



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Volunteering Grants Programme

FINAL REPORT

August 2009

oldbell³

Research Policy Analysis
Ymchwil Polisi Dadansoddi

An Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Volunteering Grants Programme

Report by Old Bell 3 Ltd on behalf of the Department for Social
Justice and Local Government

Contact Details:

For queries relating to this research report please contact:
Siân Jones, telephone: 01685 729126
E-mail: SJ&LGRsearch&Informationunit@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Author

Old Bell 3 Ltd

Publisher

Welsh Assembly Government

Location

Merthyr Tydfil

© Crown Copyright 2009
ISBN: 978 0 7504 5361 5

CONTENT	PAGE
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2.0 INTRODUCTION	8
2.1 Background	8
2.2 Aim of the Evaluation	9
2.3 Method	9
2.4 Structure of this Report	10
3.0 BACKGROUND: THE VOLUNTEERING GRANTS PROGRAMME	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 Welsh Volunteering Policy	11
3.3 The Grant Programmes: History	14
3.4 The Grant Programmes: Budget	15
3.5 The Grant Programmes: Aims, Objectives and Implementation	16
4.0 FINDINGS	21
4.1 Introduction	21
4.1.1 <i>Overview of the Section</i>	21
4.1.2 <i>Profile of Surveyed Organisations</i>	21
4.2 Review of Outcomes Achieved by Funded Projects	24
4.2.1 <i>Strategic Fit of the Grant Programmes</i>	24
4.2.2 <i>Clarity of Grant Programmes' Objectives</i>	26
4.2.3 <i>Project Applications and Funding Offers</i>	28
4.2.4 <i>Project Aims and Objectives</i>	35
4.2.5 <i>Performance against Targets</i>	38
4.2.6 <i>Value of Intervention</i>	46
4.2.7 <i>Impact upon Funded Organisations</i>	49
4.2.8 <i>Impact upon Volunteers</i>	52
4.3 Suitability of the Current Funding Structure	54
4.3.1 <i>Promotion and Marketing</i>	54
4.3.2 <i>Branding</i>	57
4.3.3 <i>Grant Application Process</i>	57
4.3.4 <i>Quality of Applications</i>	62
4.3.5 <i>Effectiveness of Grants Panel</i>	63
4.3.6 <i>Grant Monitoring</i>	64
4.3.7 <i>Grants Programme Management</i>	67
4.4 Future Funding Structure	68
4.4.1 <i>Future Plans of Organisations</i>	68
4.4.2 <i>Views on Future Structure</i>	69
5.0 CONCLUSIONS	72

6.0	RECOMMENDATIONS	76
ANNEX 1	List of Consultees	80
ANNEX 2	Telephone Survey Questionnaire	81
ANNEX 3	Discussion Guide Used to Interview Grant Recipient Organisations	93
ANNEX 4	Discussion Guide Used to Interview Volunteers	98

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the findings of an evaluation of the Volunteering Grants Programme commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government and undertaken by Old Bell 3 Ltd.

The evaluation took place between May and August 2009 with the aim of assessing whether the three Volunteering Grants schemes administered by the WCVA on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government have, individually and as a whole, achieved their objectives and increased volunteering levels in Wales; and considering and making recommendations on the future structure of grant funding for volunteering in Wales.

The work involved reviewing key programme and project level documents and monitoring data, interviewing 50 grant recipient organisations by telephone, undertaking an in-depth follow on visit to twelve of these organisations to consult with key project staff and volunteers recruited with the help of the grants, as well as undertaking consultations with key stakeholders involved with the grants programme.

The Volunteering Grants Programme provides funding via three separate grant schemes to increase volunteering levels in Wales. The three grant programmes are:

- Millennium Volunteers (MV): a UK wide-programme with the overall aim of encouraging young people aged 16-24 years old to complete 200 hours of volunteering in a year;
- Volunteering in Wales Fund (VWF): a grant programme focused upon the recruitment and training of new volunteers from particular target groups, with funding for up to three years made available on a tapering basis;
- Wales: The Active Community (WAC): a grant programme to support and stimulate volunteering activity across four key themes – infrastructure, media and promotion, research and capacity building.

An annual grant of some £2 million is currently made available to the WCVA to administer these programmes and since April 2006 (when the WCVA was

appointed to manage the schemes) a total budget of £6.9 million has been allocated to this activity. Two of the grant programmes (VWF and MV) have been available for some considerable time and WAC was introduced in its current format in 2007. During the last financial year (2008/09) the three grant programmes collectively supported the recruitment of over 10,000 new volunteers, at a cost varying between £140 to £357 per individual volunteer across the three programmes.

The key findings of the evaluation are that:

- The three grant programmes generally support the strategic policy agenda for volunteering in Wales as set out in the Third Dimension and One Wales. Furthermore, they also fit well with the citizen engagement agenda apparent in a range of WAG policies. However there is a general lack of clarity about the broader objectives (for example, in terms of personal development of the volunteers and the delivery of services at low cost) of the Welsh Assembly Government in seeking to increase volunteering via its volunteering grants programme: this has meant it has been difficult to assess the effectiveness with which the grant programmes have achieved their objectives.
- The three grant programmes were initially established independently of each other, and whilst they appear to have met the needs of the sector over the last few years, it would now be timely to strive towards greater coherence, less duplication and a more relevant offering to the sector. By making appropriate changes the Welsh Assembly Government could secure greater flexibility and grant recipient organisations could secure greater funding security.
- Demand for one grant programme, VWF, has been significantly higher than for the other two with only a third of organisations submitting applications being successful, suggesting that the VWF grant could have benefited from a slightly greater share of funding.
- The grant programmes have led to substantial numbers of new volunteers being recruited that will go some way towards increased volunteering activity levels in Wales. Each grant programme reported generally good performance against their targets with a strong coverage of wide target groups and geographical areas, although

there are grounds for some concerns that penetration in the more populated areas, such as the South Wales Valleys, may have been less.

- Volunteers were in many cases equally driven by altruistic and personal development motivations and many volunteers were developing a wide range of skills and experiences that they could then take with them to future volunteering, study and employment opportunities.
- Some of the grant programmes were not as effective in attracting individuals with no previous experience of volunteering i.e. whilst volunteers recruited may have been a new volunteer to the project they were not genuinely new to volunteering. At the same time, increasing the volunteering contribution made by existing volunteers is a worthy target that may not have been given due consideration with the current grant programme objectives.
- The diversity of projects funded often made it difficult to develop any sort of meaningful aggregate targets or performance indicators. In moving forward, efforts to capture overall volunteer numbers and hours input which result from the programmes as a whole would increase the robustness of the data being reported.
- The overall feedback obtained from both stakeholders and grant recipient organisations suggested that the grant programmes were promoted effectively and the grant application and approval process managed efficiently by the WCVA. There is scope for some minor areas of improvement such as simplification of application forms, revisions to application timescales, reduction in administration burdens imposed upon grant recipient organisations and adopting a greater flexibility within monitoring visit arrangements.

Based on these findings, the report makes a series of eleven recommendations which focus on the need to:

- Continue the grant funding to support volunteering in Wales on at least the same level as over the last three years, but with the proportional split across the three programmes being reviewed and funding for VWF programme being proportionally increased;

- Continue to use the WCVA to manage volunteering grant schemes (insofar as procurement processes allow);
- Set common core performance indicators and targets for all volunteering grant programmes and projects;
- Provide greater clarity about the range of ultimate objectives the Welsh Assembly Government is seeking to reach through encouraging volunteering and its funding schemes;
- Continue to focus on encouraging young people to become engaged in volunteering and explore the possibility of incorporating the MV programme into GwriVol, at the same time re-naming and re-branding the MV award;
- Address the current MV application restrictions facing those unable to submit regular annual applications for this funding scheme;
- Adapt WAC and VWF grant programmes into three year rolling grant programmes with a supporting on-line application process'
- Develop a VWF three year application process and six-monthly reporting model as well as revising the current tapering model of funding;
- Consider the merits of further integration between the WAC and VWF grant programmes;
- Identify the reasons for low levels of applications from under-represented areas and develop a strategy to addresses the issues underlying these;
- Review regularly the particular demographic groups to be targeted in terms of support for volunteering.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Old Bell 3 Ltd. was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government in May 2009 to undertake an evaluation of its Volunteering Grants Programme.

The Volunteering Grants Programme is administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It provides funding via three grant programmes to increase volunteering levels in Wales. The three grant programmes are:

- Millennium Volunteers (MV): A UK wide-programme¹ (with the Welsh element coming under the Welsh Assembly Government's remit) with the overall aim of encouraging young people aged 16-24 years old to complete 200 hours of volunteering in a year. Certificates are awarded at 50 hours and 100 hours and an Award of Excellence is awarded for completing 200 hours.
- Volunteering in Wales Fund (VWF): A grant programme focused upon the recruitment and training of new volunteers from particular target groups namely people aged 60 and over, people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, disabled people, young people under 25 and unemployed people. Up to three years funding is available on a tapering basis, subject to satisfactory performance and an annual application process.
- Wales: The Active Community (WAC): A grant programme to support and stimulate volunteering activity across four key themes (namely Infrastructure, Media and Promotion, Research and Capacity Building). 27 pan-Wales projects are currently in receipt of grant funding to deliver projects over a three-year period (April 2007 – March 2010).

¹ Though in England the Programme has been superseded by the V Awards.

2.2 Aim of the Evaluation

The aim of the evaluation was to assess whether the three Volunteering Grants schemes administered by the WCVA on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government have, individually and as a whole, achieved their objectives and increased volunteering levels in Wales; and to consider and make recommendations on the future structure of grant funding for volunteering in Wales.

More specifically, the evaluation was intended (as outlined in the brief):

- *“To establish whether the grant funds are being used effectively to meet the objectives of each scheme and the overarching objectives of “The Third Dimension”;*
- *To reach firm conclusions on whether the current allocation of funds to each of the three volunteering schemes is appropriate and the best way to achieve the overall objective of increasing volunteering across Wales”.*

It is worth noting that the evaluation was not required to examine the Russell Commission Youth Volunteering Grants or GwirVol funding programme.

2.3 Method

This report is based on a work programme undertaken between May and July 2009 which involved:

- Undertaking a review of programme and project level monitoring data to develop a picture of overall achievements and performance across all three programmes;
- Undertaking 50 telephone interviews with grant recipient organisations across the three grant programmes based on a questionnaire (Annex 2);
- Undertaking follow on visits to 12 grant recipient organisations to interview key staff and a small number of beneficiary volunteers within each of these organisations (based on discussion guides in Annexes 3 and 4);
- Undertaking consultations with key stakeholders (including WCVA and Welsh Assembly Government staff) who have been involved with the grant programmes (see Annex 1).

2.4 Structure of this Report

In the remainder of this report, we firstly consider the background to each of the Volunteering Grants Programme schemes (**Section 3**) before outlining our findings which are structured specifically to meet the requirements set out in the evaluation brief (**Section 4**). We then outline our conclusions (**Section 5**) and set out our Recommendations (**Section 6**).

3.0 BACKGROUND: THE VOLUNTEERING GRANTS PROGRAMME

3.1 Introduction

In this Section, we explain the context in which the evaluation has taken place. We first (in Section 3.2) examine the policy framework in respect of volunteering in Wales before considering in turn the history (Section 3.3), budget (Section 3.4) and aims, objectives and implementation arrangements (Section 3.5) for the three Grants Programmes.

3.2 Welsh Volunteering Policy

The Welsh Assembly Government has clearly stated its commitment to supporting the contribution of the voluntary sector in Wales and working with the sector to increase the scale of the contribution made by volunteers. There is a broad political consensus in supporting volunteering in Wales and this commitment is demonstrated within *“The Third Dimension - A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme”* (January 2008) as well as in overarching policy frameworks such as *“One Wales”* – the latter highlighting, in particular, the Welsh Assembly Government’s intention to:

“investigate ways in which volunteering by young people can be better recognised and rewarded”².

The **Third Dimension** builds upon the principles set out in the statutory Voluntary Sector Scheme, established on the creation of the National Assembly for Wales as a result of the 1998 Government of Wales Act which placed a statutory duty upon the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the interests of voluntary organisations in the exercise of all its functions. The Third Dimension sets out the *“Assembly Government’s vision, strategy and programme of action which will underpin its support for the sector”³.*

The document acknowledges that the third sector has grown significantly in scale and diversity in recent years and states that there are at least 30,000 third sector organisations now in operation in Wales. Of these it is believed that some 26,000 have a primarily local focus and rely entirely on volunteers. According to the action plan, there are more than 1.5 million volunteers in

² Page 24 <http://wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/publications/one-wales/?lang=en>

³ Page 9

Wales contributing as many hours as 90,000 full time workers annually. Of the 1.5 million volunteers, some 250,000 act as trustees for third sector organisations. However the Third Dimension recognises the difficulties in defining what is meant by the term volunteering and as a result admits that *“estimates of the percentage of the population who volunteer either formally for an organisation or more informally to help a neighbour or friend vary considerably, indicating the need for better quality information at a Wales level”*⁴.

In moving forward, the Third Dimension identifies some of the key volunteering-related issues facing the sector as:

- the scope to increase the contribution made by existing volunteers in Wales. Current volunteering levels appear to be fairly healthy with the WCVA⁵ estimating that about 77% of adults volunteer either formally or informally (47% doing it formally and 69% informally). The action plan argues that as over half of those who volunteer do so for five hours or less a month there is *“great scope to increase this contribution with better promotion and support”*;
- the need to encourage, support and train volunteers to act as trustees of third sector organisations with a particular focus on making management committees more representative of the communities they serve.

The Third Dimension action plan outlines a three dimensional approach to supporting the third sector in Wales, the first of which focuses upon volunteering activity itself:

- *“to support the further growth and development of the sector’s capacity to strengthen communities of place and interest;*
- *to harness the knowledge and expertise of the sector to help design better public policies and services; and*
- *to encourage and help the sector to contribute to the personalisation and greater accessibility of quality, citizen-centred public services”.*

⁴ Page 12

⁵ Citizenship survey 2005

It goes on to state that the first of these objectives will be met in the following way:

“Chapter 5 of the Voluntary Sector Scheme sets out our objectives to:

- o raise the status and enhance the image of volunteering;*
- o broaden what is meant by volunteering to include all types of participation that enhance the quality of community life and neighbourliness;*
- o improve access to volunteering for people from all parts of society;*
- o make it easier for people to make a voluntary contribution;*
- o encourage the more effective involvement of volunteers;*
- o improve the organisation and infrastructure of volunteering.”⁶*

It also recognises that these objectives are already being tackled via grant funding programmes such as the Volunteering in Wales Fund, Millennium Volunteers and Wales: the Active Community. However given the importance attached to volunteering it is not surprising that the three grant programmes which are the focus of this evaluation are only one part of a wider range of initiatives to promote volunteering:

“We intend to work with the WCVA, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), the Volunteer Centres and public, private and third sector organisations to:

- o raise the status of volunteering in the eyes of the public so that it is more widely valued and appreciated;*
- o design and run a sustained media campaign to enhance the scale, quality, diversity and impact of volunteering in communities of interest and place;*
- o achieve a step change in the commitment of public, private and third sector bodies to increase the number of volunteers and the quality of volunteering experiences;*
- o remove any barriers to formal and informal volunteering; and*
- o continue to strengthen the infrastructure of support for volunteering”⁷.*

In its detailed Action Plan for 2007/8 to 2009/10 the Third Dimension states an overall objective *“to increase the numbers of volunteers and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities and experience”*. This objective

⁶ Page 21

implicitly suggests the two key goals of encouraging volunteering – firstly, to help with the provision of support and services to the wider community (based on an altruistic contribution from volunteers as a means to an end) and secondly to provide the opportunity for personal development and fulfilment for the volunteers themselves. However, this dual “mission” of volunteering is not spelt out particularly clearly.

The Action Plan also does not suggest any quantitative targets for the objective of increasing the quality of opportunities and experiences obtained by volunteers. Indeed it sets few quantitative targets at all in respect of volunteering - apart from the aim of increasing the volunteer hours contributed per person by 5% each year. This target, however, needs to be put in the context discussed above - the lack of clarity about volunteering baselines in Wales (both the precise number of individuals volunteering in Wales and the hours they contribute) as well as the evidence pointing towards volunteering numbers already representing a significant proportion of the population. It needs to be recognised - particularly if the higher end estimates are accurate - that increasing the absolute number of volunteers is likely to be a challenge.

3.3 The Grant Programmes: History

Two of the grant programmes covered by this evaluation have been available for a considerable length of time – with VWF being the longest established and MV being introduced in 1999. WAC is the relatively newest of the three grant programmes having only been introduced in its current format in 2007 (although quite closely modelled on predecessor three-yearly schemes).

It was not clear from either the background documentation or the consultations undertaken how the need for each grant programme was identified. This may be partly explained by the fact that two of the grant programmes have been in existence for some ten years and the fact that two (MV and WAC) originated with UK wide initiatives. Some stakeholders suggested that the MV grant programme was developed in response to the economic downturn at the end of the 1990s (a characteristic which was believed to be returning to relevance in the current economic climate).

The WCVA has been responsible for the grant administration of the VWF and MV for some years but was only appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government to administer the WAC fund in 2007. According to stakeholders the decision to contract the grant management responsibility to the WCVA enabled the Welsh Assembly Government to focus on strategic policy with regard to volunteering rather than provision. It was also thought that the sector would better respond to the WCVA as a grant administrator.

3.4 The Grant Programmes: Budget

Annual grants are awarded by the Welsh Assembly Government to the WCVA via grant offer letters to administer the three programmes with payment of grants made under Section 70 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 for the following amounts (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1: Grant Programme Funding 2006-2010

	AC	VWF	MV
April 2006 – March 2007	n/a	£594,649	£315,000
April 2007 – March 2008	£1,000,000	£612,489	£324,450
April 2008 – March 2009	£1,025,000	£627,801	£332,561
April 2009 – March 2010	£1,050,625	£643,496	£340,876
Total	£3,075,625	£2,478,435	£1,312,887

The grants made available for each programme have increased on an annual basis by some 2.5% to 3% in line with inflation.

All grants are paid in equal quarterly instalments to the WCVA but during 2009/10 the payment pattern for MV was changed. It was agreed that half of the grant (£170,438) would be paid at the beginning of the year to enable funds to be distributed to the local co-ordinating partners⁸ at the beginning of the financial year with the remaining grant to be paid in equal instalments in July and October 2009.

⁸ Annual grants are made available to 22 Local Co-ordination Partnerships (LCPs) to promote the MV award to both potential volunteers and organisations within their local authority area.

