This book presents a milestone in volunteering research, offering rare and authentic insights. As an edited collection of short memoirs, it tracks the development of knowledge and understanding about volunteering during the lifetime of the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR). The memoirs written by those who were directly involved in IVR describe the growth of the body of knowledge on volunteering, the improvement of evidence to stimulate and underpin policy and practice, and theoretical and conceptual advances.

'An insightful read reflecting the ebbs and flows of volunteering policy and practice. It also highlights the resilience of an organisation and those connected to it who believe in volunteering and the power of research to extend our understanding about a phenomenon that is timeless and yet ever changing.'

— Wendy Osborne BA OBE, Senior Consultant, International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)

'What a joy to read. This book acts as a reminder of some of the seminal pieces of research in volunteering, still used by practitioners today and carried out by the biggest names in the field, all through the much-loved Institute for Volunteering Research. There is a steely edge though especially where essays look towards potential areas of research; often reflecting that these essential questions haven't changed even whilst policy positions have.'

— Ruth Leonard, Chair of the UK's Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM)

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Volunteering, research and the test of experience

Edited by Michael Locke & Jurgen Grotz

Volunteering, research and the test of experience

A critical celebration for the 25th anniversary of the Institute for Volunteering Research

Edited by Michael Locke & Jurgen Grotz

"What seems 'common sense' today took years of power and knowledge to become so. If you want to understand what makes people give their time to others, you stand on the shoulders of giants. If you want to understand where giants come from, read on..."
— Michael Ashe, Chief Executive Officer, Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea

"The volunteering community, policymakers, researchers and practitioners, across Europe in the CEV Network and beyond, has benefited hugely from the work of IVR. The contribution to the success of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and its legacy through freely sharing its evidence-base for volunteering has contributed immeasurably to the development and understanding of quality volunteering across Europe."
— Gabriella Civico, Director, Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)

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Institute for Volunteering Research

Edited by:
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INSTITUTE FOR VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH
& UEA PUBLISHING PROJECT

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List of Abbreviations

ARVAC	Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector
AVM	Association of Volunteer Managers
CAF	Charities Aid Foundation
CIS	Centre for Institutional Studies
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service
HOCS	Home Office Citizenship Survey
IAG	Institute Advisory Group
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations' Conference

IVR	Institute for Volunteering Research
LSE	London School of Economics
NAO	National Audit Office
NAVCA	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
NCSS	National Council of Social Service
NCV	National Centre for Volunteering
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
PPI	Patient and Public Involvement
RDS	Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SSRG	Social Services Research Group
TSRC	Third Sector Research Centre

UCL	University College London
UEA	University of East Anglia
UEL	University of East London
VAHS	Voluntary Action History Society
VE	Volunteering England
VIAT	Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit
VSSN	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Dedication

We dedicate this book to the pioneers of the Institute for Volunteering Research whom we lost and greatly miss, Duncan Scott and Pat Gay.

Foreword

PROFESSOR FIONA LETTICE

Fiona Lettice is Professor of Innovation Management in the Norwich Business School and Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at the University of East Anglia.

I first became aware of the work of the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) in 2018, when Fiona Poland, Jurgen Grotz, Laura Bowater and Richard Clarke approached me with their plan for UEA to host the Institute. The case was compelling, as IVR had a long and well-established track record of cutting-edge research, had played a key role in shaping the discipline of volunteering research, and was providing a strong evidence base for influencing national and international volunteering policy and practice. And so together, we were able to create a new home for IVR at UEA from 2019.

IVR's aims and objectives and overall approach are a good fit and align well with UEA's overall ethos and vision. You will

read more about IVR in the pages that follow and can judge for yourself. To help you do so, I provide here a brief summary of what is important to UEA and our community of staff, students and collaborators. At UEA, we pride ourselves on having a friendly and welcoming environment, with staff who are committed to working collaboratively and in strong partnership with students. UEA takes an inclusive approach to education and learning, with a strong focus on student welfare, mental health and wellbeing. Founded to be civic, UEA is tightly integrated with the region and aims to become truly civic through a more strategic approach to civic activities and relationships and is currently co-creating its Civic University Charter with citizens and partners from across the region. UEA is also part of the Norwich Research Park and committed to solving important global challenges through its research, innovation and impact across multiple disciplines and sectors. Based on external assessment, UEA is one of only a handful of UK universities that can claim excellence in its research, innovation, education and civic missions.

This collection of memoirs is a celebration of 25 years since the Institute for Volunteering Research was founded in 1997, with each memoir providing a different perspective on how individuals and teams have worked together to shape IVR and the field of volunteering research, and indeed how IVR shaped them, their careers and networks of colleagues and friends. The stories and reflections collected here show how a discipline is shaped by the people within it. The memoirs demonstrate how these inspiring individuals helped to define volunteering policy and practice nationally and

internationally, by researching the questions that matter from why people volunteer, to who helps and is helped, to the impact of changing political and funding landscapes, to the management of volunteer involving organisations. IVR and its researchers have challenged preconceived ideas, have deepened our understanding of volunteering in all its forms, and provided a fun and welcoming space and community in which to research, collaborate and belong.

This collection of authentic stories from those who have nurtured IVR into existence and contributed to its ongoing development provides a sound basis to reflect on and be proud of just how much has been achieved, but also how much more we need to do to continue to provide research findings and insight which can influence and impact the future of volunteering practice and policy. Just as IVR seeks to support UEA in delivering research with impact, to nurture staff and student success, and to achieve global reach and reputation, so UEA aims to support IVR with being the centre for high quality volunteering research, knowledge and evidence – now and for the next 25 years.

Researching across 25 years

MICHAEL LOCKE

Back in 1997 when we created the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) we sought to assert the significance of volunteering in public policy and in society generally. That seemed a fairly straightforward and necessary proposition. We had research and practical experience of volunteering behind us. To develop and promote the case meant focussing research on the scale and characteristics of volunteering and demonstrating its impact so that we could show how many aspects of social services and community activities not only benefited from volunteering but could benefit more.

We felt in tune with the direction of social policy; a reforming government was elected in the UK under Tony Blair, which adopted ideas of social capital and community responsibility sympathetic with voluntary action. Perhaps, the notion of volunteering was nebulous, but the predecessors of Volunteering

England had established the groundwork of researching and promoting volunteering in England. Internationally, especially through the United Nations, volunteering was headlined by the extraordinary voluntary response to the Kobe earthquake in Japan. In a sense, we had the wind in our sails, and we were supported by a founding grant from the Lloyds TSB Foundation.

Twenty-five years on, the picture is a lot more complex, and we have played our part in making it so. The bodies of research-based and practice-based knowledge about volunteering are more extensive and better tested, but raise more arguments. The knowledge of how people volunteer and of the benefits for them and society is more fully explored, but doesn't present easy answers. The place of volunteering in public and social policy and in organisations' services is accepted more prominently, but essential differences are concealed. In the policy world the discourse about volunteering is established, but prone to unwise headlines; and the relationship with national government may need to be re-examined. Volunteering as a topic figures more largely in social life; at least, you are more likely to overhear a conversation on a bus about someone's volunteering (Locke 2022), even if a girlfriend's parents find it hard to believe you earn a living from researching volunteering.

This book tells some of this story. We offer here a collection of memoirs in which 17 colleagues who worked in or with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) reflect on the research they undertook. For instance, Justin Davis Smith and I, who together founded IVR, recall events from 1997

which have suggested the opening two paragraphs above. As I read through colleagues' accounts, I find factors which have shaped the complex situation sketched in the third paragraph.

This book is not a study of the state of the art for volunteering or a guidebook to research and policy issues. It is a book of memoirs, so we can tell our individual stories of how we followed through research themes, investigating ideas and evidence, improving the knowledge available for developing research and practice. Our memoirs recall how our work interacted with colleagues and with other aspects of our lives and times. I believe the narratives add up to a celebration of voluntary action, professional commitment and friendship. They do, too, offer insights into the problems and possibilities of running a research centre, which other colleagues may find useful.

A set of questions which drove the research investigations for many of us were concerned with the evidence of what gets people to volunteer, what government and organisations can do to encourage them to volunteer and what benefits to the service and to the volunteer can follow. These investigations explored issues of motivation among volunteers, the circumstances and triggers that led them to volunteer, and the ways in which these factors could be managed.

Initially, we could identify and accept straightforward evidence on the reasons why people volunteered, but as Angela Ellis Paine explores in her memoir the understanding of the issues developed from a focus on the agency and motivations of the volunteer to analysis of the context in which the volunteering is set.

Generally, we focussed on coming up with proposals for improving policy and practice. Many of our projects were commissioned by statutory bodies and volunteer involving organisations to evaluate programmes and offer recommendations. A central concern then was for the practicality as well as reliability of data about reasons for volunteering and about satisfaction.

Our commitment to helping organisations improve their volunteering led us to develop the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) which, as Angela Ellis Paine and Joanna Stuart recount, organisations could use for themselves to measure the characteristics and impact of their volunteers. The toolkit could play a large part in exploring what difference volunteering might make to organisations and their services and to the volunteers. However, as Joanna Stuart suggests, some organisations tended to regard impact data mainly as a matter of interest for funders and funding.

Several of us were following up questions which took us into the individual's decisions to volunteer in relation to their own histories and geographies, and this crystallised in the proposal for what became Pathways through Participation. As Ellie Brodie tells in her memoir, this project investigated people's 'taking part' and how they came to start, continue and stop their participation. It found opportunities which were susceptible to policy and management, and, as several memoirs note, we look back at the report as a key event.

