confirmed benefits of volunteering to local groups of migrant workers. Also highlighted barriers to participation.
- Health-check meetings with individual groups continued to be valuable method of gathering feedback, however finding time to do them was nearly impossible.
- Extra management duties for co-ordinators have impacted on achievement of other tasks of lesser urgency.
- Publicity has clearly helped with raising our profile this is reflected in the higher numbers of enquiries from groups and individuals. A larger number of volunteers were recruited than anticipated.
- A review of VC Health and safety practices by external agency highlighted a need to carry out risk assessments and a number of small issues have been raised by staff regarding VC practices. The need to review and develop the staff handbook has been identified as a means to clarify issues.

[Statement on the Volunteer Centre's progress towards achieving its Vision]

We have continued to make significant progress towards highlighting the benefits of volunteering with young people. The uptake of the MV has been better than anticipated and visits to schools have been welcomed and well received. More young people are aware of the Volunteer Centre Western Isles. Positive images of volunteering have been used to good effect with displays, events and good media coverage. Several new partnerships have been set up this year and others developed, notably in the areas of youth, sport, older volunteers and immigrant workers. We have done some good work with organisations to raise awareness of good practice through positive promotion, training for managers, general advice and support and the launch of our new publications and WAVE awards. Staff have received support and opportunity to liaise with each other at a range of meetings in order to keep up to date with issues. Stornoway staff have worked at improving circulation of information throughout the organisation.

[Bullet-point list of what now needs to change, (that will contribute to the VC's Local Picture analysis for the following year's Work plan)]

- Continue youth promotion focusing more on out lying areas and NEET group.
- Pilot under 16's award for Volunteering.
- Continue promotion of Guide Book as valuable resource and encourage uptake of WAVE organisation standards award to Organisations.
- Re-examine make up of VSG and how it works to support Volunteers' Week and MADD.
- Creation of a permanent development worker post in the Stornoway office is now a necessity to enable Health Check meetings to continue, meet increasing demand for support and information from organisations, development of Vbay and relieve pressure on Stornoway office staff as organisation expands.
- Continue to offer training to organisations/groups.
- Work with Job centre plus to support those on benefits into volunteering where appropriate as part of Paths to Work.
- Continue to promote VC services to local sports clubs and groups of VC services and develop the number of sporting opportunities on VBay.
- Promote volunteering to immigrant workers and work with organisations to overcome barriers to participation from immigrant workers.
- Review and develop the staff handbook to include new items such as risk assessments and give clarification on the working practices of the VC.
- Continue to develop senior volunteering and offer support to RSVP in developing their programmes in the islands.