Formerly the VWF was allocated a larger budget which was used to finance the Volunteer Bureaux/Centres. However following the adoption of the Partnership Agreement between the WVCA and the Welsh Assembly Government core funding for these providers was made available via the Infrastructure fund.

In the case of MV and WAC, administration budgets are explicitly included within the programme budgets. VWF, in contrast, is delivered from within the core funding received by WCVA under the Partnership Agreement.

3.5 The Grant Programmes: Aims, Objectives and Implementation

Wales: the Active Community (WAC)

The Active Community is a UK wide initiative aimed at rebuilding “a sense of community throughout the UK by encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement”⁹.

The current WAC three year grant programme, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, was made available from April 2007 to organisations wishing to develop projects that raised the profile of and stimulated more volunteering and community involvement. It was promoted as a funding stream for project-based work on an all-Wales basis and specifically excluded locally based projects. It is the largest of the three grant programmes. Although linked to its UK counterpart it has not had any active involvement with funding processes outside of Wales.

WAC application guidance material pointed to four key objectives for the fund and stated that at least one of these had to be met by applicants:

- *improving the infrastructure;*
- *capacity building;*
- *media and promotion; and*
- *research*¹⁰.

These objectives were very broad and general in their nature and whilst this gives applicants significant flexibility in their interpretation, there appears to

⁹ Wales: the Active Community Guidelines and notes for applicants (WCVA)

¹⁰ Wales: the Active Community Guidelines and notes for applicants (WCVA)

be a lack of detail provided about these objectives (such as examples) to clarify their meaning. It is also not clear from the documentation made available how these objectives came about and how they were agreed upon at programme conception.

Applicants were also advised that funded projects should promote and maintain volunteering and community involvement from six key groups within the population:

- *rural*
- *youth*
- *ethnic minorities*
- *older people*
- *disabled people*
- *employees*

Again it is not clear from the documentation reviewed why these particular groups were selected as priority groups for the WAC grant programme. Whilst the Third Dimension points to the need to target groups that are least likely to volunteer, some of the groups identified by WAC do not necessarily fall into this category (older people being the main example¹¹).

Furthermore particular attention was expected of applicants to focus upon improving:

- *access to volunteering opportunities;*
- *co-ordinating the work of volunteers and volunteer agencies; and*
- *increasing the funding for volunteering and community involvement.*

Volunteering in Wales Fund (VWF)

The VWF was established to provide up to three years funding on a tapering basis to organisations wishing to recruit and support new volunteers. The aim of the discretionary grant scheme is to:

- *“Support projects whose aims are mainly achieved by the use of volunteers;*

¹¹ The Welsh Assembly Government's Living in Wales survey suggests older people and households of non-working age are generally equally or more likely to be engaged in voluntary service groups as the general population. See <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2009/090430liw08volunteeringen.xls?lang=en>

- *Support not for profit organisations whose primary purpose is the recruiting, training and placing of volunteers;*
- *Encourage good practice in volunteering; and*
- *Encourage projects in areas where volunteering is under-developed because of location or the type of volunteering activity”¹².*

In particular the VWF has had a focus on recruiting volunteers from specific target groups, namely those aged over 60s (later changed to over 50s), Black and Minority Ethnic people (BMEs), disabled people, those under 25 and the unemployed. It is not clear (apart from general equal opportunities concerns) why these specific groups were selected as priority groups for the VWF grant programme and why they differed to WAC priority groups.

The guidelines clearly state that funds may be used for the following purposes:

- *“Projects or programmes that recruit, train and place NEW volunteers;*
- *Projects that help to develop good practice in volunteering; and*
- *Projects that are volunteer-based and have difficulty in attracting funds from other sources”.*

In this sense, the VWF has been considered a *“last resort funding stream”* for voluntary organisations and the guidelines stress the fact that funding will not normally be made available for projects eligible for funding from other public sector sources.

Funding is made available on a tapered basis with the view that this would encourage organisations to develop sustainable projects. The maximum first year funding available is £25,000, second year funding £12,500 and third year funding £6,250. There is, however, no automatic right to continuation funding after the first year: the funding for years two and three is subject to satisfactory performance and an annual application process. Groups who have already received three years' VWF funding are ineligible to reapply until after a further two years after the end of the funding.

¹² Volunteering in Wales Fund Guidelines and notes for applicants 2009/10

Millennium Volunteers (MV)

MV is a UK wide initiative designed to promote and recognise volunteering among young people aged 16 – 24. It was established in 1999 (and officially launched in 2000) and has become a widely recognised initiative amongst education establishment, employers and the wider community throughout the whole of the UK. Volunteers are required to undertake voluntary work over the course of a year and work towards completing 200 hours of volunteering in order to receive an Award of Excellence signed by the First Minister. Recently certificates to acknowledge the first 50 and 100 hours of volunteering contribution were introduced to the programme. The award is transferable across the whole of the UK.

The programme is based on the key principles of the UK model. In England the Millennium Volunteers award brand came to an end in March 2009 and gave way to the national V Awards which ran on similar principles. The V Awards adopts the same criteria as its Welsh counterpart and has introduced similar milestones (but excludes the 200 hours threshold):

- Thank you certificate – for volunteers who have got going on their volunteering;
- v50 Award – for volunteers who have banked 50 hours of volunteering;
- vImpact Award – for volunteers who have attained 100 hours of volunteering.

According to promotional literature the main aims of the MV programme in Wales are to:

- Make a positive impact within local communities;
- Offer challenging and interesting volunteering opportunities for all young people;
- Enable young people to acquire new skills and knowledge and develop personally;
- Increase recognition of volunteering by young people in the community;
- Set a standard for volunteering opportunities in Wales;
- Encourage ownership of the programme by young people.

Funding under the programme is made available in the following ways:

- An annual grant of up to £8,000 is made available to organisations able to offer volunteering opportunities to young people. These include public, private and third sector organisations. The grants have been utilised to cover the costs associated with running the projects and can include costs such as training, equipment, travel and expenses and other support costs required by the volunteers. A system of quarterly “bidding rounds” has been adopted by the WCVA for applications to the fund.
- An annual grant of £5,000 to 22 Local Co-ordination Partnerships (LCPs) to promote the MV award to both potential volunteers and organisations within their local authority area. These centres are also expected to provide support and guidance to grant applicants. This element accounts for around 40% of all programme funding.
- Organisations are able to apply for a non-funded MV status which allows them to adopt the MV model of volunteering even if they do not require a financial contribution. This gives organisations the benefit of adopting the award status as well as an element of the support available via the programme.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Overview of the Section

In this Section, we present the findings of our evaluation, drawing together the evidence collected from a variety of sources, including the review of documentary material related to the schemes, interviews with stakeholders and crucially, our telephone survey and case-study interviews with grant recipient organisations. The material is presented in three main Sections relating to three key objectives set for the evaluation: the effectiveness of the three grant programmes in individually and collectively achieving the objectives set for them and increasing volunteering in Wales (Section 4.2); the suitability of the current funding structure – including the effectiveness of current implementation mechanisms (Section 4.3) and requirements for the future (Section 4.4).

However, before turning to these findings, we provide (in Section 4.1.2) some information about the sample of grant recipient organisations which provided much of the data within this Section.

4.1.2 Profile of Surveyed Organisations

As part of the evaluation fieldwork 50 telephone interviews were undertaken with grant recipient organisations during June 2009. They were selected representatively across the three grant programmes but with a slight over-representation from the WAC cohort given the large scale and varying nature of the projects funded via this tranche, as shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Telephone Interview Sample

	Number of grant recipient organisations (2008/09)	Interview Target	Interviews Completed
Active Community	27	15	16 (59%)
Volunteering in Wales	53 ¹³	22	22 (42%)
Millennium Volunteers	30 ¹⁴	13	12 (40%)
Total	110	50	50 (45%)

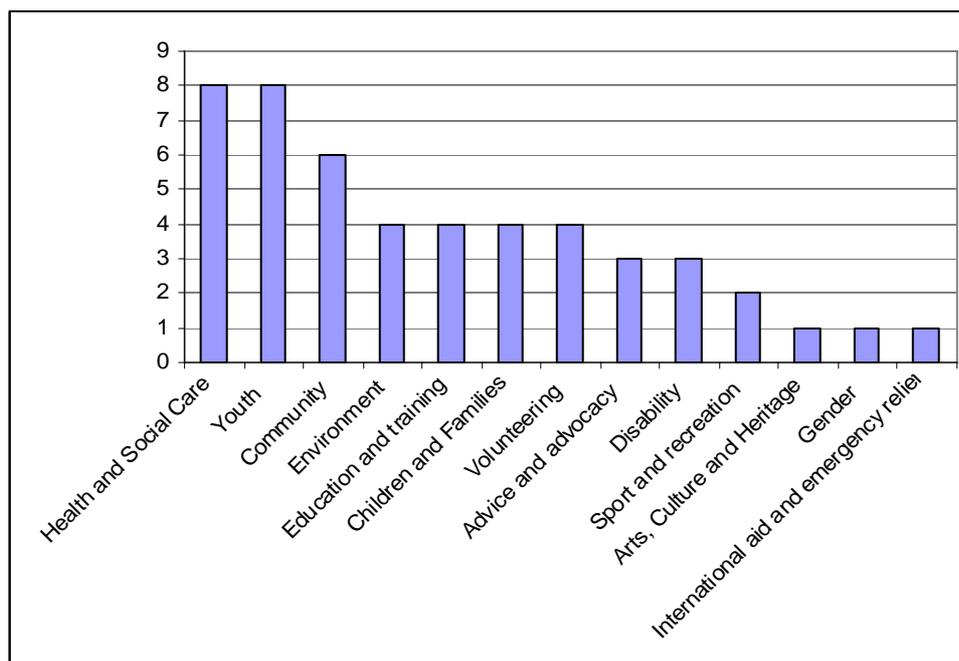
A follow on visit to 12 of these organisations was also undertaken – six from the WAC sample, three from the VWF and three from the MV fund. Interviews were undertaken with representatives from the funded organisations as well as with a sample of volunteers during the majority of visits.

The organisations surveyed covered a reasonable range of areas of interest, with 13 of the 21 third sector organisational subject forums/networks as identified in the Third Dimension represented within the sample. In line with the profile across all projects in receipt of funding the most popular areas of interest was youth activity (not surprising given the focus of the MV programme upon this age group and the fact that half of the organisations in receipt of the MV grant selected this category) and health and social care (which was particularly common amongst the sub-sample from the VWF programme), both of which were identified by eight organisations as being their main remit of activity. Chart 4.1 (over) presents the distribution of organisations across these sector areas of interest.

Overall the profile of the organisations surveyed was very broad in terms of their geographical coverage. 30% of the organisations interviewed were independent organisations serving a local area of interest, 12% were independent organisations serving a regional area of interest, a further 32% were independent organisations with an all-Wales interest and 26% were a local or regional branch of a larger UK organisation.

¹³ An interim figure provided by WCVA

Chart 4.1: Organisational areas of interest



This pattern did vary significantly across the three grant programmes and is reflective of their selection criteria – the majority (75%) of the MV organisations fell into the first two categories (local and regional areas of interest) and all of the WAC organisations fell into the latter two categories (all-Wales interest or branch of UK organisation). Organisations in receipt of the VWF were most varied in terms of their geographical coverage.

Nearly half of the sample (46% or 23 respondents) were very well established organisations having been in existence since 1989 or earlier, a further 22% (or 11 respondents) had been established during the 1990s and the remaining 30% (or 15 respondents) established since 2000¹⁵. Organisations in receipt of the MV grant tended to be the most long-established, WAC funded organisations demonstrated the greatest polarisation (with half of the sample established since 2000 and the other half established since 1989 or earlier) whilst VWF funded organisations demonstrated the greatest variety in terms of age of the organisation.

In the main, the organisations surveyed were fairly large organisations in terms of their turnover with 37% (or 15 respondents) reporting a turnover in excess of £1million per annum and the same number reporting a turnover of

¹⁴ Excluding the 22 local co-ordinator partners funded

over £100,000 (but less than £1 million)¹⁶. The remaining 11 organisations reported lower turnover amounts – but only three of these were under £25,000. No clear pattern emerged across individual grant programmes.

Half of the organisations surveyed (52% or 24 of the 46 that responded) employed up to ten employees at the time when they applied for grant funding, a further 13 organisations (or 28% of respondents) employed between 11 and 50 employees and the remaining nine (or 20% of respondents) employed over 51 members of staff. Organisations employing larger numbers of staff were more likely to be in receipt of WAC funding whilst organisations receiving VWF and MV funding were more likely to be employing a lower number.

The same pattern emerged for the number of volunteers in Wales involved with the organisations when they applied for grant funding. Organisations that were in receipt of WAC funding tended to have greatest number of volunteers involved with their activity at the outset whilst organisations receiving VWF and MV funding had lower number of volunteers involved. Across the whole sample, 12 organisations (or 26% of respondents) had ten or less volunteers involved at the outset, a further 13 organisations (or 28% of respondents) had between 11 and 50 volunteers, and 21 organisations (or 46% of respondents) had more than 50 volunteers¹⁷.

4.2 Review of Outcomes Achieved by Funded Projects

4.2.1 Strategic Fit of the Grant Programmes

Overall, despite some lack of clarity about the rationale of the three grant schemes and in particular the targeting of specific population groups, they generally appear to be well aligned with the strategic policy agenda for volunteering in Wales – with its objective of increasing the volume of volunteering and the quality of the “volunteer experience” and with a particular focus on young people - as outlined in both the Third Dimension and One Wales. The grant funding support made available also fits well with the citizen

¹⁵ One organisation did not respond to the question about year of establishment.

¹⁶ Nine respondents could not provide a turnover figure for their organisation.

¹⁷ Four respondents could not provide data on the number of volunteers involved with the organisation at the outset

engagement agenda apparent in a wider range of Welsh Assembly Government policies, such as *"Making the Connections"*. This view was generally endorsed by the stakeholders we interviewed.

However as the three grant programmes were developed independently of each other, a number of the stakeholders questioned whether they now continued to offer a coherent package of funding for promoting volunteering within the third sector. Others disagreed arguing that whilst the grant programmes might appear *"a little disparate"* there was indeed underlying logic and compatibility to their structure. Some stakeholders raised concerns about the duplication between funds (in particular the VWF and MV funds both targeting young people). In the main stakeholders did not believe that there was a danger of projects 'falling between stools' but some did raise concerns about the fact that WAC was absorbing a significant share of funding for a small number of organisations to the detriment of other highly competitive funds such as VWF.

Stakeholders had mixed views about how the funding programmes complemented other volunteering initiatives – the key one identified being GwirVol. Some stakeholders highlighted the potential duplication between the newly developed GwirVol¹⁸ funding programme and MV and called for a review of the relationship between these two specific initiatives and a number felt that the fact that England had effectively abandoned the MV brand and the 200 hours target meant that it was time to *"move on"*. Others believed that MV complemented the proposed activities of GwirVol arguing that MV focused on the quality and depth of the volunteering experience obtained (given its focus on a large number of volunteering hours) whilst GwirVol concentrated on attracting a larger audience to volunteering by promoting and targeting new volunteers.

A number of stakeholders also commented on the fact that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had recently agreed with WCVA to channel significant funding to the third sector to support work-focused volunteering opportunities for unemployed individuals, while generally seeing this as a

¹⁸ GwirVol is a partnership officially launched in April 2009 to promote, support and drive forward youth volunteering in Wales. The initiative exists to take forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission accepted by the Welsh Assembly Government.

useful compliment rather than a duplication of the current Welsh Assembly Government schemes¹⁹.

There was general consensus that the three grant programmes complemented and worked alongside the current arrangements for funding the infrastructure of advice and guidance available to support volunteering, which was generally seen as a considerable improvement on the former system by which grant funds had been “*top sliced*” to provide core funding for the Volunteer Centres. The role of these Centres was deemed a critical part of the work to promote volunteering and they were seen to undertake a vital brokerage role between individual volunteers and organisations.

4.2.2 Clarity of Grant Programmes' Objectives

Whilst the individual aims and objectives of the MV and VWF were considered to be clear, stakeholders took the view that WAC aims and objectives were slightly more blurred. Stakeholders acknowledged that this grant was targeted at funding large projects with an all-Wales or large regional area remit. However it had not always been clear whether the fund was intended to support ‘community’ projects or ‘volunteering’ projects – stakeholders agreed that the overall objective had not been explicit at the outset. Furthermore concerns were expressed that some of the organisations funded had begun to regard the funding as part of their core funding (as opposed to funding for a specific project) and that even within a competitive funding scheme these organisations had high expectations about continuation funding.

Most stakeholders believed that one key underlying rationale for all three grant programmes was that volunteers would be able to develop a range of skills and experiences which would equip them to take advantages of future opportunities, including those related to employment – in other words, volunteering as personal development rather than just as a way of providing services or support to third parties. It was thought that the MV was particularly geared up to meet this objective as it provided opportunities for young people to access sustained volunteering placements and as a result : “*What they get*

¹⁹ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2009/january-2009/emp124-120109.shtml>

out of it is the skills and the confidence and the stepping stone to go on to other things”.

There was also broad agreement amongst stakeholders that another fundamental objective for the grant programmes related to reaching target audiences which were not being reached through traditional volunteering routes. Stakeholders recognised that volunteering activity has occurred and will continue to occur regardless of funding programmes but that the funds allows organisations to *“reach the people who wouldn't traditionally be volunteers”*. There was a general consensus amongst stakeholders that the grant programmes had been established to focus on stimulating volunteering activity in areas or groups where it had not previously existed. However there was less of a consensus about whether the target groups selected had been the most appropriate ones. Most stakeholders believed that there had been a strong case for stimulating volunteering amongst some groups such as young people, unemployed people and inactive individuals. However others raised questions about the focus on groups such as older people (with data suggesting that they tend to be well represented in volunteering activity²⁰) and pointed out that it was important not to assume that all groups with low participation in volunteering ought to be targeted, citing as an example lone parents (where there were justifiable reasons for their low volunteering engagement).

Over time some changes have been made to the target groups supported by the grant programmes, notably VWF e.g. the inclusion of migrants/refugees to the VWF and adjusting the definition of older people to 50+ rather than 60+. Stakeholders welcomed these changes and believed it a strength that the grant programmes had been able to adopt new or different target audiences. The only exception to this was thought to be WAC – as this was a three year funding round it did not have the flexibility to respond to emerging target group demands once funds had been allocated to organisations. Consequently, some stakeholders called for greater flexibility within the WAC fund to respond to circumstances on an annual basis and to give the Welsh Assembly Government the scope to potentially fund pilot projects focused on new Government priorities - such as the impact of the economic climate so as

²⁰ See reference to Living in Wales in Section 3 above

to target unemployed people or young people who would be most affected by such changes.