These themes pointed in the direction of further investigating the benefits volunteers gained from volunteering, which was pursued recently with What Works Centre for

Wellbeing and Spirit of 2012 as Joanna Stuart describes, building on her earlier work on volunteering data and issues of impact.

The data from many studies, and from observations, pointed out the inequitable aspects of volunteering. As Kim Donahue discusses, organisations needed assistance in monitoring the characteristics of their volunteers as a basis for seeking more inclusive volunteering and as a means of giving a voice to the unheard.

Fundamental concern about equity in volunteering is raised by Priya Lukka drawing on theory of racial capitalism and indicating oppressive factors in voluntary action. She seeks a decolonial paradigm, which recognises how the multiple forms of voluntary action in different communities undermine assumptions that volunteering is rooted in Western values.

Nick Ockenden and Daniel Stevens introduce comparisons of volunteering in different countries, the former gathering strength from working across Europe and the latter citing data which rated levels of volunteering. Both also recall the changes in national volunteering as countries emerged from mandatory systems under state socialism.

Alongside enlarging our view of volunteering across different countries, IVR developed knowledge of volunteering historically, particularly through the work of Georgina Brewis. Her memoir, which begins as others here in a specific encounter with IVR, focusses on conserving the history of volunteering through IVR projects and her academic study.

Thus we have helped construct volunteering as a subject

in a long timescale and a broad range and bring those considerations to bear on the immediate issues of organisation and policy.

Main themes in our research focussed on the management of volunteers by and within organisations. Actually, we were more engaged in analyses and evaluations of specific volunteering programmes than the studies discussed in these memoirs show, as we were commissioned by national volunteer involving organisations and funding bodies. We saw ourselves as helping develop good practice; this contributed to the information service and published advice given by Volunteering England and also to its proposals and commentaries on government policy. On an international as well as national scale, we helped build the body of theoretical and practical understanding of volunteering; Justin Davis Smith and colleagues here recall the learning from our teamwork in evaluations of the International Year of Volunteering and the Millennium Volunteers programme across the UK.

The role and impact of volunteers in health and social care figured largely as a policy concern. Among our memoirs here, Simon Teasdale recalls his series of service evaluations of volunteering in NHS programmes and reflects on the practicalities of working with NHS procedures. Matt Hill focusses on his research in health and social care, notably on the impact and management of volunteers in care homes and hospices.

Colin Rochester, from early in the life of IVR, distinguished between volunteering in different kinds of organisations, contrasting small organisations, which he characterised as 'juggling

on a unicycle', with those located in the dominant paradigms of 'serious leisure' and 'civil society'. The differences in how organisations managed volunteers could be seen as larger than most policy discourse recognised, and Meta Zimmeck contrasts a 'home grown' approach to volunteering with the formal provision and procedures which were dominating policy debate. One size does not fit all, evidently.

We brought together our findings of organising volunteers from numerous projects in, as Nick Ockenden relates, *Volunteering Works* (Ellis Paine et al, 2007). We investigated and produced recommendations for more inclusive volunteering in *Volunteering for All* (Ellis et al, 2004). We could be confident we had a lot to offer as practical knowledge for volunteer involving organisations for managing and encouraging volunteering. It was, though, frustrating, as our History chapter here indicates, that we lacked the resources to produce practical syntheses from specifically focussed and funded research.

In retrospect, contributing to national policy was more problematic. As IVR and as supporting Volunteering England and NCVO, we engaged with the relevant government departments. It appeared common sensical that some factors in government policy, administration and regulations would encourage or discourage volunteering. Research with community organisations and comparisons with other countries, as Nick Ockenden notes, contributed insights and lessons, but the problem was more complex.

Volunteering held a strong position through the Labour government of Tony Blair, 1997-2007, and Gordon Brown, 2007-2010. Davis Smith and Locke (2007) in IVR's tenth

anniversary volume saw this government "regarded its citizens' voluntary action as an instrument of social policy as no previous government had done". But David Cameron's 2010-2015 invention of the Big Society took a different turn, as Daniel Stevens and Justin Davis Smith recall. After the disappointment of the Big Society, subsequent Conservative governments rather lost interest in making volunteering a plank of policy, as I suggest in my memoir.

As the 21st century progressed, volunteering programmes and our projects had to cope with the policy environment of austerity. Whilst volunteering might be stuck in policy-makers' minds as a panacea, the policy narratives lagged behind the practice on the ground, as Matt Hill recalls. The shifting policy context also brought in, as Andy Curtis reports, a punitive regime of incentives and sanctions for and against Jobseekers' volunteering, though, as he concludes, the tragic consequences were only officially recognised after the conversation had moved on.

We were left with a major question about what governments could do to encourage volunteering. As Justin Davis Smith shows, levels of volunteering in England have remained constant apart from the spike for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. Short of running a comparable annual event, it is doubtful, he comments, that government can do much to increase the ongoing level of volunteering.

As I suggested in the opening paragraph, in 1997 we could feel the wind in our sails in the direction of the growing significance of volunteering in national policy. Perhaps for the cause of volunteering my focus then on policymaking

was misplaced, and in concluding my memoir I ask if we should now be working out how to disestablish volunteering from the state. Justin Davis Smith draws out in his memoir a case for volunteering which pre-dates most of the discussion in this book, bringing to current attention the argument of Titmuss (1970) that volunteering should be seen not as a responsibility but as a right.

Volunteering may be seen then as much, or more, as an individual right rather than as a matter of utility in social policy and programmes. Jurgen Grotz in his concluding chapter points to current doubts about the instrumental and transactional models for volunteering and helps develop the argument, and the necessary research, by turning the debate on volunteering towards questions of agency and individual enjoyment.

The medium of memoirs which we adopted for this book has generated an original insight into the experience of research. Matt Hill remembers a nurturing team ethic in IVR. Angela Ellis Paine refers to likeness with a family business. Simon Teasdale looks back at lessons on research culture exemplified in IVR, lessons which universities and other centres could well learn from. Several of the memoirs talk about how well colleagues were getting on with each other and respecting their work; and they say thank you. In setting up these memoirs, I didn't expect colleagues to be quite so personal, and my first intention was to delete these remarks. But they ring true and represent evidence of colleagues' experience.

The medium has proved illuminating in how the experience of research is interwoven with colleagues' lives and

families, inspiring their interest in volunteering, and in careers beyond IVR, carrying forward the knowledge gained. Fiona Poland looks back on volunteering as a student and traces her interaction with other bodies which have figured in our lives through to her part in bringing IVR to UEA.

The difficulties of running a research centre are represented in the memoirs, and Rochester and Grotz in their History chapter identify issues of funding and their consequences. Initially the grant from the Lloyds TSB Foundation provided a basis for staff and running costs. Moreover, our parent body Volunteering England's funding as a Strategic Partner of the government's Office for Civil Society, and its predecessors, enabled it to underpin IVR financially. From these sources IVR had some freedom to decide on what research we undertook and how we could develop our findings into publications and proposals for further research. However, as the Lloyds TSB Foundation grant came to the end and as the Cameron government reduced and ended the Strategic Partners grant, IVR became dependent on specific grants and commissions, and was so in the context of public austerity. Researchers' time had then to be focussed on specific projects and outputs, and we lacked the resources to develop a wider agenda or to write the publications needed for academic status and practical recognition. Andy Curtis recalls what the tightly costed funding meant in the experience of carrying out research, and Meta Zimmeck points to IVR's inability to develop capacity for large-scale statistical studies and maintain its position in that field. From experience in research centres and universities, we know these are familiar problems, but no less frustrating for that.

This book represents a major body of knowledge on which the world of volunteering can draw. It is an enormous achievement by the colleagues who have contributed here and by colleagues in our networks. However, volunteering is a strange and puzzling place. Andy Kelmanson in her memoir recalls how she brought us together to create IVR 25 years ago. Yet now when she, or any of us, step outside our bodies of knowledge and networks, we find groups who treat volunteering as something they have just thought of. As Andy Kelmanson says, being a consultant advising groups, it can be like never getting beyond Book 1 French, year after year.

Clearly, the conversations, as Andy Kelmanson concludes, should continue, and Colin Rochester points to the challenges of funding and capacity, both colleagues able to take a view across our 25 years. The position now of IVR in the University of East Anglia, as Jurgen Grotz discusses in his Road Ahead, encourages IVR to collaborate with community groups and local organisations, assisting in the University's commitment as a 'civic university'. The university status has also enabled IVR's key role in significant large-scale studies: the UK's four nations study of voluntary action in the COVID-19 pandemic (Hardill et al, 2022); and United Nations Volunteers' study of the world's voluntarism (United Nations Volunteers Programme, 2021); and both these research projects lead to findings which can be taken up for developing policy as much as for identifying research questions to pursue. As always, there is tension between academic demands and practical application, and as always, as a research institute, we work in conditions of flux.

A brief history of the Institute for Volunteering Research

COLIN ROCHESTER AND JURGEN GROTZ

This section of the book is based on a paper by Colin Rochester and Jurgen Grotz, presented at the Voluntary Action History Society 7th International Conference, University of Liverpool, July 2022, which covered the period from IVR's establishment in 1997 to IVR activities at NCVO drawing to a close in 2017.

In the late 1990s three developments, political, academic and financial, and individual action, serendipitously combined to make it a propitious time for the launch of a new research initiative on volunteering.

In the early 1990s the Conservative government led by John Major, which was replaced at the general election in 1997, had shown only a passing interest in volunteering, for example, with the introduction of the 'Make a Difference' programme. In contrast, Tony Blair's incoming New Labour administration was seen to be the herald of a new dawn for

voluntary action. Blair's spokesman, Alun Michael, had enthusiastically endorsed the Deakin Committee's report on the Future of the Voluntary Sector (Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector, 1996) and its recommendation of a concordat between the government and the voluntary and community sector. Alun Michael memorably called volunteering "the essential act of citizenship".

