

Notes of Meeting

Present: Carol Stewart, Alison Hughes, (University of Liverpool, UK), Nick Ockenden (IVR, UK), Dr. Andrea Waxenegger (University of Graz, AT), Ksenija Fonovic (CSVnet, IT), Piotr Janowski (BPU, PL), Ruud Duvekot (InHolland, NL) Daniela Bosioc (CEV, BE), Ramona Dragomir (Pro Vobis, RO), Sabine Remdisch (Leuphana University, DE)

1. Administrative Update

The coordinator clarified various administrative issues:

i. Value Website

A PDF of the conference proceedings will be put on the website. The link will be circulated to partners. The Value pages will stay live but the University of Liverpool cannot commit to substantial updating after project end. It will try to update important things. CS to investigate longer term use of the domain name. It was suggested that the home page is changed to incorporate some kind of mini guide highlighting the important resources etc. We could also ask for feedback if Value material is used. It was agreed this would be very useful.

ii. Outputs

Copies of the conference proceedings (printed and CD) were distributed. A further supply will be sent to partners by post and single copies to all delegates and experts.

The summary of the national reports is being translated into the languages of the partnership and summaries of the sub-group reports into the languages of the sub-group members. These will all be on the website (accessible via the relevant pages and the flag links)

iii. Final Report/Finances

The final report will be submitted in February. There will be financial reconciliation early next year. It is possible that we will be under budget despite over-delivery. There is nothing we can do about this.

iv. Year 4

The period Oct – Dec 11 will be called Year 4. Timesheets for those attending this meeting will be required along with a travel report for London.

2. Reflections and Impact

NO invited partners to comment on how Value had impacted on their thinking - to what extent has the project made a difference?

University of Liverpool UK

The University of Liverpool is considering the development of a tailored module for volunteers.

CSVnet, IT

KF reported that before Value she had not considered universities as a possible partner in the work of the voluntary sector nor appreciated their potential as a resource. It is now clear that ULLL has a similar mission to eg volunteer centres - as a channel for promoting citizenship and community development. Value has built universities into the thinking of VOs eg inviting the President of EUCEN to a speak at a volunteering sector conference. The CEV Assembly (May 2012) will focus on cross sectoral activities and although ULLL is not specifically mentioned this will be reconsidered. How do we keep this cross-sectoral awareness alive?

University of Graz, AT/EUCEN

AW commented on the importance of sectoral as well as individual awareness eg the invitation to the university sector (EUCEN) to speak at a volunteering sector conference. (This is the 1st time that EUCN has formally been invited to another sector). Staff have individual contacts but need to think of representing their sector and considering institutional level agreements which embrace the wider resources that the sectors can offer each other eg for action research. The cross-sectoral approach can work at regional, national and European levels.

InHolland University, NL

RD supported the importance of the cross-sectoral approach both for providers/organisers of ULLL and for learners eg in the usage of personal/professional competences across occupational sectors. Both the volunteering and university sectors focus on the learner as citizen and both can work to develop individualised approaches which put the learner at the centre and which support the individual's use of, and involvement in, the system. (Dutch testing in Value made this clear). The shift to an individual orientation in LLL is underlined in *Education and Training 2020* agenda. Universities can give the volunteering sector the language to help formalise the learning that is already going on ie giving the learner the tools to make explicit their learning. This will better link the worlds of the individual with learning and volunteering/work.

IVR, UK

NO reported a much greater awareness of the potential for working with the university sector beyond research which had been IVRs previous connection. There is a clearer understanding of CE / ULLL activities and also of service learning which had been the focus of the IVR presentation in Amsterdam and which had led to huge interest in Value.

Leuphana University, DE

SR reported on 3 key outcomes for Leuphana:

- A better understanding of the variety of organisations across the voluntary sector - this had not been clear. She has been able to make more connections eg with soccer organisations and now understands just how big this sector is and is aware of the potential for collaboration eg in researching how to attract more volunteers with the right skills and aptitudes.
- Volunteering can be a method of learning eg for MBA students. They are now systematically looking for volunteering projects and building them into studies for students. They are liaising with the health sector and exploring a) ways of placing students in old peoples' homes and b) ways for the older people to learn/participate alongside students.
- The potential for the 2 sectors to work together on open questions such as APL, how to recognise volunteering in terms of a study programme, how to start up a qualification course for volunteers, how to build a competency profile for volunteers.