4.2.3 Project Applications and Funding Offers

Wales: The Active Community

The data made available to us on the Wales: Active Communities (WAC) Fund included the WCVA's End of Year Report 2007-08 and aggregate level spreadsheet data, together with about two thirds of the individual project Interim Reports covering performance (including some cumulative data) for the first six months of 2008-2009.²¹

Initially 52 applications were received and 27 projects were supported under the WAC grant programme. However, Weston Spirit, an organisation focusing on Youth engagement activities, entered administration during the 2008-2009 financial year and was unable to continue its involvement. Its place was taken by Rathbone Training, in what was considered a "like-for-like" change, who received two year funding beginning in 2008-09.

Table 4.2 provides background data on the WAC applications and funding offers. The table shows that the programme has supported 28 separate projects sharing WAG funding of approximately £1m per year. Projects ranged in scale from as little as £14,000 and £29,000 per annum for the Surf Lifesaving Association of Wales and The Woodland Trust schemes respectively to over £240,000 per annum for the "Scope" and Business in the Community projects.

Only three of the projects were awarded funding equal to their requested total and the majority of the remaining projects (13 of them) received only 50% of the amount for which they applied. This hints at the extent to which funding was 'spread' in preference to a more concentrated approach and meant that most funded organisations either needed to draw upon other sources of funding in order to deliver their projects or reduce the scale of their activities. WAC projects were appreciably larger than those funded via the other two

²¹ 18 Interim Reports for 2008-09 had been submitted to the WCVA and were forwarded to the evaluators for review.

funding programmes with the average annual WAG funding for WAC projects being over £110,000 per project.

Whilst the application guidelines clearly stated that projects should have an all Wales coverage in reality only two-thirds of the projects funded sought to have this coverage with the remaining third seeking to cover large parts of Wales such as north or south Wales.²²

Table 4.2: WAC Applications and Funding Offers

	Year 1 2007-08	Year 2 2008-09	Year 3 2009-10	Total
Welsh Assembly Government funding	£1,000,000	£1,025,000	£1,050,625	£3,075,625
Applications considered	52	1	n/a	53
Number of new projects funded	27	1	0	28
Total Grant Amount Applied For (all applicants)	£4,102,557	£4,184,915	£4,232,065	£12,519,537
Total Grants requested (successful applicants)	£2,041,846	£2,012,367	£2,059,933	£6,114,146
Grants Agreed at Application	£999,960	£988,359	£1,013,209	£3,001,528

Data on applicant organisations revealed that 17 of the 28 successful bids (and 33 of 53 applicants in total) were from organisations based in Cardiff. This however probably reflects the relative density of larger voluntary organisations based in the capital rather than a reflection of any limitations in publicising the programme.

As an indicative guide, youth focused projects were the most prevalent type of project funded: some 25% of all funded project organisations broadly fell into this category. As with the other two grant programmes, health focused organisations were well represented too.

It is noticeable that WAC funded projects tended to target a relatively broad range of target groups with 16-25 year olds, BMEs and disabled people the

²² 19 of the 28 funded projects stated specifically that they sought an 'All Wales' coverage, others sought to cover large parts of Wales e.g. 'North Wales and South Wales'. The WCVA End of Year Summary report suggested that, in practice, few projects ruled out extensive geographical coverage across Wales but some were limited by relatively small baseline positions.

most well targeted.²³ The target audiences included some that were not initially identified at the project design stage and in effect the programme funded projects that supported groups across nine areas (in comparison to an original six). The 'new' target areas to emerge were women, disadvantaged/low income areas and unemployed individuals.

Volunteering in Wales Fund

Information was made available on key indicators and spending for the VWF between 2007 and 2010. Table 4.3 presents data relating to the applications and awards for this grant programme. It shows that the VWF programme received 441 applications for over £7.3 million over the three years and provided almost £1.9million to 156 of these projects. This represents an approval rate of just over a third in terms of number of projects and around a quarter in terms of requested funding. Moreover, it needs to be remembered that projects funded in Year 1 of a grant have to complete an application for Year 2 and Year 3, which implies the rate of success of 'new' applications is significantly lower - possibly as low as one in five - even allowing for the fact that not all organisations do reapply. Altogether this suggests that this grant programme is hugely over-subscribed (particularly in comparison with the other two programmes). This finding was confirmed by the view held by stakeholders who in the main agreed that this was the most over-subscribed of all the funds.

Noticeably, the number of applications rose significantly in 2008-09 possibly reflecting a number of factors - the developments in awareness raising activities by the WCVA,²⁴ the work of the 'Help Desk' in supporting high rates of completion (in 2008-09 193 application/information packs were issued, of which 90% of recipient organisations went on to submit an application) and the reduction in other sources of funding such as the Lottery during this year.

The findings show marked consistency in the number of projects supported in each year: both in 2007-08 and 2008-09 around 40% of projects were 'Year 1' schemes and around a third were 'Year 2' schemes. This is partly linked to

²³ Based on WAC application data

²⁴ Although the exact relationship is unclear - the Interim Report for 2008-09 (October 2008) states that a number of publicity activities were undertaken that financial year, but it is likely that that applications for projects 'live' in 2008-09 would normally be have been completed in 2007-08, that is, prior to the promotional activity.

overall budget levels which have remained consistent in real terms²⁵ although it may also reflect the perceived optimal mix between new funded and follow on projects.

Table 4.3 VWF Applications and Funding Offers

	Year 1 2007-08	Year 2 2008-09	Year 3 2009-10	Total
Applications considered	125	174	142	441
Number of projects funded	56	53	49	156
Total grant amount applied for (all applicants)	£2,158,264	£3,175,560	£2,009,777	£7,343,601
Grants agreed at application (successful applicants)	£611,790	£627,801	£649,628	£1,889,219

The average level of project support in 2008-2009 was around £11,000 per year. Through the tapered approach this varied from around £18,000 for 'Year 1' projects, to £4,000 for 'Year 3' projects. Most applications have tended towards the upper end of what is permitted: around half of the successful applications received funding at 80% or more of the maximum for that year, with 16% receiving the full permitted grant. Few applicants sought funding at the lower end of permissible levels.

In terms of the types of projects funded, a number of them covered two or more Third Dimension defined sectors. However, analysis of project activity summaries for 2007 to 2009 reveals a relatively strong emphasis on 'Health and Social Care' and 'Advice and Advocacy', with little or no coverage of 'Religious' and 'International aid/ emergency relief' sectors.

Firmer conclusions can be drawn on the location of projects and their delivery areas. Over the financial period 2007-2009 around 21% of the projects targeted Cardiff. 'All Wales' projects represented 12% of the total for the two years. However, beyond this, the project has showed clear emphasis on more rural counties. One quarter of the projects delivered between 2007 and 2009 were delivered in Gwynedd, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire or

²⁵ 2009-10 budget is £643,496, 2.5% up on the previous year, in line with previous rises

Carmarthenshire. This compares to only 18% of projects delivered in the relatively more populous areas of Swansea, Newport, Wrexham, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly. The South Wales Valleys areas, in particular, appear to have received relatively far less support from VWF per capita. The reasons for this are unclear, but potentially include, of course, the capacity of Volunteer Centres, the extent to which promotional activities covered this area, and the availability of other grant support. However, it would seem unlikely that this relates to the nature of the target groups since younger people, the unemployed and BME groups are more concentrated in the more urban areas of Wales.

Feedback from stakeholders reinforced the fact that areas with large population densities such as the south Wales Valleys had not been well catered for within VWF and that the fund had experienced: “*very few applications and successful projects*” from these areas. Some raised concerns about this especially given that other funds (such as the Carnegie Foundation) were specifically established to target rural communities. On the other hand, other stakeholders suggested that deprived urban areas may well have been able to access other sources of larger and less competitive funding (such as Communities First funding) – although interestingly our recent evaluation of the Communities@One Programme targeted specifically at Communities First areas found a similar pattern of relatively less funding being accessed by groups in areas such as the South Wales Valleys, possibly reflecting the lack of capacity of voluntary and community groups in such areas to respond effectively to competitive funding regimes.

Interestingly, however, stakeholders with less involvement with the fund held the perception that not many applications were coming from small organisations based in rural and north Wales. It is possible that this perception was fuelled by the lack of information some Volunteer Centres had about the projects funded within their area (and certainly such information would be welcomed by those interviewed).

Millennium Volunteers

The MV programme has received 198 applications for over £1.1 million since 2007 and provided over £766,000 to 140 of these projects (see Table 4.4). On average around 50-55 projects have been financially supported each year

over the last few years which includes the 22 Local Co-ordinating Partnership funded projects. The rolling nature of the programme application process means that only 44 applications (including the LCP applications) have been received to date for 2009-10. However, this is a similar figure to the comparable period in 2008-09, suggesting that around 75 to 80 applications will again be received in total for 2009-10.

Roughly three in every four applications were successful; a ratio fairly consistent across the years. In 2008-09, the grant per project was £5,157 (slightly higher for Delivery Partners only). This figure was down 12% on the previous year. Closer inspection reveals that few delivery partners received the full £8,000 grant and, moreover, that there was no clear correlation between the amount of funding and the sector or type of organisations delivering the project.

Table 4.4 MV Applications and Funding Offers

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10 to date	Total
Number of applications	76	78	44	198
Number of successful applications	55	52	33	140
Total Grant Amount Applied For	£418,978	£448,543	£256,248	£1,123,769
Total Grants Awarded	£321,106	£268,172	£176,990	£776,268

Analysis of the 2008-09 project data revealed a good geographical coverage across Wales. Applications were received, and projects funded, in every county of Wales. Cardiff provided the most applications (12) although Swansea yielded the most funded projects (7) - which represented a 100% success rate for the applications submitted in that county. Overall, the pattern of funded projects shows fairly equal coverage across the counties. Given the relatively small variance in project funding, this suggests a fairly similar spend across most counties in Wales. It is noticeable however that no Delivery Partners were funded (nor applications received) in 2008-09 in the counties of Caerphilly, Denbighshire and Carmarthenshire.²⁶

²⁶ Only LCPs were funded

Of course, comprehensive coverage across Wales might raise concerns about whether Delivery Partners were funded 'because they covered a county' rather than relative quality of their application. Similarly, on issues of quality, Delivery Partners do also seem to have a higher chance of success if they do not submit applications in the March cohort. It is unclear whether this is an overt decision taken by the Assessors based on achieving a reasonably consistent number of new starts across quarter periods, or whether it relates to other factors such as varying availability of support to applicants across the year.

A good spread was also achieved in the type of Delivery Partner organisations, although, as might be expected, 'youth' and 'education' type organisations were the most numerous. A greater proportion of the projects were led by organisations in the sport and recreation; environmental and animal welfare sectors compared to the VWF and WAC programmes. Similarly, there was relatively less interest from health and disability sector organisations. In each instance the target group was, of course, people aged 16-24 years old.

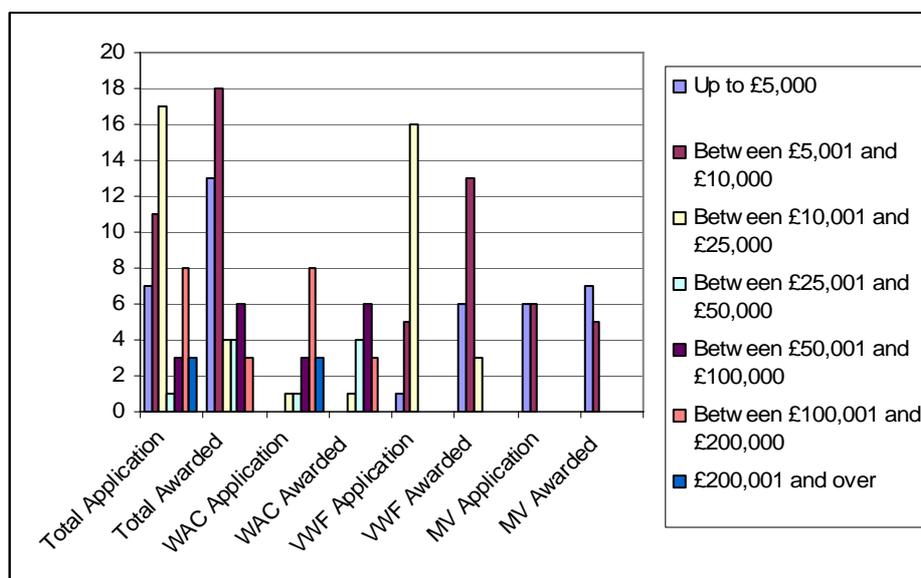
Currently, ten 'non-funded' projects are also being delivered across eight counties in Wales. The programme appears to have achieved a good mix of organisations here too, including youth, community justice, education; sport and recreation, and advice and guidance focused Delivery Partners.

Views from the Sector – Applications and Funding Offers

Feedback from the surveyed grant recipient organisations reinforces the WCVA data provided, with many applicants having to accept a much lower level of funding than was originally requested (often as little as half of what was originally requested). For example whilst only 18 organisations (or 36% of respondents) applied for funding of less than £10,000, in effect 31 organisations (or 64% of respondents) were actually offered grants of this size. Conversely whilst 11 organisations applied for grant funding of over £100,000 only three organisations were awarded a grant of over £100,000. This was particularly true for VWF and the WAC grant programmes as shown in Chart 4.2 (over) which shows that nearly all of these grant applicants had to settle for a lower funding offer.

Just under half of the organisations surveyed (24 organisations or 48% of respondents) stated that their project had an all-Wales remit. The majority of these (15 organisations) were WAC funded projects although it is worth pointing out that two WAC funded organisations claimed not to have an all-Wales remit.

Chart 4.2: Funding Application and Awards – Surveyed Organisations



Several projects covered more than one local authority area and the most well covered were those local authorities based in south east Wales including Cardiff (six projects), Vale of Glamorgan (five projects) and Merthyr Tydfil (four projects). North and Mid Wales were not so well represented within our sample with only six projects for example covering the whole of north Wales – this is more indicative of a lower response rate from these regions to our survey rather than the actual number of projects supported in these areas.

4.2.4 Project Aims and Objectives

Information about project aims and objectives is not covered in the aggregate data but is available from our telephone survey data.

As shown in Chart 4.3 the key volunteering challenges facing the surveyed organisations prior to submitting a grant application were difficulties recruiting new volunteers (cited by 26 or 52% of all respondents) and difficulties recruiting new volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience (cited by 24 organisations or 48% of all respondents). For

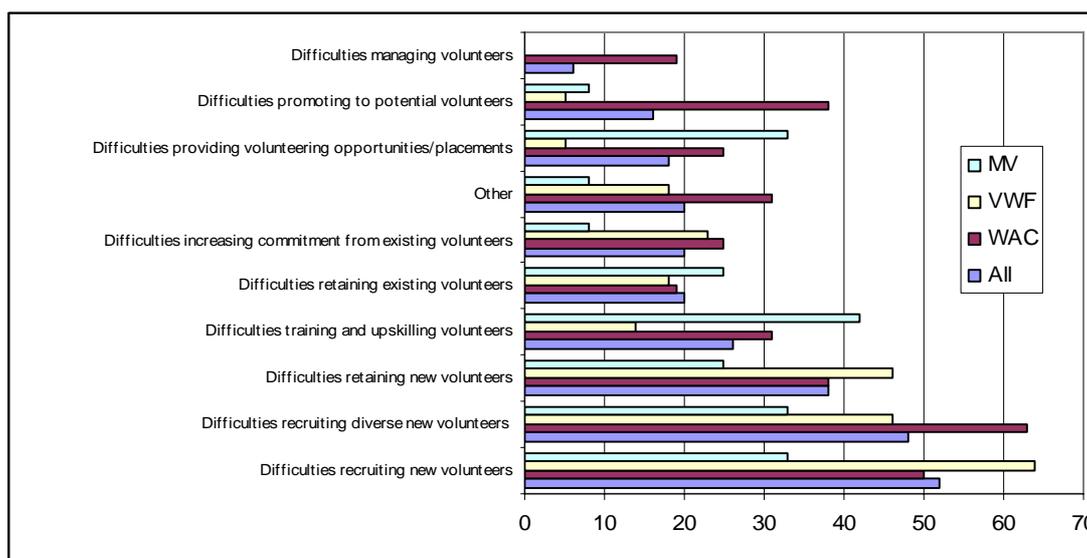
organisations in receipt of VWF recruiting new volunteers was perceived to be the greatest challenge (identified by 14 of the 22 organisations or 64% of VWF respondents) followed by difficulties retaining new volunteers.

By contrast, for those in receipt of WAC funding the issue of recruiting a more diverse volunteering base was deemed to be the greatest difficulty (cited by 14 of the 16 or 63% of WAC organisations), followed by difficulties in recruiting new volunteers in general. It is worth noting that this pool of organisations was also much more likely to say they had been facing difficulties promoting their organisation to potential volunteers – perhaps reflecting the fact that these were generally large organisations with the requirement to constantly source new volunteers.

On the other hand organisations involved with MV were more likely to identify difficulties around training and up skilling volunteers as the greatest challenge (with five of the 12 organisations or 42% of MV respondents citing this as an issue) followed by difficulties providing volunteering opportunities and placements. This perhaps reflects the fact which appeared confirmed by our case studies that MV schemes are less concerned with attracting volunteers in the first place than with sustaining their involvement and with improving the quality of the opportunities offered.

Overall ten organisations identified other volunteering challenges that they were facing: these included not being able to access funding to cover the costs associated with volunteering, lack of staff in place to recruit and manage a team of volunteers as well as volunteering being an area of work that they had not been previously involved with. Two organisations noted that their main problem was that of too much demand: *“we usually have more interested volunteers than what we can take on”*.