Academic interest in voluntary action was also increasing. It had first become more visible in the UK 1978 with the establishment of the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector but was significantly expanding in the 1990s and leading to the formation of the Voluntary Action History Society in 1991 and Voluntary Sector Studies Network in 1996.

Another fortuitous development had been the merger between the TSB and Lloyds Bank. One result of this had been a large increase in funds available to the newly merged Lloyds TSB Foundations for England and Wales whose Director, Kathleen Duncan, saw an opportunity for the Foundation to provide funding on a national scale, alongside their traditional local causes. She was thus in a position to support the creation of the new Institute for an initial period of three years.

The initiative for a dedicated Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) was taken by Andrea Kelmanson who in 1997 was the Director of the National Centre for Volunteering (NCV) (previously The Volunteer Centre UK), which became Volunteering England in 2004. With the help of Mike Locke, her former tutor at North East London Polytechnic, and Justin Davis Smith who was head of research at the Centre,

they developed a proposal to set up an Institute within NCV in association with the University of East London (UEL), as the polytechnic had become.

Together these developments enabled the establishment of IVR. Justin Davis Smith became IVR's first Director and Mike Locke was appointed as Associate Director while remaining on the staff of the University, where he was Reader in its Centre for Institutional Studies. Nicholas Deakin, the author of the report so enthusiastically supported by the new government, became the first chair of IVR's Advisory Panel.

IVR's organisational arrangements made it unique, occupying a distinct position between practice and academia, with six strategic objectives to:

- carrying out and commissioning research on different aspects of volunteering at a variety of levels;
- disseminating findings so as to maximise the policy and practice impact;
- acting as a focal point for research on volunteering;
- developing links with bodies involved in volunteering research in England, the UK and other countries, with a view to sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas;
- stimulating and contributing to education and training on volunteering,

- and being recognised as a leading centre of high-quality research relevant to policy and practice on volunteering.

(Institute for Volunteering Research, 1997)

Those familiar with the newer trends in academia to evidence impact will recognise how IVR with such objectives was leading the field. However, NCV made it clear from the outset that IVR was to be a unit within the Centre and that it was accountable to its board of trustees and management structure. Day to day management would rest with IVR's Director with regular input from the UEL's representative. Both would be part of an 'Institute Advisory Group' (IAG) which also included the NCV's Chief Executive and one of its trustees together with other members drawn from "academic and volunteer-involving agencies selected by the Group for their specialist knowledge" (National Centre for Volunteering, 1997). This structure was broadly maintained for 20 years albeit partner universities were changing. Between 1997 and 2017 IVR had partnerships with three universities:

University of East London	1997 - 2008
Birkbeck, University of London	2008 - 2011
Northumbria University	2011 - 2017

The IAG was set up to facilitate the partnerships, to act as 'critical friend' and to help maintain IVR's distinctive contribution to volunteering research, driving IVR's strategic

objectives. The group had four highly distinguished leaders in the field:

Nicholas Deakin	1997 - 2004
Jimmy Kearney	2004
Duncan Scott	2006 - 2011
Marilyn Taylor	2011 - 2017

Setting IVR up as part of a national, English, umbrella body, had one very unfortunate unintended consequence. At the time of IVR's establishment, devolution of powers relating to voluntary action picked up pace leading to increasing divergence in the policy landscape between the four nations of the UK. However, as IVR was hosted by English organisations its work would focus mostly on England.

From the beginning IVR faced a challenge that was implicit in its rationale and strategy which was to balance the desire to make a major contribution to the theory and the literature of volunteering with the need to attract funding to cover its costs. The initial funding provided by the Lloyds TSB Foundation provided an important cushion for the first three years (1997-2000) but, after that, the Institute was supported by Volunteering England (VE) to the extent of 50% of its costs and needed to earn income to cover the remainder. The approach worked reasonably smoothly until 2010 when the new coalition government decided that it would no longer treat Volunteering England along with a range of other organisations as its Strategic Partner and began to withdraw what had been a generous grant from the Office for

Civil Society, leading to the following report to the Institute's Advisory Group.

> **FINANCIAL INCOME 2010-11**
> Total 'net' income for this year is currently is approx £131K. It is estimated that total running costs for IVR for this year will be approx £179K. We have therefore generated 73% of our running costs. **Historically, this figure was 50%, with the remainder being invested by Volunteering England.**
>
> **FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS 2011-12**
> Total 'net' income already secured for next financial year is approx £95K. Estimated running costs for IVR will be £195K. We have therefore secured nearly 50% of our running costs, and will be aiming to secure 100% (i.e. the full £195K) by the end of March 2013. It will be highly challenging, but realistic, to meet this target.
>
> (Institute Advisory Group, 2012 emphasis in bold by authors)

When Volunteering England was merged into the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in 2013 money remained tight and the amount IVR needed to earn was significantly increased by a raise in the staff's levels of pay to bring them into line with NCVO's existing research staff. Running costs rose by 35%. Furthermore, the quest for funding became increasingly challenging as more and more

research and consultancy organisations became interested in working in the field of volunteering, tipping the scale in a direction less and less supportive of IVR's objectives.

The ability of IVR to pursue its own agenda promised a great deal during the first three years for which the Lloyds TSB Foundation provided funding and was then helped by the funding arrangements with Volunteering England.

However, at times this became less easy, such as when much of its research was carried out on behalf of the government's volunteering hub and became next to impossible when the coalition government cut off funding to VE and limited resources available to NCVO. During the NCVO years, according to Andy Curtis in his memoir in this book, beyond his well-funded 'Strengthening Communities through Volunteering programme', "some of the other work we tendered for ... had tight budgets, which were difficult to cover costs and overheads, thus making it hard to deliver robust research within the allocated funding". At the same time "the increasingly competitive commissioning environment with ever tighter budgets meant there was little time for reflection and bringing all this learning together".

However, despite these continuing tensions IVR undoubtably managed to make significant contributions to the development of an understanding of volunteering. Over two decades IVR delivered or was partner in over 100 projects and the list of partners and commissioners IVR worked with is impressive, including international bodies like the United Nations, national government like the Home Office and Cabinet Office, public sector organisations like the NHS and

the Natural History Museum, private sector organisations like Barclays Bank, and of course charities and other voluntary and community sector organisations like the Samaritans and the National Trust. Following many of these projects IVR delivered seminal reports on the changing landscape of volunteering (Davis Smith and Ellis, 2002; Curtis, 2015), offered open access evidence to practitioners and policy makers (Low et al, 2007), and became pathfinder with early explorations of topics such as faith volunteering (Lukka and Locke, 2003) equity diversity and inclusion (Ellis et al, 2004), evaluation and impact assessment (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2004; Donahue, 2008) and life course research (Brodie et al, 2009; 2011). Undertaking volunteering research not just with voluntary and community organisations but also with the public sector as in education (Brewis, 2006; 2010) and health (Teasdale, 2008a), and private sector such as on employer supported volunteering (Brewis, 2004); and volunteering in care homes (Hill, 2016) remains one of the lasting contributions of IVR.

Long before the endeavour to provide 'Open Access' to knowledge has become the norm in academic research, IVR offered a series of 'Working Papers' discussing volunteering research issues and, perhaps the most valuable contribution to the dissemination of research findings, an Evidence Bank established in 2010. Both were intended to provide an open access resource "to meet the needs of volunteer-involving organisations and policy makers".

IVR's status was recognised formally when 24 September 2013, the Secretary of State at the Department for Trade and

Industry, confirmed that IVR had approval to use the word 'Institute' in its business name. While IVR has thus contributed significantly not only to the development of volunteering theory and practice but also to the dissemination of IVR's own findings together with a wider body of knowledge about volunteering, its staff and members of the IAG have been consistently aware that a great deal more might have been achieved. Typically a paper written for the IAG meeting in March 2009 led to a discussion about the importance of IVR having conceptual pieces to work on, to enable it to carry research forward and to focus on theory: "IVR should not just be involved in others' agendas but should have their own". The paper claimed that "it is our intention to undertake a meta analysis of this considerable body of research evidence in order to strengthen the evidence base, develop a conceptual framework for our work, and refine our future research agenda" (Ellis Paine, 2009).

This intention was only partially translated into action. From an early stage IVR staff had acknowledged that many potential journal articles go unwritten. This observation is particularly pertinent given IVR's serious but short-lived attempt to publish its own journal *Voluntary Action* between 1998 and 2008. Restrictions of time or competition for the attention of income-earning projects meant that IVR was rarely able to rework previous reports with a focus on cross-cutting themes and ensure that reports were more widely disseminated. The attempt to produce a series of working papers and to continue developing the evidence base both also foundered for the lack of dedicated resources.

This brief attempt to weigh up the achievements and the limitations of IVR's endeavour to build a programme of research on volunteering does not, however, exhaust conclusions about its history. There are at least three less tangible upsides to the experience.

First, there is its symbolic importance. Whatever the limitations we may identify in IVR's achievements, it was, and remains, crucially important that a flag was raised and continues to fly over the tangible expression of the value of volunteering in our society and the crucial role to be played by research about it.

Secondly, there are the people who have taken part in IVR's journey. Over the past more than 20 years a succession of members of staff, many of them quite inexperienced, have made their contribution to IVR's work and learned a great deal in return. And a similar claim could be made about its research associates and the members of its Advisory Group.