Pro Vobis, RO

RD reported that Value had introduced the idea of collaboration with HE. There has been a shift in the language used eg a push to encourage volunteering centres to realise that volunteering provides learning opportunities. Pro Vobis has reorganised its strategy and public sector organisations (including universities) are now a target sector – eg. as possible hosts for volunteer centres. It is widening the services to the organisation they work with eg. now representation on the implementation group for the Year of Active Ageing. Value has strengthened links with the RO national agency and RD will speak about Value at a national conference.

CEV

Value has opened up the idea of alternative ways of collaborating with universities – this need not be restricted to research. 3 potential areas have been identified i) APL/ the recognition of skills ii) Provision of training/LLL iii) QA. The CEV GA will take place at the same Eucen conference. As the theme in 2012 will be cross sectoral collaboration would it be possible to have 2 parallel sessions at each of the events ? – both sectors reflecting on how to work together? This may not be logistically be possible but it is important to keep the momentum going.

BPU

PJ reported an increase in volunteering in the library from 10 to 42. It is clear that Value has had an impact in helping to increase the numbers of volunteers.

3. Project Ideas

Each institution briefly presented their project ideas (see circulated paper) and/or key areas of interest and answered points of clarification.

InHolland University – “Competence Circulation”

RD reported that he had attended a Brussels information day on Erasmus

There are opportunities for projects focusing on social inclusion for under-represented groups and linking/transferring competences from different environments using EQF and Europass/Skills Passport.

There are also opportunities to explore the social dimension of HE – this could focus on volunteering which is a way of making people part of society; ULLL also has a role in this.

It is proposed that national consortia of universities and VOs are created (eg NOC*NSF, Scouting + InHolland) to work with 50 + groups. The lead partner in each country would be a university with a VO partner at national level if possible. It could also work with eg Scouting organisations in each country. Individual case studies would be the focus in a project. These would explore what has to be done to re-enter society via volunteering or LLL or both. eg the development of competences in communication or teaching - developed through volunteering. The format could also be applied to other groups eg migrants. The project would also involve benchmarking, researching and analysis to illustrate the approaches in the different countries (maximum – 4)

IVR

NO reported that IVR does not have a fully developed project proposal but would be interested in:

- volunteer management - what is good or what is bad? How does this relate to the quality of the volunteering experience
- what is the impact of volunteering? What is the legacy eg. longitudinal study tracking what volunteers go on to do?
- Older volunteers. There is a research gap in this area.

Volunteering England can also play a role.

CSVnet

KF reported that she is returning to SPES. She is interested to go on collaborating especially in work related to older volunteers and awareness raising. There is a particular interest in citizenship issues. What competences are developed through volunteering?

CSVnet (national federation) is also a potential partner and is interested in RPL, volunteer passport schemes, training for volunteers in specific sectors. Also: dissemination, policy making, practical research etc.

CSVnet can also help in finding a specific volunteering organisation at national or local level.

However, CSVnet cannot leading for some time because it is involved in a FP7 measurement project – there is interest in European academic institutions having a role in this.

During the YofAA they will be working with big employers to promote volunteering for 50+ and Universities could be an employer and get involved in this.

Leuphana University

SR reported that Leuphana cannot be a coordinator as it is unable to supply the co-financing. However she has 3 areas of interest:

- Competences – what intellectual factors/personal attributes are required for different fields of volunteering?
- What sort of ULLL training /mentoring could help develop these?

- RPL – this could be informal as opposed to formal recognition (in terms of personal development). The target groups for this are younger people and also older learners (but are they interested in qualifications?)