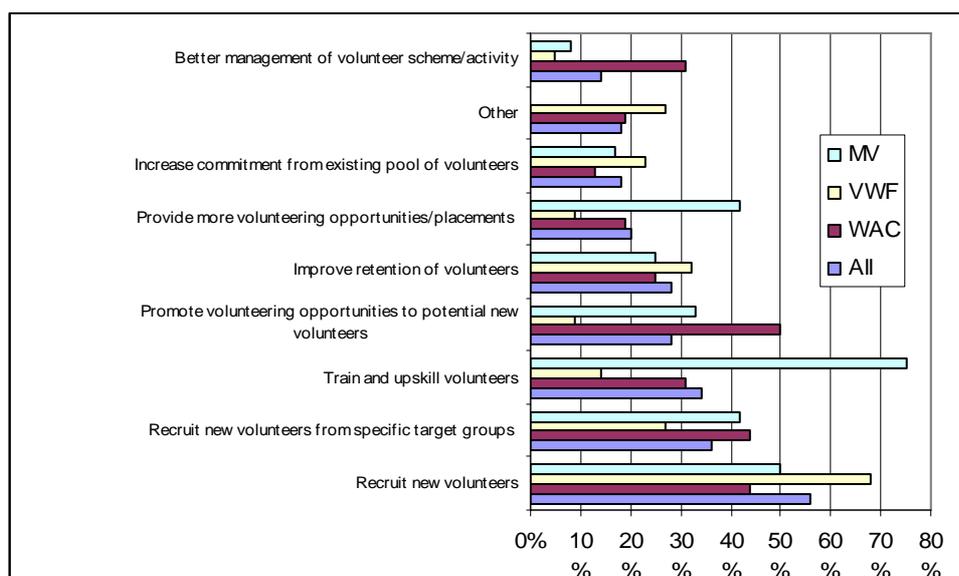
Chart 4.3: Volunteering Challenges facing organisations (%)



As might be expected, the objectives for the organisations in terms of their funding application closely mirrored the perceived difficulties they faced. Thus, the single most important objective across the funded projects was to recruit new volunteers (cited by 28 organisations or 56% of all respondents) followed by the aim of recruiting new volunteers from specific target groups such as disabled people, BMEs and young people (cited by 18 organisations or 36% of all respondents). This is shown in Chart 4.4.

Organisations involved with the VWF placed a greater emphasis upon recruiting new volunteers (which was the single most important objective) as well as other objectives such as improving the retention of volunteers and increasing the commitment from an existing pool of volunteers. WAC funded organisations identified the ability to promote volunteering opportunities to potential new volunteers as their main objective (cited by eight organisations or 50% of the WAC organisations surveyed) followed by the opportunity to recruit new volunteers from specific target groups. WAC organisations also placed a greater significance upon the objective of better management of volunteer schemes and activities than their counterparts. Organisations funded via MV placed a much greater emphasis upon training and up skilling their volunteers (with nine organisations or 75% of all MV organisations selecting this option) as well as being able to provide more volunteering opportunities/placements.

Chart 4.4: Project Aims and Objectives



These findings were reinforced by the feedback provided by those organisations interviewed, with WAC projects showing far greater variety and in several cases being more closely related to driving forward organisational objectives in terms of diversity and “image”, MV projects more focused on enhancing the volunteering experience and VWF projects more straightforwardly concerned with supporting volunteer recruitment. It was interesting however that many organisations referred to their project aims and objectives as being service or provision related and that the volunteering focus was in a sense the conduit for delivering the service, with personal development and the quality of volunteering very much a secondary objective. Volunteering was often considered as a cost-effective route to delivering broader organisational objectives. In this sense we did come across examples of organisations which had effectively used the grant to expand their core provision or service as opposed to develop an entirely new ‘project’.

4.2.5 Performance against Targets

Wales: The Active Community

The WCVA’s End of Year Report for 2007-08 and the Interim April-September 2008 reports for each of the WAC projects were made available to us. The reports present comprehensive information on performance against a range of target measures, agreed with each WAC funded organisation. The measures include a number of infrastructure, process and milestone related

measures as well as quantitative outcome figures including number of new volunteers. Clearly the targets were defined at the project level to be as appropriate as possible to planned activity. Project data collection systems do also vary to reflect the needs described at the project level, including, in some projects, completed surveys such as customer satisfaction levels, as well as more general records of project activity.

Aggregate level data provided by the WCVA does suggest good performance against targets during 2007-08. In 2007-08 6,108 volunteers were recruited across 22 of the projects (for which data was available) which was 54% greater than the target agreed across these projects in total. Similarly, project Interim Reports, available for the first six month's activity in 2008-09 showed continuing progress: of the 18 Interim Reports received two-thirds seemed firmly on track to achieve their 'new volunteers recruited' target by March 2010.

It should be noted that in some instances it was difficult to determine what constituted 'a volunteer' since often the number recruited and the number trained were recorded as a new volunteer. It was unclear where in the process 'a recruit' became 'a volunteer', or conversely, whether non trained volunteers went on to do (perhaps unskilled) volunteer work within the organisation. In this respect, a lack of consistent use of 'volunteering hours' as a measure was a clear weakness in the monitoring arrangements.

Performance in relation to the many other indicators adopted by projects also seems strong. Reported project activity for 2007-08 (year 1) included 126 new support groups set up, 131 training courses delivered, 125 toolkits produced and over 500 partnerships developed. Although it is unclear how these figures compare with target numbers specifically, the project (six month) Interim Reports for 2008-09 do show good levels of performance against target milestones and activities (e.g. promotional activities) and other output and outcome measures (e.g. setting up 'volunteer groups' across Wales). It is also clear that WAC is providing support to many beneficiaries across Wales, although in this respect, the Interim Reports 2008-09 state that some projects do seem to have set overly optimistic targets.

The Interim Reports for 2008-09 also reveal a number of fairly consistent problems encountered by the projects, namely:

- Staff retention and sickness;
- Co-ordinating a growing number of volunteers across Wales;
- Cost of training and accounting for different needs - 'one size fits all' training provision may not be appropriate when baseline skills vary so greatly;
- Availability of match funding (e.g. variation in the extent to which different local authorities across Wales would provide match funding).

These, as well as other, problems have had some effects on project spend, although generally, the spreadsheet data and 2008-09 project Interim Reports reveal that few projects were more than $\pm 10\%$ variance from budget by October 2008, nor were expected to be by the end of the three year funding cycle. This would appear to be a very positive indicator of good project and programme management.

Volunteering in Wales Fund

The main performance indicators for the VWF programme were 'the number of volunteers recruited' and the 'number of volunteer hours.' Data on target and actual performance for these measures is presented in Table 4.5. The table suggests strong performance in recruiting volunteers to the projects with an actual achievement 7% greater than the target set for 2007-08. The WCVA anticipates that the programme will be on target in 2008-09 (when the full year's data is available). It should be stressed however that analysis on volunteer hours is complicated by the fact that the recorded figures do not include data from volunteers recruited in year one but still undertaking voluntary work on the project in years two and/or three (partly as a result of the requirement for annual applications). The result is that the recorded data significantly understates the actual hours of volunteering supplied by new volunteer recruits over the three year lifetime of many of the projects. Therefore while aggregate data over the two years shows a shortfall of around 29% below target, in practice it is likely that volunteer hours – like volunteers recruited – will be above target.

Table 4.5: VWF Performance against targets

	2007-08		2008-09		
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual (11 months)	Anticipated 2008-09
Number of volunteers recruited	2,000	2,149	2,000	1,757	2,000
Number of volunteer hours	175,000	129,168	175,000	118,164	200,000

Below this level, the WCVA does not collect information on the distribution of new volunteers and volunteering hours between the different target groups supported via the projects and it has proved impossible for us to determine from the aggregate data the extent to which VWF is meeting the targets set by projects.

Millennium Volunteers

No information was available on aggregate actual spend by the partners each year. However, Table 4.6 provides data on performance against target measures. The table reveals strong overall performance in the numbers recruited to the project with 2007-2009 'actual' numbers being nearly 10% more than target. However the project did see a 21% fall in numbers recruited in 2008-09 compared with the previous year.

Table 4.6: MV Performance against targets

Measure	Target 2007-08	Actual	Target 2008-09	Actual	Target 2009-10
Number of young people recruited to the programme	1,600	1,834	1,400	1,452	1,400
Number of young people achieving the 50-hour certificates	n/a	n/a	1000	751	1000
Number of young people achieving the 100-hour certificates	900	713	800	719	800
Number of young people achieving the 200-hour certificates	640	533	600	572	600
Number of Local-Co-ordinating Partners receiving grants	22	22	22	22	22
Number of Delivery Partners receiving grants	45	33*	40	30**	35
Number of young people recruited through the six Russell Enhanced Strategic Grant Projects.	610	452	610	527	N/A

MV/Russell Matrix report to be completed by end of.	April 2007	April 2007	Dec 08	Jan 09	January 2010
Evaluate and report on Strategic Pilot projects	May 2007	May 2007	April 2008	April 2008	NA
Evaluation report of MV program to be completed by	June 2007	June 2007	March 2009	March 2009	N/A

* plus 4 non-funded projects

* plus 6 non-funded projects

The 50 hour certificate target was introduced in January 2008. 75% of the 2008-09 target was achieved, although this figure may be understated somewhat as it did not include those projects yet to claim their 50 hour certificates (despite being encouraged to do so).

Similarly, the programme has just failed to meet its targets for volunteers providing 100 hours and 200 hours of volunteering time with a variance against target of -16% and -11% respectively for the period 2007-09. The WCVA's *"Millennium Volunteers 2007-08 Performance Indicators Monitoring report"* to the Welsh Assembly Government notes that failure to reach these targets in that year could be *"accounted for by the increased concentration on promotion and the change in administration systems"*, although it remains unknown to what extent this was the case.²⁷ It should be noted however that the following year's figures (2008-09) showed only small increases in the numbers achieving the 100 hour and 200 hour thresholds. This suggests that either there was genuine underperformance in 2007-08 or, that set targets were overly optimistic; the latter reason 'fitting' with the observed reduction in targets generally for the following year (2008-09).

In this context, some stakeholders commented that the targets set (i.e. the need for an individual to complete 200 hours) was unrealistic and too high for the majority of individuals involved – something reflected in the decision in England to drop the 200 hour target as part of the transition to the V Awards. This view was also echoed by some of the grant funded organisations in our case-studies who made the point that it was nearly impossible for young people in education or work to reach the 200 hour threshold within a year. One organisation noted that *"in order to reach the 200 hour target our volunteers have to volunteer for around 5 hours a week and that is just impossible for some of them"*.

²⁷ Page 1

In this context, stakeholders generally said that they had welcomed the introduction of lower thresholds at 100 and 50 hours. Some also commented on the lack of specific targets for disadvantaged groups within the MV application and reporting process, claiming that as a result the MV had not been as successful as it could have been in targeting NEETs focusing instead on the “*easiest target groups*”.

For the period 2007-09, 66 delivery partners received funding compared to a target of 85 - again implying that applicants sought higher than anticipated funding on average. Indeed, the WCVA's submitted Performance Monitoring reports for this period do seem to suggest that funding limits, rather than low quality applications, determined the number of projects that could be supported. It should be stressed however that an additional 10 delivery partners received 'non-funded' status over this period, bringing the overall total to around 90% of target.

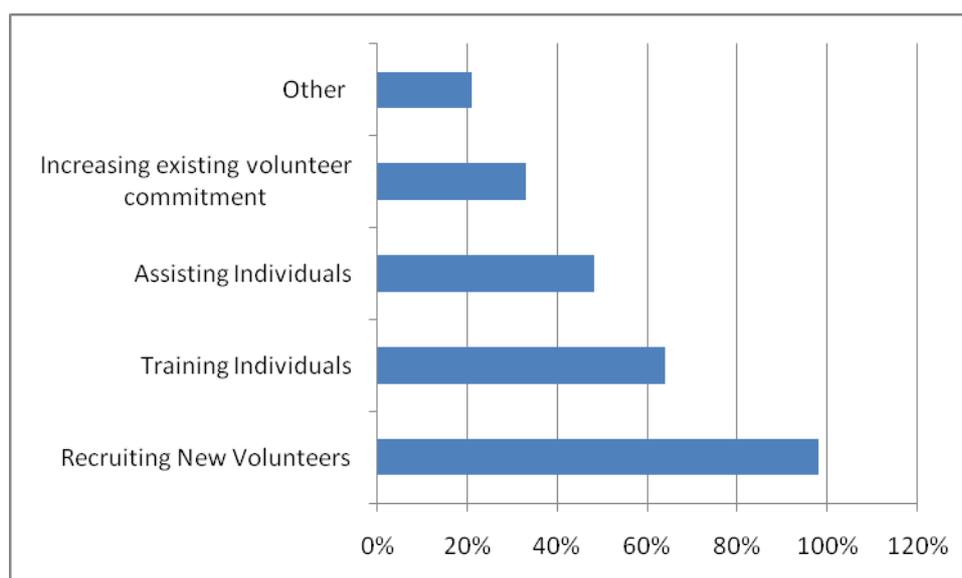
Targets were also not met for the six Russell Enhanced Strategic Grant projects over the period 2007-09. However, performance noticeably improved in 2008-09 possibly benefiting from the promotional work and general set-up activity undertaken the previous year.

Finally, Table 4.6 reveals that, performance on process related work - evaluations, reports etc – have been consistently to target.

Organisations' view of performance

Turning to the result of our fieldwork with funded organisations, surveyed respondents were asked about the nature of their project performance indicators and to what extent these were being achieved. Whilst nearly all of the projects were working towards a target of recruiting new volunteers (see Chart 4.5) lower proportions were working towards other targets such as training volunteers (30 respondents or 64%) or increasing existing volunteer commitment (16 respondents or 33%).

Chart 4.5: Project Performance Indicators



In line with the data made available by the WCVA across the three grant programmes, projects funded via the WAC stated that they were more likely than the others to have a wider range of targets. For example, WAC funded projects were more likely to have targets for training individuals (14 of the 16 projects who responded stated that they had training targets to meet), targets for assisting individuals as well as other type of targets (nine of the 16 projects who responded stated that both of these targets to meet). VWF funded projects were more likely to claim that they had specific targets to meet for assisting individuals (12 of the 22 projects who responded stated that they had targets to meet for assisting individuals) and increasing existing volunteer commitment (with nine of the 22 organisations saying so).

It would appear that between a quarter and half of the projects had already been able to achieve or exceed their various targets, with nearly all of the remaining organisations claiming to be on track to achieving them. Exactly half of the projects funded had been able to achieve or exceed their 'other' targets, a third had achieved or exceeded their targets for increasing existing volunteer commitment whilst around a quarter had achieved or exceeded the other three targets covered in the survey (recruiting new volunteers, assisting individuals and training individuals). It was encouraging to find that it was often the case that only one project of the entire sample was in each instance not likely to achieve each type of target.

Some common challenges were identified by the organisations in meeting project targets. They were:

- Project Management issues – such as budget planning and managing finances: *“our estimated costs were incorrect so we are facing difficulties paying travel expenses”*
- Inadequate funding to manage the project meaning some had to have recourse other sources of funding: *“we did not have enough of a budget to employ staff so we had to secure another grant to pay for project management staff”*;
- Difficulties in promoting to, recruiting, retaining and keeping interest amongst new volunteers: *“getting volunteers interested in the first place”* and *“keeping it interesting for young people - many of them lose enthusiasm after a few weeks”*;
- Timescale issues which frequently came about as a result of a late start or the length of time taken to establish a new project: *“we were a year late starting”*.

Our interviews with some case studies revealed that it was occasionally difficult for organisations who had received funding to expand their core provision or service (as opposed to establish an entirely new project) to be able to differentiate the impact of the grant funds upon their organisation. As a result some of the results being reported (e.g. number of BME volunteers recruited) referred to the organisation as a whole and it could be argued that some of these might have been achieved even in the absence of the grant funding.

Stakeholders' view of performance

In general terms, stakeholders believed that the projects funded via the three grant programmes were on the whole performing well. Individuals closely involved with the projects were aware of a small number of under-performing projects but believed that appropriate action had been taken to resolve these issues. There was an acceptance that some grant programmes (notably MV) had not been able to achieve some of the higher level targets in the past (see discussion above).

One of the key messages emerging from the consultations undertaken was around the lack of aggregate volunteering targets for WAC. It was

acknowledged by stakeholders that there had been a fairly rigorous process in place to determine individual project targets but that the concept of developing programme wide targets was a new and difficult one for WAC given the variety of activities and approaches which were funded. However, most stakeholders believed that this issue needed to be tackled in moving forward in order to understand the impact of the grant programme as a whole.

On the other hand it was felt that the MV and VWF grant programmes had been more successful in developing and reporting on aggregate volunteering targets – with some stakeholders taking the view that this had been easier because of the greater similarity across the projects funded and their relatively more “*numbers-driven*” approach: “*aggregate targets are calculated on the basis of new volunteers and hours. It’s a bit easier than WAC because the projects are more similar*”.

Another issue that became apparent during the course of our evaluation was the lack of consistency adopted by organisations when defining targets such as ‘new volunteers’. Whilst some took this definition to be ‘new individuals recruited’ others adopted definitions such as ‘new individuals who have undertaken the induction training’ and ‘new individuals who have contributed time in working with beneficiaries’.

4.2.6 Value of Intervention

Wales: The Active Community

The extent to which performance varies across projects is difficult to ascertain precisely from the aggregate data, given the differing project foci and indicators. In this respect, even comparing projects for ‘the number of volunteers recruited’ - measured in all cases - may be inappropriate – as was clear from our case-studies. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that variations in ‘cost per new volunteer’ are substantial. For example the Interim reports suggest that the Scope project sought to recruit 15 volunteers over the three years at a cost to the Welsh Assembly Government of £16,279 per volunteer. On the other hand Business in The Community received similar levels of funding but planned on recruiting 6,500 volunteers at a cost of around £37 per new volunteer (although in practice, due to overly optimistic target setting, the

actual cost per volunteer recruited for 'Business in The Community' was around £100 in 2007-08).²⁸

It follows that estimating 'cost per new volunteer' might also be inappropriate as a way of comparing projects. However, available data on 22 of the 27 projects in 2007-08 suggests an indicative figure of £140 of WAG funding per new WAC volunteer recruited was recorded in 2007-08 versus a derived target figure of over £215 per new volunteer. Both figures would increase if other funding utilised to deliver the project was included.

Volunteering in Wales Fund

Table 4.7 presents information on the costs incurred in achieving the 2008-09 results.

Table 4.7: Cost of VWF Intervention

	Target	Actual (11 months to Feb 08)	Anticipated costs 2008/09
Cost per volunteer recruited	£314.00	£357	£314.00
Cost per volunteer hour	£3.60	£5.31	£3.14

The findings suggest that cost per volunteer recruited is likely to fall between £314 and £357. Similarly, we might expect cost per volunteer hour to be between £3.14 and £5.31.