Thirdly, and for the moment finally, IVR was "light years ahead of its time" in developing a research culture and a focus on impact. As Simon Teasdale recalls in his memoir in this book:

> What I learned at IVR was that the essential building blocks of a research culture are often really simple things. For example, going out as a team for lunch or drinks; creating time to listen to people and share experiences; and making people feel part of a collective whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The people at IVR genuinely believed in the value of volunteering: the

importance of looking out for, and caring for others. And they brought this into their working environment: making everyone feel welcome and valued.

Memoirs

Beginnings, national and global, and the advance of understanding

JUSTIN DAVIS SMITH

Dr Justin Davis Smith was founder and Director of IVR (1997-2007) and subsequently Chief Executive, Volunteering England (2007-2013), Executive Director, NCVO (2013-2016) and (from 2016) senior lecturer and course director of the charity master's programme, Bayes Business School.

In 1987 I joined the then Volunteer Centre UK, following a short stint as speech writer to James Callaghan MP. Notably, given my future career and research interests, Callaghan had been interested in volunteering. As Prime Minister he had put forward plans for a Good Neighbour Scheme but the idea ran aground when he lost power in 1979. The Volunteer Centre had been set up in 1974 following the recommendations of the Aves Committee (1969) into the role of volunteers in the personal social services and had been moved out of London as part of the government's efficiency drive in the late 1970s.

I stayed at what became Volunteering England, following several mergers and re-branding exercises, for 20 years, first leading its research work, and ultimately taking on the CEO role before merging the charity with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) for the new year 2013. In 2016 I joined the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School (previously Cass) to teach on the charity master's programme and to write the history of NCVO for its centenary in 2019 (Davis Smith, 2019).

Mapping the field

My main task when I joined the Volunteer Centre was to help advance our understanding of the workings of this rather nebulous concept called volunteering, drawing on the pioneering work of my predecessor, see for example Diana Leat (1977).

A priority was for a new national survey of volunteering; the first one had been carried out in 1981. This new survey, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, eventually saw the light of day in 1991, together with a series of research papers on different aspects of the measurement of volunteering (Lynn and Davis Smith, 1992).

In this work I felt I was part of an exciting network of researchers, some within the sector, some outside, who were working together to build the sector's evidence base. It is a history that has been nicely told by Margaret Harris (2016) in *Voluntary Sector Review*, taking in early university bases at Brunel University, London School of Economics (LSE), South Bank University, University of East London (UEL), as well as the work of key sector bodies such as Charities Aid

Foundation (CAF), NCVO and the Volunteer Centre. With Colin Rochester and Rodney Hedley, I set up the Voluntary Action History Society in 1991 (see also memoir of Brewis; see also memoir of Rochester).

In 1997, along with Mike Locke from UEL, I managed to secure funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation for the setting up of the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) (see also memoir of Kelmanson), which I am proud to say has done so much over the years to advance our understanding of volunteering. These several initiatives were about mapping and understanding, about measuring and defining voluntary action. Remember this was a pre-post-truth era when these things were still seen as important.

Volunteering goes global

On 17 January 1995 an earthquake measuring 6.9 hit Kobe in Japan. It was the country's second worst earthquake in the 20th century and claimed over 6,000 lives. Overnight tens of thousands of volunteers, many students, flocked to Kobe from Tokyo and the surrounding area to help out. The Kobe earthquake is generally seen as a turning point in Japan's attitude towards volunteering, but more importantly for this story it is seen as the stimulus for a global awakening of interest in volunteering in which the Institute for Volunteering Research was to play a significant role.

The government immediately looked for outside help to advise on the way forward as Japan had very little tradition of organised volunteering outside of the family. I was asked to go to Japan to advise on the setting up a volunteering programme

and I travelled regularly there over the next five years.

The Japanese government immediately declared 17 January as a national Volunteerism Day, but more significantly led a call within the UN for an International Year to celebrate volunteering, which finally came to fruition in 2001.

I was appointed by the UN as lead consultant on the International Year. This involved producing a series of papers on volunteering and social development (Davis Smith, 2000) and taking part in a debate within the UN General Assembly in New York. IVR was appointed to evaluate the impact of the Year (Davis Smith and Ellis, 2002), and the Year was generally deemed to have been a success, that is as much as these global events can ever be judged to have been.

The Year was celebrated in over 100 countries; new research was commissioned; new strategies for volunteering were developed by governments and civil society; and new laws passed to recognise volunteering. Perhaps more significantly at a global level, volunteering gained a greater visibility and currency within the UN system as a result of the International Year, culminating in the recognition of the importance of volunteering towards the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

In some of the early workshops I was involved in it was clear that there was a nascent hostility to the concept of volunteering from many within the UN movement, particularly from among the developing nations. This was in part the historic hostility of the Left but it was expressed perhaps even more strongly in the hostility from the Poverty Lobby and the Women's Movement. They argued that volunteering, as

seen almost entirely through the lens of service delivery, was responsible for removing opportunities for paid employment and, in the case of the Women's Movement, reinforcing notions of unpaid gendered work.

Without wanting to claim too much for our work, the typology which we developed and which underpinned all the work of the Year, broke through some of this resistance by re-positioning volunteering in a broader context than service delivery. Alongside service delivery, volunteering was conceptualised as self-help, participation and campaigning (Davis Smith, 2000), and the UN deliberately sought out examples of how volunteering manifested itself in these different ways in different parts of the world. Of all the achievements of IVR in its formative years, the work with the UN was perhaps the most important and satisfying.

Active Citizenship

Closer to home, the Blair government 1997-2007 was fully into its stride with its Third Way project in which the voluntary sector, or Third Sector as it was now termed, and volunteering were seen as key components (see also memoir of Locke).

We were in a phase of what Jeremy Kendall (2000) has described as 'hyper-active' policy making on the sector with a torrent of policies to promote volunteering from Experience Corps to V and culminating in the appointment of a Volunteer Tsar in Julia Neuberger.

One of the drivers of this interest was the growing interest in social capital (see also memoir of Locke). Another was the resurgence of interest in active citizenship, which harked

back to the nineteenth century Idealist philosophy of Green, Toynbee and Hobson, and through them much further back to the city states of ancient Greece, and which was being rediscovered for a new age by political thinkers and politicians of various hues (Davis Smith, 2019).

Crucial to this rediscovery was an insistence on both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and volunteering was lodged very tightly in the responsibilities camp, fuelling an idea that all in society, including individuals, organisations and businesses, had a duty to give something back.

Concern was expressed by IVR and others in the volunteering movement at the way in which this ideology was being interpreted by policy makers. The argument appeared to go something like this. If full citizenship is dependent on active participation, as volunteering, and if people are proving resistant to overtures from the state to get involved, then the next step is to nudge more forcefully such engagement. There were policy moves towards the end of the Labour government to fast-track citizenship applications to those who could demonstrate that they were volunteering, and proposals from a number of local authorities to put active volunteers to the top of the housing queue.

I felt strongly then, and still do, that compulsion and volunteering do not mix and that by going down that route we threaten to undermine the very essence of what makes volunteering different and special.

Recently re-reading Richard Titmuss, whose The Gift Relationship (1970) is perhaps the best book on altruism ever written, I was struck by an ingenious re-positioning of

the rights and responsibilities argument which seems to me to help us navigate a route through this paradox of state encouragement for what is at its core a voluntary act. For Titmuss, volunteering is categorised not as a responsibility but as a right, the right to give. This seems to me a perfect way of squaring the circle and of avoiding falling into the trap of coercion. If volunteering is the reciprocal activity we all claim it to be and if it is as much about personal development and learning as giving back, then everyone in society should have the right to take part, and the government should ensure that as far as possible all barriers to engagement are removed. You don't force someone to take up their rights: you simply make the opportunities and benefits known and clear the path.

The Right to Volunteer seems to me a perfect call to arms for the future development of our movement.

The Games Makers

Active citizenship in action was demonstrated most clearly perhaps during the summer of 2012 when volunteering was widely seen to have come of age.

The Games Makers clad in their purple and pink uniforms were the public face of the Olympic and Paralympic Games; and the Games were widely regarded as one of the most successful of modern times. One survey carried out during the Games suggested that some 40% of the British public wished they had been Games Makers.

As Chief Executive of Volunteering England I had been asked to help with putting together London's bid to host the

Games which had identified volunteering as a strand to set it apart from other bidding nations. And following London's successful nomination I was asked to write the strategy for volunteering for the Games.

I want to make three observations about the Games and the implications for volunteering and the role of government.

First, the success of the Games Makers project suggests just how difficult it is for government to stimulate volunteering. Yes, participation rates rose in the year or two following the Games but they soon returned to their historic levels, albeit in international terms relatively high. Short of hosting an international jamboree each year, government leverage appears pretty limited, certainly without investment.

Which takes me to my second point. The Games came two years into the coalition government at the height of interest in the Big Society (see also memoir of Stevens), but also at the height of government cuts in public spending which impacted disproportionately on the voluntary sector (see also memoir of Curtis).

The Big Society concept had much to commend it. But it had a fatal flaw: the belief that government and voluntary action are largely incompatible, and that a strong statutory sector serves only to crowd out voluntary action. In some ways the timing of the introduction of the Big Society was unfortunate for the government, coming up against their austerity programme. But in other ways it made little difference. The Big Society was always going to be positioned as an alternative to the Big State, whatever the condition of the nation's finances. For government ministers this perspective

saw funding for the infrastructure of the voluntary sector as part of the problem: free voluntary action from the constraints of the state and the bloated voluntary sector, and a thousand flowers would bloom.

There was little historical evidence to support this position. In fact, the scant evidence that existed, based on an analysis of what happened to the sector in the United States during the cuts of the Reagan era, suggested the opposite of the crowd-out affect at work (Salamon, 1986).