Pro-Vobis

Pro Vobis is willing to be a Project Coordinator and proposed 3 projects:

- International exchanges of older volunteers through the senior volunteering programme. Universities cannot be involved except perhaps as eg. research consultants
- Organising a Grundtvig Workshop to explore innovative LLL practices (this could focus on older learners). The budget for this is underused in RO.
- Development of a professional community/national network of volunteer coordinators to help professionalise the role and to make them aware of what is needed eg standards, competences. Universities could be involved in this to support CPD . This could be a Learning Partnership.

BPU

PJ reported that BPU is willing to be a coordinator of a project focusing on developing volunteers in libraries. Universities could have a role in supporting the learning of the volunteer. Project activities could include eg workshops, learning programmes. Case studies would also be a key output.

CEV

DP reported that CEV can add an EU dimension to a project and can be a link/catalyst and provide visibility. 3 areas interest are i) RPL, ii) QA and iii) senior volunteers.

University of Liverpool

AH reported that any new project would need to have a direct impact on practice at the UoL and she outlined the ideas in the circulated paper. A Grundtvig Multilateral project might support the development of a handbook – to enable the university and voluntary sectors to talk together more easily.

Eucen

AW reported that the organisation is restructuring. There is also a problem with co-financing.

University of Graz

Any project would need to have concrete outputs which supported new ULLL opportunities. Graz is not in a position to be a coordinator but could be a partner if the role was limited and well defined

4. Project Details

It was agreed that, in the final part of the meeting, priority should be given to project areas put forward by institutions which are willing to take a coordinating role (in the short-term). The institutions were: Pro Vobis, InHolland, BPU and the University of Liverpool.

Each project proposer elaborated further on their ideas which were then discussed by the wider group. Proposers agreed to circulate further details in the near future.

Arising key points not covered in project introductions were:

The Professionalisation of Volunteer Coordinators (Pro Vobis)

- The Learning Partnership would focus on the development of Occupational Standards for volunteer coordinators
- There would be a minimum of 4 countries

- Up to €25k is available but only for direct, not staff, costs.

Senior Volunteering (Pro Vobis)

- This will focus on elderly volunteers working in schools.
- There is possible potential for universities to prepare volunteers.

Grundtvig Workshop (Pro Vobis)

- Pro Vobis will apply for the money and, if successful, will circulate to the workshop participants
- It could focus on volunteer managers working with elderly volunteers. This fits into year of active ageing
- It will go into the EU catalogue of courses
- Information can also go onto CEV's online knowledge platform CEV which is open to the volunteering community. It has resources searchable by topic. DB will invite all to join.
- NO can send contact details of useful UK speakers

LLL and Volunteers in Libraries/Cultural Institutions (BPU)

- The project would cover the cultural/heritage sector not just libraries
- It would involve: i) a programme of workshops for volunteers and volunteer leaders ii) input from universities on how to develop volunteering in cultural organisations such as libraries.
- A University could evaluate the project – Leuphana has experience in this area.
- There is potential to explore different approaches across countries – some kind of comparative study.
- In PL libraries are classed as cultural, not educational institutions but they do perform an educational role. The project is an opportunity to reinvent the library concept and to develop its role as a LLL resource and a learning environment.
- PJ reported that BPU wants to work on this idea even without funding.

Competence Circulation (InHolland)

- The target groups would be older people and EU migrants.
- The project would explore ways in which to link professional, personal and occupational standards to motivations: empowerment, personal development, qualifications and employability
- The target groups would be used to illustrate and clarify the process through case studies
- The European Framework for Key LLL Competences could be central in the case studies.
- The case studies should incorporate learning stories – the key triggers in people's lives.
- It would be useful to choose partners representing 4 different models of volunteering eg Mediterranean/Anglo-Saxon

Value Added (University of Liverpool)

- 2 versions of the Handbook would be developed to support the different sectors. These might be quite different.
- In the voluntary sector – volunteer support centres would probably be the most useful target group. The grass roots organisations are not yet ready.
- The material would be piloted and evaluated – not necessarily at national level
- The project could incorporate: i) some kind of needs analysis that builds a competency profile ii) tools to support collaboration (some might be country specific) iii) support material for staff training

5. **Conclusion**

It was agreed that project proposers would circulate information and/or contact potential partners directly.