'Cost per new volunteer' and 'cost per new volunteer hour' data for 2007-09 projects were analysed to determine whether projects with an 'all Wales' focus would prove to be more expensive. Comparisons were drawn for projects on a (same year) like for like basis.²⁹ The results suggested that in each 'year' category, 'all Wales' projects tended to be more expensive than other projects. This may be due to greater resources being consumed in administering more nebulous activity.

²⁸ Both projects received 50% funding from WAC, which constituted around 66% of Business in the Community total project cost (33% of total funding was sourced elsewhere). Total first year 'cost per volunteer recruited' for Business in The Community was therefore around £150 – still substantially less than Scope, which did not source other funding.

²⁹ Data was available covering three quarters periods of 2008-09. Where projects had not provided information, then these were not included

A similar analysis was used to consider costs per type of project – where ‘type’ was defined as the closest match to those categories described in the Third Dimension strategy. Tentatively, there does appear some evidence that Children and Families type projects might operate at the higher end of cost per volunteer hour (perhaps reflecting the need for more rigorous checks and training), while Sports and Recreation type projects operate at the lower end. Again, the extent to which projects do work across types mean that the results can only be indicative, and more detailed project activity data would be need to be considered before firm conclusions could be drawn.

As a general point, the projects do seem to be more cost effective over time. ‘Year 3’ projects do, on average, return a lower cost per new volunteer hour (even though they are funded significantly less overall) compared to ‘year 2’ or ‘year 1’ projects.

Millennium Volunteers

Without actual cost data it is impossible to draw accurate conclusions on the overall cost associated with these aggregate performance measures. However, for indicative purposes, comparison might be drawn between numbers of volunteers recruited and total grants awarded. This gives rise to a figure of around £179 per volunteer recruited in the period 2007-09 (and £185 per volunteer recruited in 2008-09 only).

The data provided for 2008-09 did not allow for thorough and detailed analysis of the cost effectiveness associated with different types, and locations, of delivery partner. However, we were able to tentatively identify that volunteering projects delivered within an educational organisation setting (university, schools etc) do produce relatively high numbers of recruits and therefore potentially offer greater value for money.

Overall stakeholders believed that MV provided good value for money with often “*small amounts of funding...going very far*”. More generally, some suggested that whilst smaller organisations offer more for the funding it does not necessarily follow that they perform any better than national organisations who have strong management in place and greater experience of managing volunteers.

What would have happened in the absence of funding?

The findings of the survey suggest that the funding has made a real tangible difference to organisations' ability to deliver their projects. A high proportion (20 organisations or 41% of respondents) claimed that their project would not have been delivered at all in the absence of the grant funding – and nearly all of the WAC funded projects fell into this category. A large number of the remaining respondents believed that the project would have been modified in some way - 15 organisations (or 31% of all respondents) believed that the project would have been delivered on a smaller scale with funding from elsewhere and three (or 6%) thought that the project would have been delivered at a later date. MV funded projects were more likely to state that their projects would have been delivered on a smaller scale with funding from elsewhere – again reflecting the fact that MV tends to add value to the volunteering experience rather than create it. For example, one case-study project leader said that they would continue to run their MV project because *“it the most worthwhile thing I do”* in terms of its impact on the young people involved but recognised that they would be much more likely to have problems in retaining volunteers.

Only 11 organisations (or 22% of respondents) thought that their project would have gone ahead in the same way with funding from elsewhere, with projects funded via the VWF programme more likely to select this option.

4.2.7 Impact upon Funded Organisations

The survey of funded organisations questioned respondents about the additional volunteering contribution being made to their organisation as a result of the project. The findings show that the additional volunteering contribution made by both new and pre-existing volunteers varied hugely. Around a third of respondents (15 organisations) stated that up to ten new volunteers had joined their organisations as a result of the project, another third (16 organisations) placed this output at between 11 and 50 volunteers and the remaining 13 stated that this output was more than 50 volunteers. These figures probably reflect the scale of the projects funded: WAC funded projects were much more likely to specify the higher outputs in comparison with the other two grant programmes.

A slightly different trend for increases in the number of pre-existing volunteers now volunteering for more hours each week or month emerged with the actual output increase much smaller than that related to new volunteers. For example only six organisations (or 15% of respondents) reported that more than 50 pre-existing volunteers were now volunteering for more hours each week or month and the large majority (65% or 26 organisations) said that this applied to fewer than ten volunteers. Of these eight did not report any impact in terms of pre-existing volunteers volunteering for more hours each week or month.

In terms of the additional hours of volunteer time that had been given to their organisations each week as a result of their project, the findings suggest a fairly polarised picture – 21 organisations believed the contribution to be less than 50 hours per week whilst nine believed it to be over 100 hours a week. Again WAC funded projects were much more likely to specify the highest contribution whilst MV funded projects were more likely to specify the lower contributions. Quite a few organisations were unable to provide this data to us (either as they did not have this information to hand during the interview or because they did not collect it).

It would appear that the grant funding has gone a fair way to help the organisations involved address some of their critical challenges. The key ways in which the funding was identified as having had a very large impact are:

- Overcoming difficulties around training and upskilling volunteers (with 36% of organisations saying the project had had a very large impact). Several of the organisations we visited talked of formal training programmes that had been put into place as part of the project. For example one organisation in receipt of funding via the VWF has been able to develop and deliver a comprehensive training package for new volunteers recruited via the programme leading to an OCN Level 2 Mentor qualification. Another MV funded organisation was able to offer a NVQ Level 2 Certificate in Sports Leadership as part of the programme;
- Overcoming difficulties recruiting new volunteers (with 34% of organisations saying the project had had a very large impact). The majority of organisations we visited argued that the funding had been

crucial in allowing them to focus on attracting new volunteers - mostly by having staff in place to enhance the recruitment drive;

- Overcoming difficulties providing volunteering opportunities or placements (with 32% of organisations saying the project had had a very large impact).

The funding is not perceived as having been quite so effective in addressing other volunteering challenges such as helping to address the difficulties of managing volunteers (28% believed that the funding had either had no impact or a small impact upon this area) and overcoming the difficulties in retaining volunteers (with 26% of the view that the funding had either had no impact or a small impact upon this area).

In addition to meeting these challenges, several of the organisations were able to identify other benefits of being involved. These included:

- Improved recognition and positioning of the organisation – in several cases the promotional activity that had been undertaken via the project had helped them become a more attractive option to their target volunteering audience – for example, countering stereotyped images;
- Improved links and partnerships with other organisations be they schools, community groups or delivery organisations;
- Enabling organisations to continue or expand their service provision;
- Improved quality of the service provided by volunteers as a result of increasing training and investment made in selected applicants: *“the standard of volunteers is better”*;
- Improved enthusiasm amongst the existing pool of volunteers;
- Improved engagement with specific groups and their associated representative organisations e.g. BMEs, young people.

Only two of the organisations cited any disadvantages of being involved, with both identifying this being related to the increased paperwork involved.

The issue of tapering funding was discussed at length with those organisations in receipt of VWF grants. Both funded organisations and stakeholders pointed to the logic of this tapering model as it was intended to reduce the organisation's dependency upon the grant funds and encourage

them to secure other non-governmental sources of funding. However in reality questions were raised about whether this model was working. We did not come across any projects who believed that their activities would be completely sustainable after the third year of funding: *"because we lose volunteers we have to be constantly recruiting new ones"*. Several VWF funded organisations pointed that they constantly are looking at all sources of possible funding to support the recruitment, training and management of volunteers and this would always be the case: in one case, the organisation had accessed three-year VWF on a number of occasions, using other private sector charitable funding to fill the gaps in the 'fallow years' when they were not eligible for VWF.

4.2.8 Impact upon Volunteers

The survey suggested that the projects have been able to provide a number of benefits to the volunteers involved in terms of personal development, with the greatest of these being increased self- confidence, followed by enhancing their skills and work experience. A slightly lower number thought that the experience had improved their volunteers' prospects of securing paid employment and only a few thought that the experiences had enabled volunteers to secure paid employment. It is possible that this proportion is lower as many of the volunteers were still involved with the projects at the time of survey.

The volunteers interviewed during the case-studies were probed about their motivation for getting involved. Around half of those interviewed identified altruistic reasons (particularly more mature volunteers who felt that they had a lot to give back to society) whilst the other half referred to personal development opportunities:

- *"I used to work in a factory and got made redundant at the start of the year. A friend told me about this project and I felt it offered me a complete career change"* (VWF project);
- *"I'm studying for a childcare qualification at college at the moment but am thinking about getting into youth services. I can't get that experience on my college placements so this was the ideal thing for me"* (VWF project);

- *“Some of the young people are quite far away from getting jobs or going to college. So with them it a case of one step at a time. Just getting them to talk to people, make friends, is a big thing”.* (MV project manager);
- One MV volunteer believed that the experience she had obtained of working with younger children would be relevant to her future career, particularly if she were to enter the teaching profession;
- Another MV funded organisation was aware of the value of the MV award amongst volunteers when applying for university placements or future work opportunities.

In the main it would appear that the vast majority of volunteers involved with the projects had some previous experience of volunteering with other organisations (with 30 of the organisations surveyed or 63% believing that either all or some of the volunteers had done so previously). Only a few (six organisations) stated that none of their volunteers had previous volunteering experiences and these were much more likely to be organisations funded via the MV programme³⁰. This finding was reinforced in our visits to funded organisations – volunteers who were involved with WAC projects were much more likely to have previous volunteering experiences whilst MV volunteers did not.

The suggestion that grant funded organisations are at least in some cases attracting the already converted is also reinforced by the responses given by surveyed organisations when asked about what the new volunteers attracted through the project would have done had the project had not existed. Overall, just under half of the organisations (23 or 46%) believed that the individuals recruited as a result of their project would have explored either other volunteering opportunities or paid employment or a mix of both, had the project not recruited them, with a quarter of organisations (13 organisations or 27%) stating that the individuals involved would not have pursued other volunteering had the project not existed (and the balance responding that they did not know). Responses from volunteers interviewed reinforced this variation with comments varying from *“probably I would sit at home”* to *“you could say I’m a serial volunteer, so yes, I would have found something else [i.e. volunteering]”*.

These findings raise some important questions about the ability of the WAC and VWF grant programmes to target wholly 'new' volunteers as opposed to drawing in individuals who are already contributing towards the volunteering capacity within Wales. Indeed, it is likely that in some cases, volunteers may even be being 'poached' from other volunteering activities by the funding. However we must not underestimate the ability of such projects in tackling the Third Dimension's agenda of increasing the commitment made by existing volunteers.

Moreover, a common type of feedback given by volunteers during our fieldwork was around the quality of experience and recognition given to their work as a result of the projects. For those who had prior volunteering experiences to draw upon, many argued that their experiences via the projects had been much more worthwhile:

- *"you are made to feel so valued here – you're effectively one of the team";*
- *"the experience has been very rewarding – when you see the difference you can make to clients";*
- *"the quality of the volunteering experience has been impressive – from the training and induction made available, the way we are managed so professionally to the recognition given to our work".*

Several volunteers referred to their enjoyment and satisfaction in what they did (regardless of their original motivation of getting involved).

4.3 The Suitability of the Current Funding Structure

4.3.1 Promotion and Marketing

As might have been expected, stakeholders reported that a wide variety of methods have been adopted by the WCVA to directly promote the three grant programmes to target organisations. These included:

- making information and the grant application documentation available on their website: *"the website is the crucial tool, because it's always live and in theory it's always up to date";*

³⁰ The remaining organisations could not provide this information for various reasons.

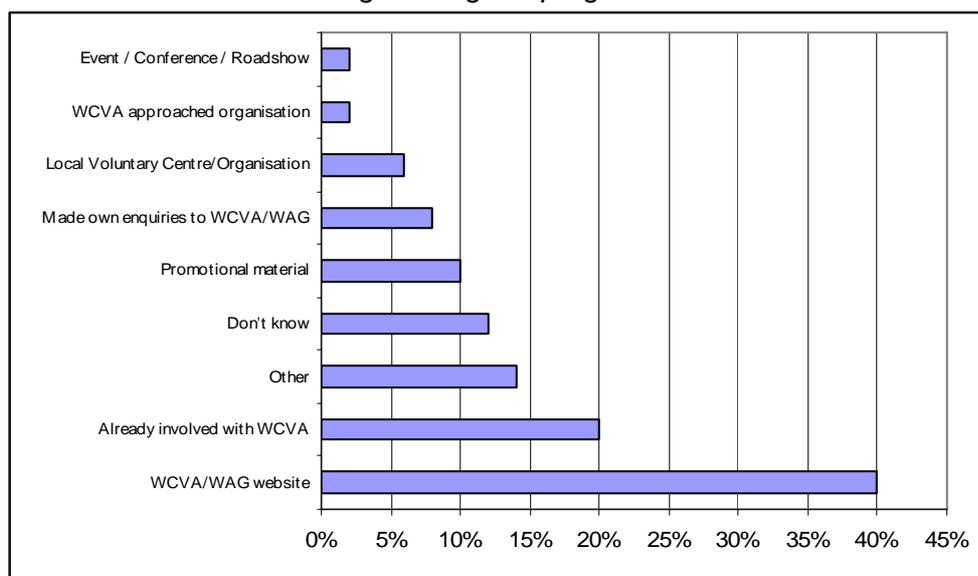
- promotional material such as WCVA's e-briefing newsletter;
- signposting to the grant programmes via their Help Desk;
- adverts in various magazines (such as the Network Wales newspaper) and mail shots;
- promotion via intermediary providers/networks working with target organisations (e.g. Voluntary Action Network and youth services);
- attendance and presentations at events run by CVCs.

Stakeholders believed that the approaches adopted had been sound and none suggested ways in which marketing or promotion needed to be improved. As a result stakeholders believed that awareness of the grant programmes was good amongst voluntary organisations in Wales. This was evidenced by *“the fact that there are generally high levels of applications [which] implies that the programmes are relatively well known”*. In some cases it was felt that a recent increase in grant funding interest had been experienced due to the reduction in the grants available to the sector via the Arts and Sports Councils (the effects of the Olympics upon funds in Wales).

Amongst the surveyed organisations the most common means of coming to hear about the various grant programmes by far was through the WCVA/WAG website (see Chart 4.6). This is of no surprise given the wealth of information available on the WCVA's website on each grant programme (including downloadable application packs) and the high profile the WCVA has within the sector more generally. Interestingly nearly all (18 of 20) of the organisations who had selected this option were funded via the VWF grant programme. By contrast, only one organisation (2%) said it had first found out about the schemes through attendance at an event or roadshow.

A fifth of organisations claimed to be already involved with the WVCA prior to finding out about the grant programme and these were much more likely to be WAC funded organisations. This finding was echoed by the comments made by a couple of the stakeholders interviewed - one stakeholder did raise concerns that the promotion may be only reaching those organisations already well entrenched within the WCVA. Another stakeholder also felt that the WCVA had not overly-promoted the WAC fund for fear that it would have been hugely over-subscribed.

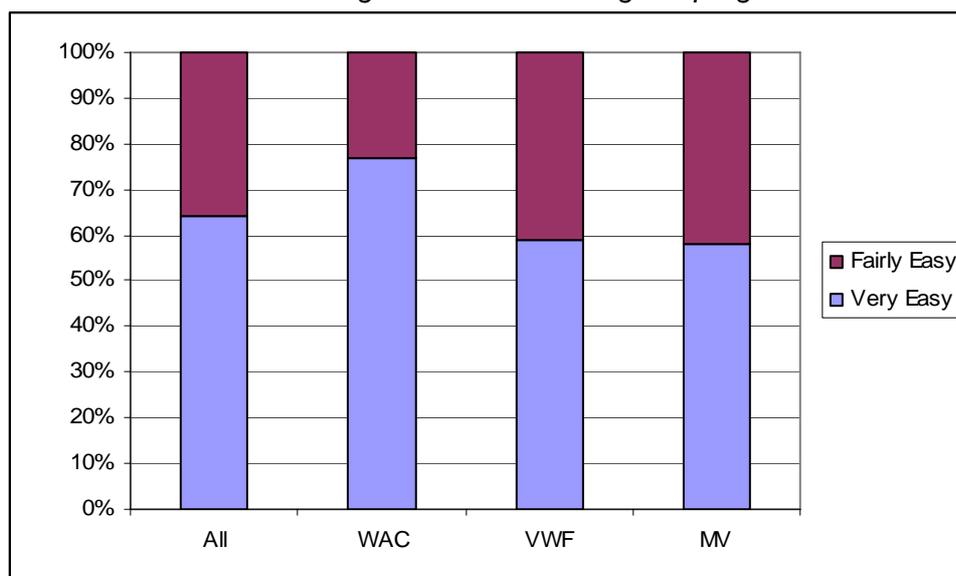
Chart 4.6: Method of hearing about grant programme



All surveyed respondents believed that it had been easy to obtain information about their respective grant programme (see Chart 4.7). Organisations funded via WAC were more likely than the other two to state that this experience had been very easy but this may reflect the sophistication of the organisations being funded via this grant regime.

Given their positive experience the majority of respondents could not offer suggestions of any ways in which the information about the grant programme could have been made more readily available, and several complemented the WVCA on the wealth of information available on its website. One respondent suggested the focus should be in the future upon raising awareness of the grant programmes amongst smaller organisations as *“information is readily available once you are aware that the grant programme exists!”*.

Chart 4.7: Ease of obtaining information about grant programme



4.3.2 Branding

The branding of the grant programmes was discussed during the stakeholder consultations, with mixed views about the value the three current brands in evidence. Overall stakeholders believed that the MV brand carried the “greatest recognition” and “affection” amongst its target audiences but were less convinced about the value of maintaining it – some stakeholders regarded the brand as a widely- and well-recognised brand that should be kept whilst others pointed to its “archaic” nature. Some of the arguments for modernising this brand were particularly strong - the fact that England has adopted an alternative brand (V Awards), Scotland is reviewing its MV programme and that the association with the term ‘Millennium’ was deemed to have become out-dated for the audience it was targeting.

There was less debate about the other two brands, although some stakeholders argued that both VWF and WAC were by now widely recognised brands within the sector.

4.3.3 Grant Application Process

Each grant programme appears to have adopted comprehensive application processes which include the following elements:

- Application forms – individual forms which vary in length and nature of questioning;

- Application guidance notes – individual guidance notes which are largely based on providing advice for each question posed in the application form;
- Equal opportunities monitoring form – to collect information about the applicant organisation and its employees and volunteers;
- Project Assessor grant assessment form – used by the project assessor to assess eligibility criteria and organisational fitness as well as to score project proposal;
- Grant Panel assessment form - used by grant panel to score project proposals;
- Grant programme helpline – usually staffed by the respective grant assessor.