And the third lesson of the Games? The declining interest by government in the infrastructure nationally and locally, both of which were largely by-passed in design and delivery, amounted to a sea-change in attitudes from the high-point of the Wolfenden report (1978) and its argument that local support agencies were essential for the development of voluntary action. Volunteering infrastructure has continued to struggle for funding since 2012, and that has hampered considerably efforts to build on the legacy of the Games.

Conclusion

IVR has done much over the past 25 years to expand our understanding of volunteering and promote its value to policy makers in the UK and internationally. It has also argued strongly against government attempts to co-opt the movement for its own ends by blurring the boundaries between volunteerism and compulsion. The COVID-19 global pandemic has seen a resurgence of interest in volunteering, both formal and informal. We now know far more about what makes volunteering work, in no small measure due to the work of the

Institute over the past quarter of a century. The hope is that policy makers interested in building on this legacy, will draw on this accumulated body of knowledge before acting.

Testing policies, building good practice, re-thinking relationships with the state

MICHAEL LOCKE

Michael Locke was joint founder of IVR in 1997, as Reader in the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London, and with IVR as Associate Director (1997-2001), Senior Research Fellow (2001-2007) and Assistant Director (2007-2008), joining Volunteering England as Director of Public Affairs (2008-2011) and subsequently leading on volunteering policy for Volunteering England and NCVO (2011-2014).

It was Andy Kelmanson who put the idea to me for an Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR). In the early 1980s she had taken a sabbatical from her job in Community Service Volunteers (CSV) (now Volunteering Matters) to study for a BA by Independent Study at North East London Polytechnic (now University of East London, UEL), where I was a researcher in the Centre for Institutional Studies (see also memoir of

Kelmanson). Independent Study required the student to devise an individual project to motivate and structure their programme; for Andy this was a study of the management of voluntary organisations. I was assigned as her tutor on the basis of my knowledge from being involved in community politics in North Kensington (Locke, 2016a) and also then developing an organisation development programme for Notting Hill Housing Trust (Griffith et al, 2020). After Andy graduated we stayed friends and kept talking about issues in volunteering and voluntary organisations management.

In 1997 Andy was CEO of the National Centre for Volunteering (Volunteering England from 2004), where Justin Davis Smith was building a body of research on volunteering. Andy introduced Justin to me, and proposed that we create the Institute for Volunteering Research (see also memoir of Davis Smith; see also memoir of Kelmanson). We wrote an agreement between the polytechnic and National Centre to set up IVR within the National Centre. Lloyds TSB Foundation came forward with initial funding. Justin became Director of IVR, and I had a title of Associate Director whilst continuing in employment at the polytechnic.

At the polytechnic Jon Griffith, myself and colleagues were creating new research and teaching projects for the voluntary sector, as described in our chapter (Griffith et al, 2020) in the history of UEL (Rustin and Poynter, 2020). The chapter summarises how as the Centre for Institutional Studies (CIS) we drew our approach from the philosophy of Karl Popper, treating policies and organisational programmes as trial solutions to social problems and testing their success or

failure. We undertook a number of commissions from central and local government agencies and voluntary organisations (see for example Locke et al, 1995).

Hence the expertise I brought to IVR was in policy and organisational studies along with my first-hand experience and commitment to volunteering and voluntary organisations. My research for IVR was mostly concerned with policies and programmes and their analysis (see for example Locke and Davis Smith, 2000) and evaluation (see for example Davis Smith et al, 2002).

In the first years of IVR from 1997 I felt we were attuned to the approach and policies of the newly elected Labour government led by Tony Blair in its progressive commitments to the 'third way' and social capital, which seemed to augur well for voluntary action, and which Steven Howlett and I explored in a series of conference papers (see for example Howlett and Locke, 1999).

The concept of the third way, which echoed a theme in the Clinton presidency in the USA (1993-2001), supposed that social policy could effectively progress through a way distinct from either public ownership or private enterprise (Giddens, 1999), and it looked therefore as though the voluntary sector would be a major player in a range of social policies.

The other main focus of research and policy discourse at the time was 'social capital'. Robert Putnam's (1992) enormously influential *Making Democracy Work* had found that underlying effective democratic participation was the social capital created through voluntary associations. Putnam's case became even more influential and urgent through his *Bowling Alone: The*

Collapse and Revival of American Community (2000), which took evidence from the loss of team participation in bowling as evidence of a weakening of social ties and hence democracy and which concluded with an 'agenda for social capitalists'.

It was widely taken for granted then that a strength of social capital was created through volunteering and so formed an argument for encouraging and supporting volunteering through social policies. As people established voluntary working relationships they built trust, especially following Fukuyama (1995). They, in effect, banked their experience of working together and their preparedness to trust others.

Applying the CIS approach to policy studies as noted above, we undertook a small scale, local study in East London to test the hypotheses of Putnam's social capital in people's involvement in voluntary action. We asked what had triggered their voluntary action and found support for the hypothesis of social capital in that individuals had developed habits of working together (Locke et al, 2001).

The concept of social capital made a compelling case for volunteering to play a main role in democratic participation and social policy, and hence for our contribution from IVR to Volunteering England in representing volunteering in national policy discourse.

But articulating and testing the intellectual themes in or behind policies could only be part of the practical project. It took us to the question what would actually encourage people to volunteer and keep on volunteering, and for this we needed to build an understanding of the constraints and opportunities which made it more likely that people would

or would not volunteer. This knowledge would feed into Volunteering England's information service and help build and publicise a body of good practice in volunteer management. My work in IVR contributed to that through evaluations of both national policy and organisational programmes as well as a study of reasons for volunteering in terms of faith (Lukka and Locke, 2003) and a literature review on retention (Locke et al, 2003). Later, this body of knowledge would underpin guidance on volunteer management offered by Volunteering England colleague Rob Jackson and myself (Jackson et al, 2019).

A theme which we developed through discussion was how individuals' history and geography shaped their decisions to volunteer, and consequently how these factors might be managed by central and local government and by volunteer involving organisations. A series of discussions, which for me developed from the evidence in Bowling Along (Locke et al, 2001), with Angela Ellis Paine and Véronique Jochum of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) produced their proposal in 2009 with Involve for one of the most significant research projects Pathways through Participation (Brodie et al, 2011) (see also memoir of Brodie; see also memoir of Ellis Paine; see also memoir of Ockenden). I was simply a member of the steering group; by then I wasn't active as a researcher.

In 2008 I was appointed as Director of Public Affairs for Volunteering England in Justin Davis Smith's new Senior Management Team, thus leaving UEL and employment as a researcher. At a distance, that might have looked like

discontinuing my professional career as I was no longer employed as a researcher and teacher but a publicist and policy-maker, even as a public relations spokesperson. But for myself I was more conscious of the continuity of themes and commitment. My vision in research with IVR, and indeed the vision for IVR, was of strengthening the representation of volunteering, public knowledge and awareness, political significance and recognition by government, central and local, and other public services and institutions. In my research career, I had sought to test, evaluate and criticise volunteering policies, programmes and practices, the point being to improve them; I don't recall doing a piece of research which found against volunteering.

At the time I felt a sense of direction in the flow of ideas and knowledge, building research-based and practice-based evidence, promoting volunteering and developing a body of good practice. In Volunteering England we sometimes talked of volunteering as having 'come of age'; I wasn't keen on the phrase but it did express the view that volunteering as an institution or a movement had grown up to the stage where it took its place among other public institutions as a mature force for good in society. And we could take pride in this as to a considerable extent the work of IVR and Volunteering England and its predecessors had achieved this.

This was a high tide for volunteering in the realm of national policy. In the last years of the Blair and Brown Labour government Volunteering England, as a Strategic Partner, was attracting a government grant of a million pounds a year, unhypothecated in that we submitted a programme of

work and reported back but it was not specific funding for items or projects with, as we'd now expect, quantitative monitoring. The Cameron coalition government (2010+) stepped the grant down to zero or 'independence from government', with the consequences which led to Volunteering England's merger with NCVO as the new year 2013 began.

From 2008 until I left NCVO in 2014 my scholarship on volunteering consisted largely of conference papers, notably to the annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference, continuing the theme of how government actions could be shaped to strengthen volunteering. However, the Conservative government lost interest in volunteering as a main plank of policy, and in 2016 I titled my conference paper 'Volunteering as a fancy-free institution: Uncoupling the relationship with the state' (Locke, 2016b). My thinking drew partly from my work on education systems in the 1970s and the argument from Ivan Illich (1971) for deschooling (Locke, 1974). Would it be good for volunteering to be 'deschooled' or, perhaps a better word, 'disestablished'; to back out of helping maintain the establishment of the state and to assert the independence of volunteering? I sketched how a research project, drawing on institutional theory, could delve into the ethos and logic of volunteering as expressed by volunteers, but I couldn't take it further. That was as far as I got with that train of thought until the IVR conversation in April 2022 asked if it was time to reconsider volunteering's relationship with the state (Locke, 2022).

Beyond reason: Centring context in our understanding of volunteering

ANGELA ELLIS PAINE

Dr Angela Ellis Paine joined IVR as Research Officer in 2000, becoming Assistant Director in 2005 and Director in 2008. She left in 2011 to become Research Fellow with the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham, and in 2022 moved to the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes, City, University of London as Lecturer in voluntary sector management.

