

## **VALUE Network – Employability Sub-group**

Meeting in Jonkoping, SE  
5 November 2009 14.00-15.30

Present: Alison Hughes (University Liverpool, UK), Ruud Duvekot (InHolland University, NL), Matthew Hill (IVR, UK)

### **Update re Employability web page and resources on there**

It was agreed that the page contains useful indications of the work to date and some resources.

We plan to introduce a Case Studies section. The group will investigate some useful case studies to go in this section and the site would link to them. The webpage would include a couple of sentences that indicate why the group considers the CS is relevant to the network theme. It can also be linked into the overall website resources pages.

There isn't specific NL CS to date re HE level but at upper secondary level re this employability theme. RD working with sports organisation in NL currently re this.

We also agreed that the overarching theme for the subgroup related to a vision of volunteering and competences used and/or acquired from the perspectives of

- Volunteers- re their personal development
- employers – re employability
- universities. – re educational standards

A short sentence re this to go on website.

### **Overview of workshop on 6 November 2009**

Overarching theme is 'what do the various stakeholders want from the volunteer- ULLL interaction in terms of employability?' This will focus on the different motivations.

NL Case Study – RD to make short presentation. It relates to TU member (volunteer) who wanted to gain APEL for university study and some of the issues this raised.

We discussed the proposed questions and agreed that it would be good to approach the session from the perspectives of the different motivations of the different stakeholders.

So for question 1 MH will open with some observations about the motivations of volunteers themselves (important to start with the individual learner); RD will then talk a little about the motivation of employers and AJH will look at the university response to these perspectives.

The group discussed these motivations in some detail:

Employer perspective - Some experience in NL re why employers value validation of volunteering – employability. Also perceived to be a good employer through facilitating this. Also for recruitment; professionalization of the volunteer

Volunteer – better chances once moved on from being a volunteer into employment. For volunteers there is the added dimension HE can provide beyond just certification of skills.

HE – provision of career paths through diplomas / issue of non-certified volunteers

Question 2 opens up the wider context of state/ trade unions / local government and how they perceive this issue.

Question 3 to leave in reserve if there is time. NL case of bank bought by Scottish bank, which is encouraging employees to undertake vol. activity. Issue of how employer sponsored activities fit in with community activity/needs. Also is it actually of value if validation is used?

Major point- does the voluntary body/receiving organisation of the volunteering get the benefit of this?

### **Update on work to date by subgroup members**

Activities to date and issues identified:

- RD working on case study with sports association
- RD also developed the idea of a questionnaire to be used- as in speaking about valuing volunteering, and linking this with ULLL and employability we often simply lack a vision on this from the other stakeholders: authorities and social partners. We agreed to suggest to VALUE MG that we formulate a questionnaire for employers, trade unions and authorities in which we can find out what their demand articulation is for voluntary work, the valuing of competences needed for these voluntary functions and the way ULLL can validate and develop these competences. We will also suggest that at the next VALUE network meeting in BE in December 2010 we could ask partners to work on this with us to set up this questionnaire. Although it isn't an output of VALUE it would be very useful to gain the perspective from external stakeholders and would be a form of exploitation, and would possibly identify points for a future network ( VALUE Phase 2)
- MH been working on the perspective of employers supporting their employed staff to volunteer. How does this link to ULLL. Asked AJH to look at his findings to date – he to email them for her comments re UK HE perspective on this.
- AJH identified some issues arising from her research into managing of volunteers – the needs of managers and the current UK ULLL offer for this group of stakeholders. Once the review is completed, AJH will do a short summary doc for the webpage and circulate to the group.

Points of interest to date:

- Many of the UK HE accredited modules offered are for managers of volunteers, rather than volunteers themselves
- Many of these are very 'management school' type titles eg organisational identity; project management; managing change;
- Flexibility of approach eg Birkbeck offer variety of options –Cert Attendance / Cert Achievement / Full award
- Flexibility of modes of delivery eg Lampeter offer accumulation of credit / distance learning /intro to uni study
- Some volunteers report they do not receive the kinds of good practice promoted in volunteer management. Many volunteers report they do not receive training for their role. This identifies a need for ULLL for both managers and volunteers. ( See IVR Research Bulletin 'Managing for Success'

Questions identified:

- Is it an economic model of management? If so is this appropriate?
- Are funding bodies pushing towards professionalization of the sector
- IVR Research Bulletin 'Volunteering to Lead' identified the tension between balancing requirements for managerial training and the informality and flexibility of a host organisation valued by its volunteers

### **Year ahead for the subgroup**

- planned activities by individuals
  - RD to continue researching the issue of how the different stakeholders value the concept of ULLL for volunteers
  - AJH to continue looking at issues arising for managers of volunteers
  - MH also continuing on his theme.All to continue to identify relevant resources for the webpage
  
- Next subgroup meeting – 2010.  
Suggested dates for the meeting in NL were firstly 29-30 April and 2ndly 6-7 May.  
Group to liaise re availability and confirm soon.

### **Glossary**

AJH to put into one doc the various papers already collected and will circulate to group.  
Group will then finalise glossary and this can be put on the webpage. Terms to be covered: employability; employment; employer; VPL; APEL

Employer – by this do we mean:

- General employers employing people
- Those who host volunteers
- Those who actively support their employees to volunteer?

### **Suggestion re questionnaire**

Suggestion from RD re questionnaire was discussed.

It was agreed that this was a good idea to pursue. The group will (through AJH) contact the VALUE MG and suggest that this is included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> network meeting in Brussels in December 2010. It would also be a useful tool for leading into any Phase 2 of the Network as it would help identify issues for further development/research.