We believe that the documentation adopted has been comprehensive and largely fit for purpose. We would however make the following observations:

- At present WAC applicants are able to define their own project's targets and we believe that it would be beneficial for the WAC application to ask applicants to indicate outputs against at least a common core of targets in addition to these (e.g. number of new volunteers);
- There is no consistency in the requirements for applicants to provide targets against eligible target groups - for example WAC only asks applicants to define which target group it will focus upon whilst MV on the other hand is much more explicit about this area (despite grant sizes being far smaller);
- None of the applications probe about the quality of experiences that will be obtained by volunteers (i.e. whether it will be formal or informal volunteering) thus making any monitoring against Third Dimension objectives around this area difficult;
- There appears to be a lack of clarity and detailed guidance about the key objectives of the WAC scheme (i.e. what is meant by improving the infrastructure, capacity building, media and promotion and research). We believe that some examples of the type of activities that would be expected from applicants to be useful here;
- There is a lack of consistency in the approach adopted across application forms when asking about methods to be adopted for monitoring and evaluating the impact of funded projects – for example

(and despite the fact that the grants it awards are far smaller) MV specifically asks about evaluation and monitoring methods and provides examples of such methods (e.g. post project evaluation, end of project reports, portfolio evidence, case studies etc) whereas WAC is much less specific.

The feedback from funded organisations on the application process was, in overall terms, very positive. The large majority of surveyed respondents had found the grant application form either very or fairly easy to complete – only six organisations (or 14% of all respondents) stated otherwise³¹ although those in receipt of VWF and MV funding were more likely to identify difficulties than those in receipt of WAC funding (see chart 4.8). This could possibly be explained by the fact that WAC funded organisations had more prior experience of completing grant application forms and could draw on a wider support network from within their larger organisations.

Chart 4.8 Ease of completing the grant application form



Interestingly, stakeholders were more inclined to stress the need to simplify the application process than the applicant organisations themselves. For example one Volunteering Centre called for the need to simplify and shorten the application process for MV delivery providers: *“the application process is just too long for the amount of funding available – we’ve not attracted much interest here because organisations out there will access more money while*

³¹ Six of the surveyed respondents could not respond to this question as they had not been responsible for completing the application. All six were Active Community funded project staff.

having to provide less information elsewhere". Another stakeholder referred to complaints received in the past about *"long winded questions"*. However it would appear that several efforts have been made in the past to simplify the application forms and that any further steps in this direction was proving a difficult challenge.

Stakeholders involved in the delivery of the grant programmes stated that (unsurprisingly) smaller organisations were more likely to seek advice and guidance from the WCVA than larger, national organisations who were more likely to have expert teams in place to support the application process. They reinforced the importance of providing this support even though the larger organisations were considered *"easier targets"* as there was often a special value in the type of voluntary activity offered by small locally based projects.

Stakeholders also noted that there was often a greater risk in supporting smaller and less experienced organisations and that effective monitoring systems needed to be adopted to identify any issues with this projects at an early stage in their delivery.

The small number of survey respondents who had reported difficulties in completing the application forms were asked to provide more detail about their experiences and some of the comments included:

- Their lack of experience in completing application forms: *"this was the first grant application I had ever completed. It was difficult to estimate costs such as travel. I estimated incorrectly so we have a problem now in paying for volunteer travel costs"*;
- Difficulties associated in planning ahead: *"the form had to be completed six months before recruitment and because the needs and interests of new volunteers were unknown at that point we don't have enough money to cover their training needs in particular areas"*.
- Difficulties with the form itself: *"unnecessary information required"*, *"questions kept repeating themselves"* and *"lengthy and too detailed"*.

When asked about changes they would wish to see made to the application forms a small number of surveyed respondents suggested the following:

- The provision of a web-based application form that can be saved and returned to and/or electronic submission of the current application form;
- Reducing what appear to be repetitive questioning on current application forms;
- Provision of training and support for first-time grant applicants (e.g. reviewing draft applications and providing advice on areas such as expenses costs): as such provision has, in fact, been made available via the WCVA, this perhaps signals the need to try even harder to ensure that potential applicants are aware of these opportunities.

Surveyed respondents were asked to rate particular aspects of the grant application and approval process and feedback was very positive:

- All respondents were of the opinion that the WVCA had dealt with their enquiries either very well or well;
- All but one of the respondents believed that the speed with which the application was approved had been either very good or good. This may well reflect the recent decision taken by the WCVA to move back the VWF grants panel meeting to November/December so that applicants are informed of the outcome in January as opposed to February or March in previous years, giving them more time to prepare for an April start;
- All respondents were of the opinion that the notification about the outcome of the grant application had been either very good or good (though perhaps this is unsurprising as it was only successful applicants who were questioned!).

In terms of changes or improvements to the grant application and approval process respondents suggested the following ideas:

- For VWF, there was strong support for moving away from an annual application and re-application to a three-year application process which would reduce the time commitments significantly for such organisations. The majority, but not all, of the stakeholders interviewed were aware of this additional burden upon VWF funded projects and agreed that the issue needed to be addressed so as to ensure better value for money for this grant programme in moving forward;

- For MV, overcoming the issue of a quarterly gap in funding that comes about as a result of having to submit an end of year report before the following year's funding application will be considered. This currently generates a problem in retaining volunteers and some organisations were finding that they had to start from scratch again in year two. Two of the MV organisations visited noted that they had missed out on MV funding for a year as the application timescale had become too misaligned with the academic year and whilst this had not led to the projects not running in either case, it had placed a strain on funding and reduced the scale of activity. Again stakeholders involved in the delivery of MV acknowledged that this issue caused problems for some organisations and that it was not an easy issue to resolve given the need for the grants panel to see progress against application targets. It was suggested that it may be possible for the MV grants panel to base a decision upon interim reports rather than final project reports in future;
- The introduction of a 'passport scheme' where standard information such as accounts for organisations are submitted once to the WCVA and stored for future applications. We understand that the WCVA has recently adopted such a scheme (whereby constitutional documentation are submitted once to the WCVA and stored under the Passport initiative for use against future applications) and the feedback from voluntary organisations suggest that this is a welcome move.

Stakeholders on the whole took the view that the application processes and procedures adopted by the WCVA had been very appropriate. Whilst recognising the need to be able to adopt electronic application submissions in the future, some were of the view that paper based applications should also be maintained to allow those completing application in writing to continue to do so should they wish.

4.3.4 Quality of Applications

Stakeholders who were involved with the application process were generally content with the quality of applications coming forward for the three grant programmes. It was felt that the quality of the WAC applications are

somewhat better than the other two – possibly a reflection of two factors, firstly, the fact that organisations put in more effort into this application as it is only available once every three years in comparison with the VWF grant which tends to receive more speculative applications; and secondly, WAC applications are more likely to be made by the larger voluntary organisations who have greater experience of fund application. In the case of the MV fund, stakeholders involved in the application assessments had experienced a direct improvement in the quality of applications being submitted for that grant when training had been made available beforehand.

Whilst there was a general acknowledgement that funds were oversubscribed compared to the amount of funding available, this was considered to be a healthy situation. It was not felt that funds were so vastly oversubscribed that strong applications were being turned down or that an increase in budget was urgent – although, given the evidence in Section 4.2.3, it might be thought that VWF is experiencing such high levels of demand that there must be a risk of good projects being rejected.

Stakeholders implied that appropriate procedures were established for unsuccessful applicants to appeal. Although we did not collect data on the number of appeals made against each grant programme, stakeholders suggested that not many organisations had taken this route arguing instead that the feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants had eliminated the need for appeals.

4.3.5 Effectiveness of Grants Panels

A grant panel facilitated by the WCVA has been established for each grant programme and considers the recommendations made by the grant assessor. Those stakeholders who were able to comment felt that the membership of these panels was appropriate, including good representation from the third sector as well as Welsh Assembly Government officials as observers: the panels were considered an important method of keeping the Welsh Assembly Government in touch with programme progress and issues. The grants awarding panels were considered to be well managed and to contribute effectively to the decision making processes, as illustrated by the following comments:

"I think the panel system is very robust. There are clear terms of reference, clear framework from which projects are scored"

"WCVA certainly has very clear processes and procedures in place for running grant panels."

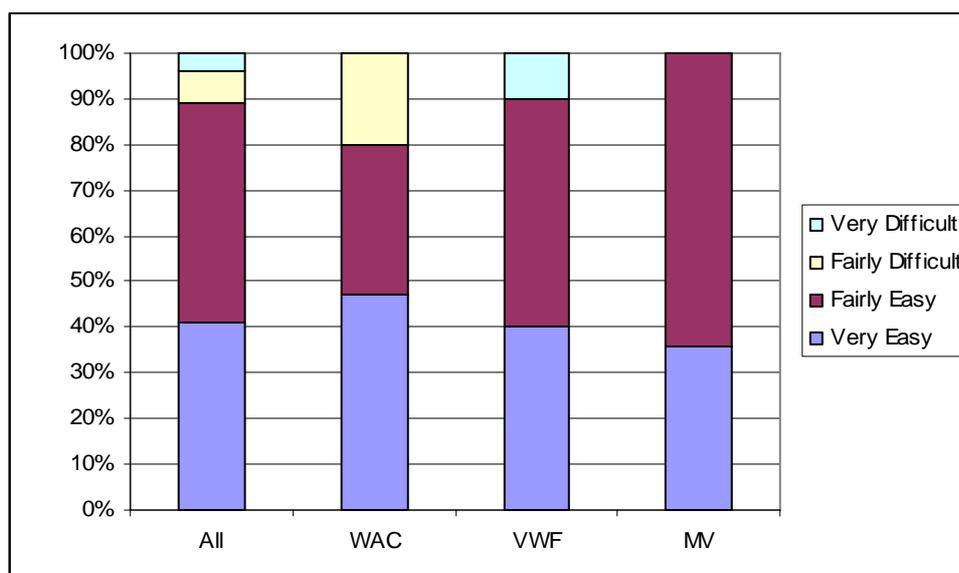
One informant noted that application forms were sent to members well in advance of meetings and the focus of the discussion was on difficult cases. Feedback suggested that the panels effectively challenged assessors' views of applications and that they were not a simple rubber-stamp. Generally it was felt that the scoring assessments were valuable and that there was also sufficient flexibility within the system to account for wider factors.

Some concerns were however expressed about the relatively high turnover of panel membership as well as the difficulties faced by some of the panels in recruiting and securing the input of young people as members.

4.3.6 Grant Monitoring

Feedback from the surveyed respondents tends to suggest that they faced slightly more difficulties completing the grant monitoring forms in comparison with the grant application forms, with five of the organisations (or 7% of respondents) noting these to be either fairly or very difficult. Three of these organisations were in receipt of WAC funding and the other two in receipt of VWF funding. Having said this, 19 organisations (or 41% of respondents) found the monitoring forms very easy to complete and a further 22 organisations (or 48% of respondents) found them to be fairly easy, as shown in Chart 4.9.

Chart 4.9 Ease of completing grant monitoring forms



Surveyed respondents were asked how (if at all) the monitoring forms could be improved. The majority were content with the existing forms themselves but a few suggestions were made:

- Reducing their frequency (particularly the VWF) to annual or six-monthly monitoring reports (this issue was cited by four of the VWF respondents);
- Removing the *“repetitive nature of some of the questions”*;
- Providing more space to report on progress *“not enough room to write everything down and to write it in so many words. It looks as if we haven't done much work”*.

The frequency of the VWF reporting was discussed with stakeholders who in the main were aware of the frustration amongst organisations about the onerous reporting. A few defended the regular monitoring approach adopted by this grant programme, particularly during the first year of funding, as it enabled the WCVA to assess project progress and tackle any areas of under-performance at a very early stage in the process. It was argued that less frequent monitoring, say on a six monthly basis, might result in problems being identified too late in the day with the end result being projects not getting their second year funding. The majority of stakeholders however argued that there was a need to reduce the reporting burden imposed upon the VWF projects, particularly in years two and three when projects would be well established and bring it into line with the six monthly reporting adopted by

WAC and MV. This change it was claimed by some stakeholders would also lead to the grant programme offering better value for money

Over half (29 organisations or 59% of surveyed respondents³²) had experienced a monitoring visit from a WCVA grant assessor during the lifetime of the project. As would have been expected given the scale and numbers involved, this proportion varied hugely across the three grant programmes – with all of the WAC funded projects, around half of the VWF and only two of the MV projects having received a monitoring visit. This confirmed the approach adopted by the WCVA who stated that monitoring visits ranged from all of the WAC projects to around 5% of the MV projects. The interviews with grant funded organisations revealed that some monitoring visits had been requested by the WCVA but it had proved impossible to arrange them due to the fact that they would have to take place in the evening.

All respondents who could comment upon the monitoring visit (22 in all) were satisfied with the process involved and this was echoed in our case study interviews, where interviewees were generally very complementary about the experience. Survey respondents stated that they had been required to make available a range of data and information to the assessor including:

- Project accounting information and systems;
- Project progress reports;
- Evidence for performance indicator outputs;
- Project monitoring systems;
- Case studies of volunteers.

None of the organisations believed that changes were required to the monitoring visits.

Stakeholders also gave positive feedback upon the monitoring visits process and their usefulness. Project assessors commented that the visits were a particularly useful way of understanding how organisations were using the funds, assess progress and discuss any implementation problems they were experiencing.

³² One did not respond to this question.

4.3.7 Grants Programme Management

Overall both grant funded organisations and stakeholders were very complementary about WCVA's management of the grant schemes. Several stated that the WCVA was the right organisation to manage the grants programme in Wales as it was a lead body for volunteering in Wales. Comments made on the grants programme management by external (to WCVA) stakeholders included:

"I think it's excellent. I think they do a very good job, I think they are thorough".

"They have very good systems in place."

Their views were supported by facts such as the lack of complaints made by organisations to the Welsh Assembly Government and the positive recent report prepared by the Welsh Assembly Government's internal auditors on the WCVA's systems. There was an issue of programme underspend during the last financial year but this was considered a minor issue in the context of a generally well managed grant programme. Of greater significance has been the relatively high staff turnover within the WCVA over the duration of the grant schemes but it was not felt that this had had any significant detrimental effect upon the performance of the grant programmes.

The working relationship between WCVA and Welsh Assembly Government officers, described by one stakeholder as *"quite hands off"*, was deemed to be very good and appropriate by all those interviewed. As already noted, Welsh Assembly Government representatives also contribute as observers to the grants panels, and this role was considered a valuable one by all concerned. Welsh Assembly Government representatives believed that they had been kept fully informed about programme progress via regular WCVA reporting and that any problems were drawn to their attention in a timely manner. Likewise WCVA representatives believed that they had a strong and open working relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government, so that any problems were reported and resolved quickly. An example of the smooth working of relationships was said to be the speed with which WCVA and the Welsh Assembly Government had worked together to resolve the situation

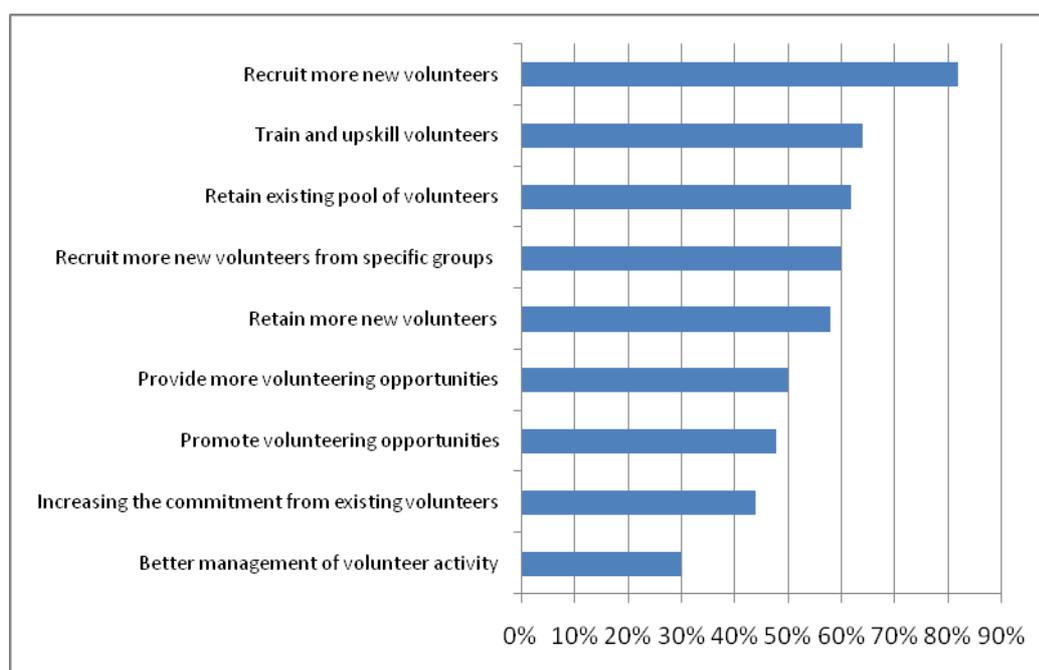
created when the Weston Spirit, one of the WAC funded organisations, had run into financial difficulties, which had enabled an alternative provider to be identified and its application developed and approved very quickly.

4.4 Future Funding Structure

4.4.1 Organisations' Future Plans

The surveyed organisations were asked about their future plans for volunteering activities and the single most important objective identified by the large majority of those interviewed (41 organisations or 82% of respondents) was to recruit more new volunteers, as shown in Chart 4.10.

Chart 4.10 Organisations' Future Volunteering Plans



This reflects the findings from the fieldwork that, for many organisations, recruiting new volunteers to replace the natural turnover is a constant challenge. Other goals, such as training and upskilling existing or new volunteers and retaining the existing pool of volunteers were also deemed to be important but less critical with around two-thirds (or 32 and 31 organisations) identifying these objectives respectively. Response from the MV funded organisations followed a slightly different pattern to the other two grant programmes with respondents placing a greater focus upon training and

upskilling their volunteers. Only a minority (15 organisations or 30%) believed that they needed to focus upon better management of volunteer activity, possibly suggesting that this element had been dealt with during the project lifetime (or conversely reflecting a degree of complacency over these issues).

The large majority of organisations (43 organisations or 86% of respondents) indicated that they intended to fund these future plans (in part at least) via the WCVA volunteering grant schemes with fewer selecting other options such as drawing on the organisation's own resources (23 organisations or 46%), fund raising (19 organisations or 38%) and other grant schemes (12 organisations or 24%). This is an important sign of the lack of progress towards (and arguably impossibility for many third sector organisations of) creating a self-sustaining way to finance the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers.