Expectations are high for the potential of volunteers to create resilient communities, deliver services, and contribute to a thriving civil society. Repeated drives to increase volunteering often seem based on an assumption that there is an army of people ready, willing and able to offer their time for free to support local organisations and communities, if only they were 'asked' to do so. One reading of the evidence on how people have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 would lead us to believe that this is the case. The expectations also seem based on the assumption that organisations

are actively waiting to welcome, and have the capacity to effectively involve, anyone who should put themselves forward to volunteer. All leading, of course, to a whole series of individual, organisational and societal impacts. This is set, however, against longer-term static levels of volunteering (Staetsky and Mohan, 2011), a decline in the average amount of time spent volunteering (Clark, 2014), evidence that a few people make a disproportionately large contribution to formal civic engagement (Mohan and Bulloch, 2012), and that organisations struggle to prioritise appropriate resources for volunteer management (Machin and Ellis Paine, 2008).

Within volunteering policy and practice, the emphasis is often on individual action and agency: on the responsible, entrepreneurial, individual citizen (Crossan et al, 2016). Research on volunteering has also tended to focus on the individual, particularly their motivations and pre-dispositions; and often on volunteers engaged in specific, individual, volunteering activities. The body of literature on motivations, or the reasons that people say they volunteer, is now substantial. But does asking people why they volunteer, really explain the patterns that we see in volunteering about who does and doesn't get involved? Do the reasons they give really tell the whole story? Not to my mind. All too often studies of volunteering decontextualise it. They seem to freeze it in time and space by focusing on individuals' engagement in one volunteering activity and/or at one point in time.

Less, although growing, consideration has been given to the ways in which volunteering is shaped, enabled and constrained by the contexts within which it occurs. Volunteering

is not static or isolated. It is dynamic. It is a 'situated practice' (Cornwall, 2002). It is positioned within and shaped by the multi-layered relationships and contexts within which it is embedded: individuals' life histories, their families, organisations and communities (Omoto and Snyder, 2002). Although often not the direct subject of study, these have been some of the underpinning questions which have driven my research on volunteering over the past 25 years, before, during and after my 10 years at the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR).

Like many of us, both my interest in and my particular understanding of volunteering grew out of a childhood shaped by the voluntary activities of my parents. I don't recall ever thinking of my parents as 'volunteers', but both were heavily involved in the life of our local community and church. My dad campaigned against homelessness and helped build a youth café; he even sold his car at one point in order to buy a digger to help with the construction! My mum organised numerous groups and activities for children of various ages and was always baking or catering for one event or another. Our home was constantly busy and chaotic, providing space for and the organisation of a mother and toddlers group, pre-schoolers, youth club, large and small gatherings of various church-related groupings, and for couples or families in need of a home for a month or two. I don't remember these activities even being discussed or questioned; they were just part of how our family, and the communities we belonged to, worked. They weren't something that we did; they were simply part of who we were.

Studying sociology and geography got me interested in how typical my experiences were, or weren't, and to ask questions about how and why people came to be either included or excluded from such voluntary action, with what effect. This led me to undertake a PhD exploring questions of power and exclusion in rural community development. Although I rarely used the language, my research was all about volunteering in the form of community participation. And I was critical. I wanted to expose the power dynamics at play, to highlight the tensions which exist within communities, even through the way that 'community' is defined, and which play out through voluntary action. I wanted to draw attention to the ways in which communities and volunteers within them were being drawn into the dense web of governmentality, which saw the state increasingly governing through communities.

As I approached the completion of my PhD in 2000, a friend shared with me an advert they had seen for a research officer position at IVR. I remember so clearly my interview: I had to prepare a presentation on the impact of volunteering, the framework I suggested for which later became the basic starting point for IVR's Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2004). I remember the excitement I felt at being offered the job: what was the chance of being able to continue my research on volunteering, and be paid for it! And the feelings of being part of a fantastic, energetic and inquisitive team, as was apparent from the start. One of my new colleagues said that being part of IVR was like being part of a family business, in the sense that everyone there felt like it was collectively 'theirs', and I

quickly came to feel like this. Indeed, I continued to do so long after leaving.

One of the first projects I got involved in on joining IVR was a Lottery funded project on social exclusion and volunteering. The aim was to explore how people from racially minoritised backgrounds, disabled people and ex-offenders experienced volunteering. Writing up the research, in *Volunteering for All?* (Ellis et al, 2004), we identified various personal, organisational and structural barriers that limited people's participation, but also some of the things that organisations could do to help facilitate access. We highlighted the ways in which volunteering can risk exacerbating rather than ameliorating societal inequalities. We also, however, demonstrated the real difference that volunteering can make to individuals' lives when those barriers are overcome: the particularly transformative effect it can have for some people most at risk of marginalisation. This was recently reinforced through IVR's review for the What Works Centre for Wellbeing on the impact of volunteering on wellbeing (Stuart et al, 2020).

Reflecting the emphases at the time of the New Labour government 1997-2010 on both social exclusion and on volunteering as a potential route to inclusion and civil renewal, I got involved with several applied pieces of research commissioned by various organisations and associations. These explored barriers to volunteering and issues of diversity and representation in volunteering in different organisational contexts: for example, amongst school governors for the Department for Education and Science (Ellis, 2005a); amongst

colleagues governors for the Association of Colleges (Ellis and Brewis, 2005; Ellis Paine and Brewis, 2006; Ockenden and Ellis Paine, 2006); and evaluations of programmes, large and small, generally designed to encourage more people to volunteer (see for example Davis Smith et al, 2002; Ellis, 2005b; Ellis Paine, 2006). Collectively, these provided deep insights into why and how different people volunteered, and the range of factors which influenced that. These went beyond the reasons that the volunteers might give for or for not volunteering. Being part of the team working on the evaluation of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 (Davis Smith and Ellis, 2002) was insightful in terms of building my understanding of volunteering as a cultural construct (Lukka and Ellis, 2001) (see also memoir of Lukka). Thus, volunteering could mean different things to different people in different places and over time, with the associated risk that dominant meanings could come to marginalise others. As an aside, much of this work was also be great fun, particularly the bit where I got to go dog sledding in Canada!

The insights such projects provided collectively contributed to my thinking and writing, with various wonderful colleagues, about the intersection of individuals as volunteers and organisations, and particularly about how organisational change was affecting volunteering. Drawing on ideas of organisational hybridity, and associated developments such as professionalisation and the formalisation of volunteer management practices, we argued, for example, that volunteers were at risk of being a marginalised majority within some third sector organisations (Ellis Paine et al, 2010),

particularly those that engaged in public service delivery (Ellis Paine and Hill, 2016), but also how volunteering might look and feel different in hybrid organisations with their roots in the voluntary, public or private sectors (Rochester et al, 2020). This work proved to be a link between what I was doing at IVR and what I went on to do when I moved to the Third Sector Research Centre at University of Birmingham in 2011, not least through the Change in the Making project, which explored how change happens and is experienced within voluntary organisations, and, more recently and directly, through a study, funded by Power to Change, of the meaning, practice and management of volunteering in community businesses, which are inherently hybrid organisations (Ellis Paine et al, 2021).

In parallel, the insights that we were gaining at IVR from various evaluations and small-scale pieces of research also raised questions about people's geographies and histories of volunteering, which made us look beyond organisational contexts to consider how volunteering is shaped by, and in turn shapes, people's own life histories and the communities in which they live. We were delighted to secure funding from the Big Lottery to undertake the Pathways through Participation project, along with NCVO and Involve, to explore exactly these questions (Brodie et al, 2011; see also memoir of Brodie; see also memoir of Ockenden). I have been asked a few times which piece of research I am most proud of, and Pathways through Participation always comes to mind, even though I wasn't one of the report authors as I headed off on maternity leave before we got that far.

While Pathways through Participation really developed our understanding of people's journeys through volunteering over time, the focus was still, predominantly, on individuals and their experiences. After I had moved from IVR to the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) at the University of Birmingham, I was able to do some secondary analysis of a selection of interviews the Pathways through Participation project and TSRC's Real Times project, exploring how various contexts were shaping volunteering: individual lives, organisations, communities and families (Ellis Paine, 2015). This heightened my interest in not just how context shapes volunteering, but also in volunteering as a collective, rather than purely individual, practice. A group of us were recently able to explore these ideas further through a study into families and volunteering, within which we considered both how families engage, collectively, with volunteering, and how organisations engage with families (Ellis Paine et al, 2020).

Over the years our understanding of volunteering has increased dramatically. Throughout this, IVR has been at the forefront. Not only has it directly contributed to that evidence base, through working collaboratively and energetically to enthuse and enable others, it has helped build the field of volunteering research whilst ensuring that it has remained closely connected to policy and practice. I am privileged to have been one of those who has contributed a little, whilst gaining far more, from being part of that journey. I am endlessly grateful to all the fantastic colleagues I have been lucky to work with, many of whom have become life-long friends and mentors. Thank you!

Decolonising volunteering: Overdue recognition of origins outside the West

PRIYA LUKKA

Priya Lukka was a Research Officer with IVR (1999-2003); she is a macroeconomist in international development working with government policy-makers to improve outcomes for groups of people most marginalised by economic systems, through understanding the impact of policies on debt, trade and tax. She writes on a range of issues, including on global economic governance and climate colonialism; she is also a Board Advisor for a number of organisations working for social justice.

It was 1999, and I was new out of university. At my interview for my role as Research Officer at the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR), amongst other questions I was asked to talk about a figure who had inspired me. My family, like so many others, has a mixture of migrating patterns, but one branch of our roots is in Porbandar, a small village in Gujarat North West India, and it was here during visits

that I frequented Mahatma Gandhiji's museum home and I was inspired by his wife, Kasturbaji Gandhi, a woman of immutable spirit and active resistance for India's independence against the British.