VWF and MV funded organisations were more likely to identify the grant schemes as a potential future funding route which could be explained by the fact that year 1 VWF projects would anticipate being able to submit for years 2 and 3 funding and MV projects being able to submit ongoing annual applications. VWF funded projects were much more likely to identify their own organisation's resources as a potential funding source (at 82%) which may be a result of two factors - better project exit strategy planning within this funding programme and these organisations being much more likely to state that the projects would have gone ahead in the same way with funding from elsewhere (perhaps suggesting, despite the aims of the scheme, that the VWF is not really a fund of last resort). WAC funded projects were twice as likely to identify other grant schemes as a potential future funding source (at 44%) suggesting that these organisations may be more likely to be able to access alternative sources of funding available via the private sector or local authorities. Only two organisations mentioned other sources of funding and these included GwirVol, Lottery and ECHR funds.

4.4.2 Views on Future Funding Structure

The consultation with stakeholders considered whether it was appropriate to maintain the current grant funding structure and if not, what alternative structure would be most suitable. Overall there was no real consensus on this issue amongst stakeholders although most recognised that the policy agenda

had moved forward since the establishment of the grant programmes and that some changes needed to be implemented as a result.

Mixed views were conveyed about any ideas that would streamline and merge the grant funds, with several voicing their concerns that merging any of the grant programmes would result in a reduction in awareness within the sector. These stakeholders felt that the current separation of the grant programmes allows organisations to easily associate themselves with the brand that reflects their own objectives: *"pigeon holing makes it easier to understand"*. There was also a concern that removing the distinction between, for example, WAC and VWF might result in the larger organisations funded under WAC 'squeezing out' organisations which were smaller and had less resources to develop polished funded applications.

While many stakeholders could see the benefits of introducing a smaller number of funding streams as a logical progression of current arrangements, there was much uncertainty as to whether it would work in practice.

More generally, it was felt, particularly within the third sector itself, that it was critical to safeguard the level of funding currently available via the three grant programmes due to the recent drop in funding generally available for the sector as a result of the recession. It was stressed by several individuals that any economies of scale that might result from merging grant programmes should be transferred back into the funding pot.

There was more widespread support for reviewing the MV grant programme and exploring the possibility of both re-naming and re-branding this award and bringing it closer to the GwirVol initiative. Several stakeholders highlighted the need to *"protect it within GwirVol"* however so that there be a continued emphasis on *"sustained volunteering"*. Overall stakeholders could see the value and logic of joining up the GwirVol and MV initiatives.

Some stakeholders suggested the possibility of merging the WAC and VWF grant programmes, but this was regarded a contentious issue by many:

“if the criteria are too broad, anything goes and therefore you don't quite know what the expectation is and what is needed by the funder in order to make the decision. I would argue for keeping them separate to provide that clarity”.

“Separating does have some benefits. If you target say young people then marketing and promotion can be targeted specifically towards young people. One larger programme might be less attractive to specific groups”.

However several stakeholders believed that the current disadvantages within these funding streams needed to be resolved – issues such as the lack of flexibility within WAC to respond to government priorities more frequently than every three years; the lack of certainty within the VWF fund due to the annual application process and the disproportionate amount of administration involved with the VWF grant. In moving forward several individuals suggested that the WAC and VWF fund could be merged into one flexible grant programme that would be based on the principle of a rolling three year grant funding programme. This would allow the Welsh Assembly Government to respond to policy requirements on a much more regular basis, allow annual entry points for voluntary organisations to the funding regime and give those securing funding medium-term security (i.e. three years).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

We now, in conclusion, return to explore the overall evaluation aims and objectives.

Have the grant programmes, individually and as a whole, achieved their objectives and increased volunteering levels in Wales?

During 2008/09, with a budget of just under £2m., the three grant programmes collectively supported the recruitment of over 10,000 new volunteers. Even allowing for the fact that a significant proportion of these will have been new to the particular organisation rather than new to volunteering *per se*, this is a substantial figure that will go some way towards increasing volunteering activity levels in Wales. The evaluation suggests there is generally good performance against individual grant programme targets with a strong coverage of a wide target groups and geographical areas, albeit with some concerns that penetration in the more populated areas, such as the South Wales Valleys, may have been less.

At the same time, our findings do suggest that not all of these outputs can be attributed to the effects of the grant funding as a few organisations were reporting organisational wide achievements rather than those which specifically related to the project in question. Our findings also show that the definition of what constituted a 'new' volunteer was inconsistent across the projects we visited.

There are also some questions stemming from the evaluation about the extent to which the grant programmes have been able to attract individuals with no previous experience of volunteering, in other words to increase the proportion of all adults within Wales who volunteer in one form or another. Whilst this is an underlying objective for all grant programmes, MV appears to have been more effective than the others in supporting individuals who are genuinely new to volunteering – though this may largely be a function of the age profile.

Having said this, we would stress that increasing the volunteering contribution made by existing volunteers is also a worthy target (and one that certainly relates well to the 'instrumental' view of volunteering which sees it as key to third sector organisations' capacity to provide a depth and breadth of services and support to individuals and communities that could never be achieved through statutory provision) that has possibly not been given due consideration within the grant programme objectives and could be strengthened within future funds.

The evaluation has found evidence to suggest that projects are supporting many volunteers to develop a wide range of skills and experiences which they could take with them to future volunteering, study and employment opportunities. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that in many cases volunteers are equally driven by altruistic and personal development motivations.

While both of these motivations are clearly relevant to the Welsh Assembly Government's views of the value of volunteering, there is perhaps, scope for a more explicit explanation both in policy documentation and in terms of guidance for future grant schemes of the balance between different motivations (e.g. increasing the provision and quality of services and support offered by third sector organisations; personal development of individuals through volunteering; creating social inclusion and community cohesion by extending volunteering beyond the groups who already are most likely to volunteer). In this sense, the extent to which we have through this evaluation been able to judge the effectiveness with which the grant programmes have achieved their objectives has been hampered by a lack of clarity about the broader objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government in seeking to increase volunteering.

Turning to 'value for money' considerations, the findings do point to fairly similar estimates for the 'cost per new volunteer recruited' in each of the three programmes which ranges from some £140 -£300. However, the validity of such comparisons is severely limited by the diversity of target groups and project approaches in meeting what are distinct programme objectives. It does need to be recognised that even within programmes – and particularly within WAC where projects are very distinctive and tailored to the

requirements of the individual organisation (to an extent that WAC sometimes appears to be a framework for individually negotiated projects rather than a programme at all) – the diversity of projects makes it difficult to develop any sort of meaningful aggregate targets or performance indicators.

Nevertheless, any future funding arrangements may wish to consider including greater commonality across programmes, for example, in relation to clear targets set for 'the number of new volunteers recruited' and 'number of new volunteers hours input'. Additionally, moves to capture overall (cumulative) volunteer numbers and hours input would increase the robustness of the data and support better decision making on future resource allocation.

Is the current allocation of funds to each of the three volunteering schemes appropriate and the best way to achieve the overall objective of increasing volunteering across Wales?

When the grant programmes were initially established they were done so independently of each other. Overall they appear to have met the needs of the sector over the last few years and this is evidenced by the high demand for resources from within the sector. Demand for the VWF grant has been significantly higher than for MV and WAC with only a third of organisations who had submitted applications for funding over the last three years being successful compared to half of the WAC and three-quarters of MV applicants. This does raise some questions about the proportional split in funding and suggests that the VWF grant could have benefited from a slightly greater share.

Feedback from grant recipient organisations points to the WCVA being the most obvious organisation to manage grant schemes to increase volunteering, given their high profile within the sector and the degree of trust which they command from third sector organisations, and it is clear from the feedback from both stakeholders and more importantly the recipient organisations that the WCVA has managed the schemes professionally and effectively. The grant programmes have been promoted effectively and the grant application and approval process managed efficiently. The findings do point to some areas where application forms could be simplified and guidance

offered to applicants improved. Furthermore issues raised on MV application timescales has restricted some organisations from securing annual funding and the VWF could have secured greater value for money had the relatively greater administrative burden been removed. Lastly the WCVA could have shown slightly more flexibility in undertaking monitoring visits outside of normal office working hours in order to accommodate the needs of grant recipient organisations who meet during the evenings.

Whilst the funding structure has worked well up to date we believe that it would be timely to now strive towards greater coherence, less duplication and a more relevant offering to the sector. We also are of the view that some changes need to be implemented so as to increase funding security for organisations (particularly those funding via VWF) and offer greater flexibility to the Welsh Assembly Government. Our thoughts on these changes are outlined in Section 6 (Recommendations).

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

In the light of the evidence of demand, and the need for ongoing support to the third sector to attract and retain volunteers, we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government continue to provide funding to support volunteering in Wales at least the same level as over the last three years. We recommend that the current proportional split across the three programmes be reviewed and funding for the VWF programme be proportionally increased.

Recommendation 2

Given the evidence from our fieldwork with grant recipient organisations of considerable satisfaction with the way in which the schemes have been managed and the positive feedback provided by WAG on the effectiveness of the administration of the current schemes by the WCVA, we recommend that (insofar as procurement processes allow) the Welsh Assembly Government continue to use the WCVA as its agent for managing specific volunteering grant schemes.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government and the WCVA and any future grant manager work together towards setting a limited common core of performance indicators and targets for all volunteering grant programmes and projects which would facilitate the compiling of aggregate data but which would not exclude developing more tailored targets for individual projects (particularly larger or more innovative ones). These might include number of new volunteers recruited (with some simplified demographic data); number of additional volunteer hours contributed; number of volunteers trained. These targets need to be clearly defined and communicated adequately to funded grant organisations. Furthermore we believe that monitoring and capturing cumulative data on volunteer numbers and time contribution would strengthen the robustness of the data available.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that, in moving forward, the Welsh Assembly Government seek to provide greater clarity about the range of ultimate objectives it seeks

to reach through encouraging volunteering in general and through funding schemes in particular (including the role of volunteering in enabling service delivery; the role of volunteering in promoting personal development and the contribution of volunteering to building social inclusion and community cohesion). To the extent that this highlights the importance of attracting and offering opportunities to individuals with little or no previous experience of volunteering, we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government and WCVA or any future grant manager explore whether specific targets need to be set and monitored for individuals who are not currently volunteering.

Recommendation 5

Given the clear evidence of the relatively low engagement of young people with volunteering, we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government continue to focus attention on encouraging and sustaining volunteering by young people through support for a specific youth-focused strand of grant funding. We believe that, with the WCVA or any future grant manager, it should explore the possibility of incorporating the MV programme into GwirVol but ensuring that the objectives of sustained volunteering within MV are not lost in doing so. At the same time we believe that there will be merit in re-naming and re-branding this award in line with such developments outside of Wales.

Recommendation 6

In taking forward Recommendation 5, we recommend that the MV application and approval process should seek to address the problem facing funded organisations (particularly those who are working within academic cycles) that restricts them from submitting regular annual applications.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that both the WAC and VWF grant programmes be adapted into three year rolling grant programmes to give greater flexibility and security for both the Welsh Assembly Government and the third sector respectively. In both cases, an on-line application process should be developed as an alternative to, but not replacement for, the hard copy version.

Recommendation 8

In respect of VWF, we therefore recommend the removal of the need to apply for the VWF fund on an annual basis so as to increase security for funded organisations and reduce the administrative burden imposed on them: organisations should apply for three year funding, on the basis that indicative allocations for the second and third year will be confirmed only on the basis of satisfactory progress against targets. We also recommend the removal of the current tapering structure within VWF (retaining the overall project funding cap of £43,750 but allowing for flexibility as to how it is distributed over the three year period): although the current approach appears logical it is not having the desired impact upon volunteering organisations in terms of moving them towards sustainability and in practical terms is counter-intuitive since projects often take time to build up activity. We also recommend that the VWF should move towards a six-monthly reporting model (particularly during years two and three of funding although we can appreciate the value of more frequent reporting during the first six months of a project).

Recommendation 9

By bringing both WAC and VWF into line in terms of offering three-year funding on a rolling basis, we recommend that consideration be given to the merits of further integration between the two and introducing a single grant programme. If this option were to be taken we recommend ring-fencing funds for smaller projects and local organisations at a somewhat higher level than currently allocated to VWF (given the higher demand for this fund) and that the remaining funds be made available to all Wales or regional projects. If the two funds continue to be operated separately, we recommend that at the end of the current round of WAC, there is some virement from WAC to VWF to reflect this demand.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the WCVA should work with Volunteer Centres and CVCs in those areas (notably the South Wales Valleys) which appear under-represented in terms of applications for funding to identify the reasons for this and develop a strategy to address any capacity issues which may lie behind this. While spatial ring-fencing of funds is likely to lead to undesirable bureaucracy, some element of this may need to be considered in the longer term if the situation persists. We also recommend that WCVA ensure that

CVCs and Volunteer Centres are made aware of projects being funded within their areas by the grant scheme(s).

Recommendation 11

Given budgetary pressures and the current high level of demand for the schemes (particularly VWF), as well as other policy developments (e.g. DWP funding for volunteering opportunities for the unemployed), we recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government keep under review the particular groups to be targeted in terms of support for volunteering and base decisions on evidence from, for example, the Living in Wales survey about the prevalence of volunteering. In particular, the Welsh Assembly Government should consider the case for maintaining an emphasis on older people in this particular context.

ANNEX 1

Consultations Undertaken

Organisation	Contact Person
Iain Willox	Head of Third Sector Unit, WAG
Amanda Williams	Third Sector Unit, WAG
Paul Dunhill	Third Sector Unit, WAG
Tim Day	Director of Volunteering, WCVA
Tessa White	Engagement Gateway & Grants Manager, WCVA
Leah Doherty	Millennium Volunteers Co-ordinator and GwirVol representative, WCVA
Mark Bendon	Volunteering in Wales Fund Assessor, WCVA
Michael Dupree	Wales: The Active Community Assessor, WCVA
Hayley Bevan	Powys Volunteer Centre
Alison Steere	Vale Volunteer Bureau (VALE)
Delyth Vaughan	Mantell Gwynedd
Jane Pagler	Chair of Millennium Volunteers Advisory Panel

Grant Recipient Organisations Interviewed

Grant Programme	Organisation
VWF	BCA Independent Advocacy Services
VWF	The Bridge Mentoring Plus Scheme
VWF	Pen yr Enfys
WAC	Tros Cynnal
WAC	BCTV Cymru
WAC	Prime Cymru
WAC	Scope
WAC	St John Cymru-Wales
WAC	Sustrans Cymru
MV	Flintshire High School
MV	Swansea Community Farm
MV	Girlguiding Ceredigion

ANNEX 2 Telephone Survey Questionnaire

Old Bell 3 has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to carry out an evaluation of its volunteering grant programmes managed by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). I understand that [name of organisation] has received a grant through one of the grant programmes [Active Community / Volunteering in Wales Fund/ Millennium Volunteers] to increase and develop its volunteer base.

Would you be prepared to tell me briefly about the grant that you have received and what difference it has made to your organisation? This should only take around 20 minutes of your time and all your responses will be kept confidential. Feedback from respondents will be used to help inform Welsh Assembly Government's policies for supporting volunteering activity in Wales.

Confirm respondent is happy to proceed.

1. CODE: Grant Programme

- The Active Community*
- Volunteering in Wales Fund*
- Millennium Volunteers*

Background Details for Organisation

2. Name of Organisation

3. What is the main activity of the organisation?

4. Which area of interest does the organisation cover? [Give one or two examples and classify response]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sport and recreation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Education and training</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Community</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>International aid and emergency relief</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Benevolent organisation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Housing</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Health and Social Care</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Advice and advocacy</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Children and Families</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Animal welfare</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Youth</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ethnic minorities</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Arts, Culture and Heritage</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Community justice</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Religion</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Employment</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Gender</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Volunteering</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Disability</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Intermediaries</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Environment</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other</i> |

If other please specify

5. Is the organisation:

- An independent organisation with a local area of interest (e.g. within one local authority)*
- An independent organisation with a regional area of interest*
- An independent organisation with an all-Wales interest*
- A local or regional branch of a larger UK wide organisation*

6. When was the organisation established?

- 2005 or later*
- 2000-2004*
- 1995-1999*
- 1990-1994*
- 1989 or earlier*
- D/K*

7. What is the turnover of the organisation? [Probe for 2008/9 financial year]

- £10,000 or less*
- £11,000 - £25,000*
- £26,000 - £50,000*
- £51,000 - £100,000*
- £101,000 - £250,000*
- £251,000 - £1 million*
- More than £1 million*
- D/K*

8. How many people were employed by the organisation in Wales when it applied for grant funding? [Probe for full time equivalent - don't include unpaid volunteers/Board members etc]

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>None</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>31-50</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1-10</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>51-100</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>11-20</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>100+</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>21-30</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>D/K</i> |

9. How many people were involved with the organisation as volunteers in Wales when it applied for grant funding? [Probe for all unpaid volunteers/Board members etc]

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>None</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>31-50</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1-10</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>51-100</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>11-20</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>100+</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>21-30</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>D/K</i> |

Grant Funding.

10. What was the total value of the grant your organisation applied for in the first instance?

- Up to £5,000
- Between £5,001 and £10,000
- Between £10,001 and £25,000
- Between £25,001 and £50,000
- Between £50,001 and £100,000
- Between £100,001 and £200,000
- £200,001 and over

**11. What was the total value of the grant awarded to your organisation?
[For Volunteering in Wales probe for total of grant awarded to date]**

- Up to £5,000
- Between £5,001 and £10,000
- Between £10,001 and £25,000
- Between £25,001 and £50,000
- Between £50,001 and £100,000
- Between £100,001 and £200,000
- £200,001 and over

**12. In what year was the grant first awarded to the organisation?
[For Volunteering in Wales probe for first year grant awarded]**

- 2009
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009

13. How much of the grant have you claimed from the WCVA (as at end of March 09)? [Probe for £000]

Aims and objectives of project.

**14. What volunteering challenges did the organisation face before it applied for the grant?
[Prompt and select all that apply]**

- Difficulties recruiting new volunteers
- Difficulties recruiting new volunteers from a diverse range of background and experience
- Difficulties retaining new volunteers
- Difficulties retaining existing volunteers
- Difficulties increasing the commitment from existing volunteers
- Difficulties providing volunteering opportunities/placements
- Difficulties around training and upskilling volunteers
- Difficulties promoting the organisation to potential volunteers
- Difficulties managing volunteers

- Other

If other please specify

15. What did the organisation hope to achieve with the grant? [Probe for project aims and objectives] [Select all that apply]

- Recruit new volunteers
- Recruit new volunteers from specific target groups (e.g. young people, disabled people, BMEs)
- Improve retention of volunteers
- Increase commitment from existing pool of volunteers
- Provide more volunteering opportunities/placements for individuals
- Train and upskill volunteers
- Promote volunteering opportunities to potential new volunteers
- Better management of volunteer scheme/activity
- Other

If other please specify

16. Which of the following local authority areas did the project funded by the grant cover? [Select all that apply]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All Wales | <input type="checkbox"/> Neath Port Talbot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anglesey | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridgend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gwynedd | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhondda Cynon Taf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conwy | <input type="checkbox"/> Merthyr Tydfil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denbighshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Torfaen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrexham | <input type="checkbox"/> Blaenau Gwent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flintshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Caerphilly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powys | <input type="checkbox"/> Newport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ceredigion | <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pembrokeshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Monmouthshire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carmarthenshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Vale of Glamorgan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swansea | |

Contact with the grant scheme.

17. How did the organisation come to hear about the grant programme in the first instance? [Select all that apply]

- Organisation/Individual already involved with WCVA
- Made own enquiries to WCVA/WAG
- WCVA approached organisation
- WCVA/WAG website
- Promotional material (e.g. newsletter, leaflet)
- Event / Conference / Roadshow
- Recommended by colleague/friend
- Don't know
- Other

If other please specify

18. How easy was it to obtain information about the grant programme?

- Very easy* Go to 20.
- Fairly easy* Go to 20.
- Fairly difficult* Go to 19.
- Very difficult* Go to 19.

19. [If Q18 = Fairly or very difficult]

Why was it difficult to obtain information about the grant programme?

20. How (if at all) could information about the grant programme have been more readily available?

21. How easy was it to complete the grant application form?

- Very easy*
- Fairly easy*
- Fairly difficult*
- Very difficult*

22. [If Q21 = Fairly or very difficult]

Why was it difficult to complete the grant application form?

23. How (if at all) could the grant application form be changed to make it easier for organisations to complete?

24. How would you rate the following aspects of the grant application and approval process?

	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Dealing with your enquiries	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The speed with which the application was approved	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Notifying you about the outcome of the grant application	<input type="checkbox"/>				

25. How, if at all, do you think the grant application or approval process could be improved?

Grant monitoring forms and visits.

- 26.** How easy to complete were/are the monitoring forms?
- Very easy
 - Fairly easy
 - Fairly difficult
 - Very difficult
- 27.** What changes (if any) would you like to see made to the monitoring forms?
- 28.** Did a WCVA grant assessor undertake a monitoring visit to your organisation?
- Yes
 - No
- 29.** [If Q28= Yes]
- Were you satisfied with the monitoring visit undertaken?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- 30.** [If Q28= Yes]
- What sort of information did you have to make available to the assessor?
- 31.** [If Q28= Yes]
- What changes (if any) would you like to see made to future monitoring visits?

Project targets and achievements

- 32.** Did the project have a specific target to meet for recruiting new volunteers?
- Yes
 - No
- 33.** [If Q32 = Yes] What was this target?

- 34.** [If Q32 = Yes] To what extent has this target been achieved?
- This target has already been achieved and exceeded*
 - This target has already been achieved*
 - This target has not been achieved but we are on track to achieving it*
 - This target is not likely to be achieved*
- 35.** [If Q34 = Not likely to achieve] Why is this target not likely to be achieved?
- 36.** Did the project have a specific target to meet for assisting individuals?
- Yes
 - No
- 37.** [If Q36 = Yes] What was this target?
- 38.** [If Q36 = Yes] To what extent has this target been achieved?
- This target has already been achieved and exceeded*
 - This target has already been achieved*
 - This target has not been achieved but we are on track to achieving it*
 - This target is not likely to be achieved*
- 39.** [If Q38 = Not likely to be achieved] Why is this target not likely to be achieved?
- 40.** Did the project have a specific target to meet for training individuals?
- Yes
 - No
- 41.** [If Q40 = Yes] What was this target?
- 42.** [If Q40 = Yes] To what extent has this target been achieved?
- This target has already been achieved and exceeded*
 - This target has already been achieved*
 - This target has not been achieved but we are on track to achieving it*
 - This target is not likely to be achieved*
- 43.** [If Q42 =Not likely to be achieved] Why is this target not likely to be achieved?

44. Did the project have a specific target to meet for increasing existing volunteer commitment?

- Yes
- No

45. [If Q44 = Yes] What was this target?

46. [If Q44 = Yes] To what extent has this target been achieved?

- This target has already been achieved and exceeded*
- This target has already been achieved*
- This target has not been achieved but we are on track to achieving it*
- This target is not likely to be achieved*

47. [If Q46 = Not likely to be achieved] Why is this target not likely to be achieved?

48. Did the project have any other specific targets to meet?

- Yes
- No

49. [If Q48 = Yes] What were these targets?

50. [If Q48 = Yes] To what extent have these targets been achieved?

- This target has already been achieved and exceeded*
- This target has already been achieved*
- This target has not been achieved but we are on track to achieving it*
- This target is not likely to be achieved*

51. [If Q50 = Not likely to be achieved] Why are these targets not likely to be achieved?

52. What has been the greatest challenge to the organisation in meeting project targets?

Addressing volunteering challenges.

53. How many new volunteers have joined the organisation as a result of the project?

- None
- Between 1 and 5 volunteers
- Between 6 and 10 volunteers
- Between 11 and 25 volunteers
- Between 26 and 50 volunteers
- More than 50 volunteers

54. How many pre-existing volunteers are now volunteering for more hours each week or month?

- None
- Between 1 and 5 volunteers
- Between 6 and 10 volunteers
- Between 11 and 25 volunteers
- Between 26 and 50 volunteers
- More than 50 volunteers

55. Overall, how many additional hours of volunteer time has been given to your organisation each week as a result of the project?

- None
- Up to 10 hours a week
- Between 11 and 25 hours a week
- Between 25 and 50 hours a week
- Between 51 and 100 hours a week
- Over 100 hours a week
- Don't know

56. To what extent has grant funding helped you address the following volunteering challenges?

	<i>A very large extent</i>	<i>A large extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>To no extent</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Overcome difficulties recruiting new volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties recruiting new volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties retaining volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties increasing the commitment from existing volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties providing volunteering opportunities/placements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties around training and upskilling volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties promoting the organisation to potential volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overcome difficulties managing volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

57. What other benefits (if any) has the organisation encountered? [Probe for any unanticipated benefits]

58. Have the organisation encountered any disadvantages of being involved? [Probe for any unanticipated disadvantages]

59. What do you think would have happened to the project in the absence of grant funding? [Select one option]

- Project would have gone ahead in the same way with funding from elsewhere*
- Project would have been delivered on a smaller scale with funding from elsewhere*
- Project would have been delivered at a later date*
- Project would have been delivered via an alternative model (e.g. via another organisation)*
- Project would not have been delivered at all*
- Other*

If other please specify

60. Turning to the volunteers themselves, to what extent do you think that as a result of the project they have:

	<i>A very large extent</i>	<i>A large extent</i>	<i>A small extent</i>	<i>To no extent</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Increased their confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhanced skills and work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved prospects of securing paid employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Already secured paid employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

61. As far as you know, did the new volunteers attracted to your organisation through the project have previous experience of volunteering with other organisations?

- Yes, all of them*
- Yes, some of them*
- No, none of them*
- Don't know*

62. What do you think any new volunteers you attracted through the project would have done if the project had not existed?

- Looked for paid work*
- Volunteered/increased their volunteering with another organisation*
- A mix of these two*
- Neither*
- Don't know*

Future Plans.

63. Which of the following plans (if any) does the organisation have over the next couple of years?[Select all that apply]

- Recruit more new volunteers
- Recruit more new volunteers from specific target groups (e.g. young people, disabled people, BMEs)
- Retain more new volunteers
- Retain existing pool of volunteers
- Increasing the commitment from existing pool of volunteers
- Provide more volunteering opportunities/placements for individuals
- Training and upskilling existing or new volunteers
- Promote volunteering opportunities to potential new volunteers
- Better management of volunteer scheme/activity
- Other

If other please specify

64. How do you intend to fund these future plans? [Select all that apply]

- WCVA Volunteering grant schemes
- Own organisation's resources
- Fund raising
- Other grant scheme(s)
- Other

If Other grant scheme(s) please specify

If other please specify

Follow Up Visit.

65. Would you be prepared to take part in a follow up interview and for a member of the team to contact and visit you?

- Yes
- No

Any comments/issues:

66. Would it be possible to speak to a few of the volunteers who have been involved with the project when we visit the organisation?

- Yes
- No

Any comments/issues re organisation of visit

67. Who is the best person for us to contact to discuss these issues and obtain feedback on behalf of the organisation?

68. What is their phone number and e-mail address?

Thank you for completing this survey.

ANNEX 3

Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Volunteering Grants Programme Interview with Grant Recipient Organisations Topic Guide

NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER

Please familiarise yourself with the responses to the telephone questionnaire before undertaking the fieldwork and refer to answers given in that interview in posing questions. Interviews should be recorded, unless interviewee is uncomfortable with this.

PREAMBLE

- Thank you for completing a telephone survey and for agreeing to be interviewed further.
- OB3 has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government (Third Sector Unit within the Social Justice and Local Government Department) to undertake an evaluation of its Volunteering Grants Programme which is administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The evaluation will cover three grant programmes – Millennium Volunteers, Volunteering in Wales Fund and Wales: the Active Community.
- Broadly speaking, the areas I'd like to cover are:
 - Aims and objectives of the project funded via the grant programme;
 - Your experiences of the grant scheme processes including application, monitoring and reporting;
 - Your experiences of delivering the project and the difference it has made to the volunteering challenges you face.
- We will be preparing a report during July and your views will be important in feeding into it, although what you say will be kept anonymous and not attributed to you.
- I'd expect our discussion to take about one hour.
- Please feel free to ask me any questions before we start.

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 668619

The client contact is Sian Jones, Welsh Assembly Government 01685729126

BACKGROUND

Interviewee Name	
Interviewee Role	
Name of Organisation	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

Background to Organisation

Nature of the organisation (refer to Q3-Q9 and Q14)

- What area of interest does the organisation cover? What are its main activities/services?
- What are your overall aims and objectives (including charitable objects if a charity)?
- How do you use volunteers – are they a means to an end (e.g. to provide support to third parties; to staff a charity shop)? Or is developing the skills and confidence of those who volunteer a central part of your activity?
- Before the project, what sort of volunteers did you attract and where were they based? (Probe for age, gender, ethnicity, social background, location)
- What type of volunteering challenges did the organisation face when you applied for the grant?

Project Aims and Objectives

Project ambitions (see Q15-Q16, and Q32-Q52)

- Can I just confirm that you accessed funding from the xxx Grant fund?
- What were the original aims and objectives of the project? What was the project trying to achieve?
- How was the need for the project identified? What research or evidence was available?
- What sort of activities was the project going to involve?
- Did you have the project idea before you knew the grant fund was available or was it the result of finding out about the availability of grant funding?
- Were project aims and objectives modified at all to reflect the grant funding criteria?
- What sort of volunteers were you hoping to attract through the project? [Probe for specific target groups such as BMEs, disabled people, young people, lone parents, unemployed people] Where did you expect them to be based?
- What targets (if any) were agreed with the WCVA as the grant administrators for the project? Who set these targets – did you propose them or were they suggested by WCVA/the grants panel?
- What internal targets (if any) not shared with the WCVA did you set for the project?
- How are key targets defined? For example how do you define a new volunteer or define additional volunteering hours?

Project Implementation and Project Achievements

Overall, how far has the project run to plan, so far and have targets been achieved? (Q32-Q52)

- Have there been any delays compared to original plans? If so why was this?
- Have you claimed/will you claim the entire amount of grant offered? If not, why was/is this?
- To what extent have the targets (either agreed with the WCVA or set internally) been achieved/are likely to be achieved over the course of the project? (If relevant) Why are some targets unlikely to be achieved?
- How does the organisation collect output data? What validation processes are in place?
- What problems (if any) do you face in collecting and validating outputs?

Addressing volunteering challenges

How far has the grant funding enabled the organisation to address the volunteering challenges it faced? (see Q53-Q59)

- To what extent has the project made a difference to the number of new volunteers joining your organisation? To what extent is this change sustainable after the project funding ends?
- To what extent has the project made a difference to the type and range of new volunteers joining your organisation (e.g. ethnicity/age/gender)? To what extent is this change sustainable after the project funding ends?
- To what extent has the project made a difference to the number of existing volunteers now working for more hours each week/month? To what extent is this change sustainable after the project funding ends?
- To what extent has the project made a difference to the total volunteer time being given to your organisation each week? To what extent is this change sustainable after the project funding ends?
- To what extent has project funding helped to address other volunteering challenges such as training volunteers, managing volunteers or promotion to potential volunteers? Why do you say this?
- Have there been any unintended effects (positive or negative) from the project in terms of attracting and making best use of volunteers?

Meeting volunteers needs

How far has the grant funding helped volunteers themselves? (see Q60-Q62)

- To what extent (if at all) has the project enabled the organisation to better train or support new or existing volunteers? (Probe for specific examples)
- Can you point to any specific examples where the project has led to positive outcomes for individual volunteers e.g. taking up learning opportunities, gaining qualifications, progressing to paid employment, addressing personal problems/issues etc.
- More generally, can you point to any other positive benefits for the individual volunteers recruited/supported through the project such as increased confidence? What evidence can you provide to support this?
- Have there been any unintended effects (positive or negative) from the project in terms of the impact on individual volunteers?

Grant Funding and Added Value

Overall, how has grant funding added value to your organisation? (see Q10-Q13 and Q59)

- Clarify amount of grant sought and amount of grant awarded.
- [If organisation was awarded a smaller grant than was requested] What difference did this reduction have upon the project and your ability to deliver it?
- Did the grant funding enable you to lever in any additional funding over and above the grant (e.g. using it as match funding)?
- Were there any other funding options available to you at the time to fund the project? If so, what were they and why did you feel the grant fund was the right source of funding?
- What would have happened to the project in the absence of grant funding?
- How has the grant funding added value to other sources of income (such as other grant funding) that you receive?

Views on the grant programme

Overall, what has been your experience of the grant programme processes? (see Q17-Q31)

- What are your views about how easy or difficult it was to find out about the grant programme in the first instance?
- What are your views on the grant application form? How easy or difficult was it to complete? Would you have preferred an on line application process?
- Did you request any support to complete the application form? If so, how useful was this support. If not, what support or training would you have found useful?
- [For Volunteering in Wales] What are your views about the need to apply for funding on a yearly basis? What changes (if any) would you like to see made to change this application model?
- What are your views about the way in which grant applications were processed and approved? (Probe for any feedback on the grant programme criteria and scoring mechanisms as well as timeliness).
- What are your views on the grant monitoring forms?
- What are your views on the grant monitoring visits?
- What changes (if any) would you like to see made to improve these elements of the grant programme processes?

Future Outlook

What volunteering plans does the organisation have over the next few years? (see Q63-Q64)

- What volunteering challenges do you think you will face over the coming years?
- What plans do you have for addressing these challenges?
- How do you intend to fund these future plans?
- Do you think that the grant funding programme you have been involved with should continue in its current form?
- Are there any areas of volunteering activity in Wales not currently being funded or targeted (e.g. specific regions or target groups)?
- Do you have any other comments to make on volunteering grant funding in Wales?

ANNEX 4

Evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Volunteering Grants Programme Interview with Volunteer Beneficiaries Topic Guide

PREAMBLE

- Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.
- OB3 has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government (Third Sector Unit within the Social Justice and Local Government Department) to undertake an evaluation of its Volunteering Grants Programme which is administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The evaluation will cover three grant programmes – Millennium Volunteers, Volunteering in Wales Fund and Wales: the Active Community.
- Broadly speaking, the areas I'd like to cover are:
 - Your background and any prior involvement with volunteering;
 - Your motivation for getting involved with volunteering;
 - Your experience of the volunteering project and skills you have gained;
 - Satisfaction with the experience so far and what difference it has made to you;
 - Your future plans.
- We will be preparing a report during July and your views will be important in feeding into it, although what you say will be kept anonymous and not attributed to you.
- I'd expect our discussion to take no more than ½ hour.
- Please feel free to ask me any questions before we start.

The contact person at Old Bell 3 is Nia Bryer 01558 668649

The client contact is Sian Jones, Welsh Assembly Government 01685729126

BACKGROUND

Volunteer Name	
Name of Organisation	
Date of Interview	
Interviewer	

Background and prior volunteering experience

- *Collect demographic data via focus group attendance sheet (to include gender, age and ethnicity)*
- What were you doing before you got involved in this volunteering project? (Probe for prior education and employment history).
- When was the last time you worked or were in education?
- Have you had any volunteering experiences in the past? (If so probe for nature of volunteering work, with which organisation, when activity took place and whether experience was positive or negative).

Motivation for becoming a volunteer

- How did you come to hear about this volunteering opportunity? (Probe for role of other organisations such as Volunteer Bureaux)
- Did you have any prior involvement with the organisation?
- Why did you decide to get involved in volunteering work?
- Why did you decide to get involved with this organisation and this project?
- What were you hoping to get out of the experience?
- Had this volunteering experience not have been available what do you think you would have done?

Your volunteering experience

- What is your volunteering role and the nature of the work undertaken?
- Is the work and activities undertaken as you expected?
- What training was given to you by the organisation? (Probe for views on training effectiveness).
- How is your work supervised? Are you happy with the level of supervision and guidance provided to you?
- How satisfied are you with the experience you have obtained to date? (Probe for reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction).
- How many hours do you work each week (or month) as a volunteer? Is this in line with what was expected of you?
- What new skills (if any) have you obtained as a result of your volunteering experience?
- What other benefits (if any) have you obtained as a result of your volunteering experience? (Probe for social interaction, increase confidence, improve prospects of securing paid employment).

Future Plans

- How long do you expect to continue volunteering with this organisation? (If for a defined period, probe whether that was the intention when starting or is due to some other reason)
- What other plans (e.g. for volunteering with other organisations, learning, paid employment) do you have in the near future? How do you think your volunteering experience will help you realise these plans?
- Do you have any plans or intention to volunteer in the future? If so, what are these plans?
- What benefits to you think your volunteering experience will give you to obtain paid work in the future?