My own afflicted history of the colonial oppression of my ancestors was orally passed down to me and supplemented by anything I could find in local libraries. Sadly my school education in the UK rigidly stuck to European colonialism and the origins of British politics, missing out, of course, Britain's exploitative past which set much of the blueprint on how to colonise others successfully. The Industrial Revolution was built on sourcing cheap materials overseas, using labour unethically and violently, and selling the goods produced by that labour back to the colonies and others, and thereby amassing immense wealth over the centuries. Britain also had highly profitable sugar trade based on millions of people being trafficked from Africa to work as slaves in the Caribbean. This is still a period for which there is little acknowledgment or repair for the devastating harm caused to communities across the world.

Britain's historic colonialism extended itself to the way in which welfare and charity originated and is organised. When I arrived to work at IVR, my first role in the British charity sector, the sector was mainly White, middle class and not representative of the communities that voluntary sector programmes and organisations were designed to support. At the time, I didn't have the conceptual framework to unpick this inherent contradiction. A sector set up to help, to strengthen communities, to mitigate the years of inequality

and dismantling of workers' rights from the previous 18 year-long Conservative administration, 1979-1997, was one where I found that projects were designed by the modality of response to funders' priorities, based on programme managers' ideas of what was needed, based in turn on academic published work and evaluation reports evidencing deprivation. This approach was biased towards formally organised and evaluated charitable work and shaped by mainstream policymaking doctrines of what was desirable. There was a stark contrast between those people that the sector set up its projects for, and those that made the decisions for what the projects looked like.

This was also the post-Live Aid era, when the artist Bono chillingly sang "Well tonight, thank God, it's them instead of you", in a track (Geldof and Ure, 1984) to raise funds for and awareness of the Ethiopian famine 1983-1985. In effect, the charity sector was othering people who lived in poverty and exclusion and was fundraising huge UK operations on the images of their destitution. That extended to how the sector problematised and marketed the needs of excluded groups. This was not by accident. The economic power structures, processes and mechanisms that enabled Britain's colonial exploitation have left an enduring effect. Colonialism created racial segmentation of the worker and slave class and the owning and elite class, from which patterns of exclusion today are derived.

However, this segmentation has its origins further back in Western society. Cedric Robinson, a scholar of the Black radical tradition, argued that Western civilisation was

infused with racialism even under the feudal system, and, as capitalism evolved, it produced the modern world system of 'racial capitalism' (Kelley, 2017). This was not because of a conspiracy to divide workers or justify slavery but because racialism already permeated feudal society; racial subjects, such as Irish, Jewish and Roma people, were the victims of colonialism and slavery within Europe. Robinson suggests that the tendency of European civilisation was not to "homogenise but to differentiate – to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into 'racial' ones" for profit and exploitation (Kelley, 2017). Thus, working in the sector, I saw that the process of programme design for social, economic and environmental issues was and is still colonial in how it insists on emphasising the contrasts between communities as resources are competitively allocated. This is the intrinsic method of late stage capitalism, essentially to pitch communities against each other instead of seeking our natural commonality and connection through working together.

However, in my home at IVR, I found room to grow my own approach to social research and make small contributions to the well-entrenched nexus between charity and coloniality. My first assignment was to undertake an evaluation of the British Heart Foundation's Healthy Walkers Scheme in Leicester to understand whether it had inspired Gujaratis who lived in the city to take up walking. I had the task of designing an appropriate methodology, which led me to try out interviewing bilingually in Gujarati and English, asking participants questions like:

> "Tumne chalwanu majaiwu ane bija lokho nai kyo aah karwanu?"
>
> "Did you enjoy walking and would you recommend this to others?"

I was moved by how at ease my interviewees felt discussing their experiences in their mother tongue. Primary research gives researchers a trusted space and roles of immense privilege to listen to people talking about their experiences. This was the time of New Labour, and the government 1997-2010 was keen to provide communities with resources to meet gaps in social welfare services. As in IVR we moved between national contracts to evaluate government schemes like the Millennium Volunteers programme (Davis Smith et al, 2002) to international initiatives like the UN International Year of Volunteers in 2001 (see also memoir of Davis Smith), each project widened my understanding of what volunteering is and left me with a deepened understanding of injustice and inequality too. Working in post-conflict Lebanon for the evaluation of the International Year (Davis Smith and Ellis, 2002), families and communities told us about how volunteering had built back the use of community spaces, so people could convene again. I worked there with Pat Gay, a freelance researcher and long friend of IVR (see also Obituary Pat Gay), and she said one of the most important things was to bring humour to semi-structured interviews! Such wise words from the best at her craft. Pat had the ability to often crack a joke early into our interviews, and she instilled in me

the importance of bringing a sense of ease into research settings (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2021).

My role was instructive in recognising that, whilst the Western approach is to claim volunteering as a phenomenon that developed in twentieth century Europe, there are a multiplicity of origins for volunteering in many diverse settings and historical traditions. Moreover, the political and justice struggles and movements for African nationalism, spearheaded by leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, were also all voluntary movements for change bringing together activists seeking liberation from imperialism. Making links between historic and contemporary exploitation brings a strong imperative to visibilise the natural links between volunteer movements and their solidarity with anti-racist and post-colonial struggles as we have seen with Black Lives Matter movements across the world and aligned social justice struggles.

When Mike Locke and I undertook a national study of faith-based volunteering across the main faith communities in England (Lukka and Locke, 2003), visiting gurudwaras, mosques, churches and more, we found comparable and deeply rooted notions of service and communality that went far further back than the twentieth century. This challenged the idea that volunteering is an expression of a uniquely Western values base and that it originated solely from countries in the West. Stepping out of the Western framework allows us to acknowledge the depth of the segmentation historically and how it has reinforced and helped to sustain colonialist assumptions within a capitalist system. This is important because volunteering has carried, for a long time,

a connotation of being morally purposed and originating from White Western societies. Reflecting on these dichotomies of how the concept has been instrumentalised and posited as uniquely Western and contrasting it with the plethora of cultures across the world organised along diverse concepts of self-help is now overdue. A decolonial paradigm for volunteering is essential to disentangle it from this narrow basis and to value that it has different sister concepts that flourish across the world.

Discovering and preserving the history of voluntary action

GEORGINA BREWIS

Georgina Brewis PhD is Professor of Social History based at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. She was Research Officer with IVR (2003-2005) and Head of Research (2009-2011).

I first came across the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) in 2003 when I was taking a masters-level qualification in social research methods. I was spending a year after graduating from my History and Politics undergraduate degree as a residential volunteer at Toynbee Hall, the former university settlement on Commercial Street in Whitechapel. Since I was so heavily involved in volunteering at Toynbee, including as a Guide leader, helping at summer holiday camps, running weekly history enrichment activities in a Brick Lane school, organising some fundraising events and supporting

research projects, it made sense to focus my research methods assignments on this topic. So for example, I ran focus groups with fellow volunteers about their experiences on the recently relaunched residential volunteering programme and conducted a series of one-to-one interviews about people's motivations for volunteering.

In search of academic literature and data on volunteering to engage with for my written reports, I stumbled across the work of the then National Centre for Volunteering and its research arm IVR. This was only the early days of the internet, when few research bulletins, journals or publications were online, so I had to make an appointment to access the materials at the library on the third floor of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) building in King's Cross. I still remember being astonished at encountering a whole library, small though it was, on the topic of volunteering and voluntary action; it had originally been an important function of The Volunteer Centre UK, predecessor of the National Centre for Volunteering, when it was founded in 1973 (Brewis and Finnegan, 2012). Several years later that library was closed. Gradually, we had stopped printing research bulletins, and IVR's journal *Voluntary Action* ceased publication. I helped arrange the transfer of some of the publications to the London School of Economics (LSE) Library. But, of course, LSE only wanted publications it didn't have duplicate copies of and since no one else at IVR or Volunteering England seemed at all interested in old copies of A.F.Bourdillon's (1945) *Voluntary social services, their place in the modern state* or a second edition of Geraldine

Aves' (1969) *The voluntary worker in the social services*, I took them home, where they have been very well used in my historical research on volunteering.

I was sufficiently impressed with IVR, and obviously confident enough at 22 that they might be impressed with me, to write and post a letter to IVR Director Justin Davis Smith asking for a job, or at the very least, seeking if there was some unpaid work experience going at IVR. What Justin thought of this I am not sure, but he kept the letter on file and a month or so later wrote to tell me IVR was advertising a research officer position: would I like to apply? I worked at IVR for two years (2003-2005) on projects for a range of clients including the National Trust, Barclays Bank (Brewis, 2004) and the Association of Colleges (Brewis, 2006). This was my first proper job and a fantastic introduction to applied research and the voluntary sector.

After a couple of years, I decided that my real research love was the historical study of voluntary action and I left to take up a funded PhD at the University of East London, IVR's academic partner, where Mike Locke, then Senior Visiting Fellow with IVR, formed part of the supervisory team. As a PhD student I was also then involved in resuscitating the Voluntary Action History Society (VAHS) (see also memoir of Davis Smith; see also memoir of Rochester). Founded in 1991 by Colin Rochester, Justin Davis Smith and Rodney Hedley, VAHS had become inactive by the early 2000s, and my membership cheque was returned! With Pat Starkey, I helped relaunch the society in 2005 and served on the committee until 2012.

I returned to work at IVR for just over a year from 2009 to January 2011. The day after my PhD viva, IVR's Director Angela Ellis Paine took me for lunch and not only offered me some temporary research work but also encouraged me to apply for a maternity cover post that was due to be advertised. It was this second period at IVR that really shaped my research future. First, I discovered that colleagues in Volunteering England were recalling boxes from the so-called 'City Archives', which was in fact a draughty storage facility in Dagenham, to dispose of as part of a cost cutting exercise. Some of these boxes contained the original records of the independent Committee of Inquiry on the place of volunteers in the social services in England and Wales set up in 1966 by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS, now NCVO) and the National Institute of Social Work Training. This commission, chaired by former UN advisor Geraldine Aves, was a significant moment in the development of a specialist infrastructure to support volunteers and volunteering in the UK and led to the establishment of The Volunteer Centre UK. Securing the support of Justin Davis Smith, by now leading Volunteering England, I recruited PhD student Anjelica Finnegan as a volunteer to manage an archives project, and we worked to arrange the deposit of the entire 'Volunteering England' papers at the LSE; the collection includes the papers of the Aves Committee, the Student Community Action movement, the Voluntary Action History Society and the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering (Brewis and Finnegan, 2012). This was my first recognition of how vulnerable charity archives can be, and

my first experience of an 'archival intervention' to safeguard an organisation's records (Brewis et al, 2021). Since then I've worked closely on the issue of archives and records in the voluntary sector, including through a long-running British Academy funded project 'Charity and Voluntary Sector Archives' (Brewis, 2022).

The second important way in which this return to IVR shaped the direction of my later research was through the leadership of the big survey of student volunteering in England for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) (Brewis et al, 2010). This project led to a collaboration with the charity Student Hubs that produced a series of public facing outputs on the history of student volunteering including a witness seminar, policy paper and animated film (Brewis, 2010; Brewis, 2011; Conn et al, 2014). This research focus on students' volunteering, service and campaigning past and present provided an organising concept that led to my first monograph (Brewis, 2014) and to subsequent work on the history of student life and student culture (Brewis et al, 2020).

As a historian of voluntary action, humanitarianism and student culture now based at University College London (UCL), my connection to IVR in its new home at the University of East Anglia continues. Most recently, and as part of a wider concern about the vulnerability of so-called 'grey literature' produced in the voluntary sector, I worked with Jurgen Grotz to ensure that 225 items from IVR's defunct Evidence Bank, which was mothballed after IVR was subsumed within NCVO, were uploaded and made available for researchers, open

access, via the British Library's Social Welfare Portal, a valuable insight into the landscape of volunteering research since 1997 (Grotz and Brewis, 2020).

European contexts and priorities: Belonging to a larger community

NICK OCKENDEN

Nick Ockenden worked at IVR from 2005 as a Research Officer and Research Manager before becoming its Director in 2010. Following the merger of Volunteering England and NCVO, he was Head of IVR and Head of Research at NCVO (2014-2017). He subsequently joined ActionAid Denmark (2018-2021) and currently works as a freelance research and evaluation consultant. He was Honorary Research Fellow, Birkbeck University of London (2009-2012) and Visiting Fellow, Northumbria University (2011-2017).

In 2006 a few months after I started with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) in my mid-twenties I found myself speaking at the General Assembly of the European Volunteer Centre in Rome on volunteering accreditation. As an early career researcher I was certainly nervous, but it went well, and I've been to more General Assemblies since. I was also very happy that as a new and junior employee I'd been

trusted to represent IVR and Volunteering England to present on research I'd been working on. Looking back, we were always encouraged to take opportunities like this. This may have been because we were never big so we all had to take on things like this, but it would've also been very easy to assume the Director would take these jobs.

These projects and visits were hugely enjoyable, taking me to 15 different European countries and introducing me to hundreds of amazing volunteers and staff across the continent. The research I worked on examined the skills adults gained through volunteering, designed methods to measure volunteering rates across multiple countries and contexts, and developed online platforms to capture the competences of volunteers, and much more. It taught me a huge amount and was probably one of the many reasons that I stayed with IVR for as long as I did. On top of that it helped cement a feeling within me that I truly was European, and I'm still in touch with many of those people I met. It was also part of convincing me that I wanted to live abroad at some stage in my life. I knew it would take something big to pull me away from IVR, and in 2017 it was the opportunity to go and live in Copenhagen with my family, where I'm still based and still researching volunteering as a freelance consultant.

I always felt that European projects were a priority for Volunteering England and IVR; in all of my years with the organisation, we always had at least one European project running. They were certainly some of the most challenging and demanding projects I worked on. I think the organisation recognised that having an outward-facing perspective

was a vital part of researching and better understanding volunteering. We had a pride in what we did and recognised our position as experts, but we also knew that to be really good we needed to listen to different voices and to look at volunteering in a whole range of contexts.

Working on projects with partners in Eastern Europe, for example, where the modern volunteering infrastructure only emerged after 1990, taught us a huge amount about how new systems, policies and laws could be rapidly developed to support volunteering. It raised the challenges of a legacy of volunteering which had been mandated by the state and helped us understand more about the limitations of government support and involvement (see also memoir of Stevens). Scandinavia, on the other hand, had much more in common with the UK but nonetheless highlighted how a more comprehensive welfare state could affect volunteering, most notably by there being comparatively little public sector involvement of volunteers; this is changing, at least in Denmark. These variations, and the effect they have on volunteering, have always been of interest to me, and these questions often influenced our research at IVR: in 2008 we partnered with IVAR to research the impact of public policy on volunteering in community-based organisations (Hutchison and Ockenden, 2008). The research found that government policy had a notable impact on the profile of volunteers, what they did, and how they were supported and managed.

A recurrent theme in the European projects I worked on was the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of volunteering

and the difference it could make to volunteers and their communities, particularly around thorny issues such as employability. We were aware of multiple pieces of research and heard from practitioners how it could be sometimes confusing and difficult to determine which findings were useful and of high quality; and, we were asked, why some findings appeared to contradict one another. Our response was our biggest piece of work across the team at the time, and in 2007 we produced *Volunteering Works*, which brought together what we and others saw as the most valuable and useful pieces of research on the value of volunteering (Ellis Paine et al, 2007).

The question about the effectiveness of volunteering also pointed to the need to better understand the environment within which individuals volunteered and got involved, whether that was in a rural English community or a post-communist country in Eastern Europe. One of the most enjoyable pieces of research I worked on at IVR was the Pathways Through Participation research (Brodie et al, 2011) (see also memoir of Brodie). This large-scale project worked with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Involve from 2008 to 2011 in three different English communities, to better understand why people participated in their communities. The findings focused on the value of viewing a volunteer's involvement as a journey over their lifetime and demonstrated the part played by external factors that either pushed someone towards volunteering, as a trigger, or prevented them from getting involved. The research led to many organisations fundamentally rethinking how they manage and support volunteers, and more than a decade later I still

find myself talking with people all over the world about this research and what it means for volunteering.

IVR's work across Europe produced a great deal of valuable insight and learning in its own right. But it also had an important influence on IVR's research agenda. By being part of a larger community, our work was better, more relevant and more widely communicated. But, perhaps above all, my experience of working on the European projects showed me that in England we were, and still are, very, very lucky to have IVR. Almost everyone I met seemed to envy us having a dedicated research institute set up to examine volunteering in all its forms. Very often they simply couldn't imagine a scenario in their country where it would be possible for such a body to exist, let alone for 25 years. So once again, it's a reminder to me that we can't take for granted the presence of a body like IVR and that we should continually remind one another of its value, recognising this position of privilege as we do the work. I feel very lucky to have worked at IVR, and even though I'm no longer part of it formally, I still feel very connected to the community it's been vital in helping to create.

Learning points on NHS research ethics and healthy research culture

SIMON TEASDALE

Professor Simon Teasdale was Impact Assessment Officer with IVR (2006-2008) and is currently Professor in Management at Queen's University Belfast.

The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) was my first job following my PhD at the University of Manchester. IVR had a great reputation for policy-relevant research. My supervisors, Peter Halfpenny and Duncan Scott, had always spoken highly of Angela Ellis Paine, then Director of IVR, and I had been really impressed whenever I saw her make a presentation. Mike Locke, then Senior Visiting Fellow with IVR, had been the external examiner for my PhD. When a post came up for a research officer to evaluate the impact of volunteering in the NHS I applied, and was successful.

My success perhaps reflected the quality of the other applications. I knew nothing about the NHS, or health, and,

on reflection, very little about volunteering either. With some trepidation in 2006 I packed my bags and moved to London to stay with a friend during the week. The next day I braved the tube during rush hour for the first time. By the time I eventually arrived at the Volunteering England offices in King's Cross, I had begun to realise why people in London always appeared stressed. I was then introduced into an oasis of calm. Looking back, I never really recognised or appreciated it at the time, but the working environment at IVR was truly special. Perhaps if I had been more considered in which jobs I applied for, I might not have ended up working on a project looking at the impact of volunteering in the NHS (Teasdale, 2008a). But I am glad I jumped without looking. I met some wonderful people both at IVR and in the NHS trusts where I conducted my 'service evaluations' with volunteer managers. And I learned a great deal during the relatively short space of time I was at IVR. Perhaps the lesson that has stayed with me most was around writing up reflections as learning points. So here goes.

I learned that managing people fresh from a PhD is difficult. During a PhD the student is largely in control of their research and writing, and sets their own deadlines. During their first research position the postgraduate researcher is often there to complete a research task defined by others. It is not always an easy transition. I suspect Sheila Hawkins, Head of Health and Social Care Volunteering at Volunteering England, learned this before I did. At first, we enjoyed a difficult relationship. Sheila had a project to complete for the Department of Health. I was keen to challenge everything

and explain why the project should have been designed a different way. Eventually we became great friends. I became more persuaded of the need to work to funders' deadlines, and of the need to do the best you can with limited resources. I suspect Sheila learned never to employ another newly graduated PhD student.

Volunteering England and IVR were great advocates of toolkits (Teasdale, 2008b; see also memoir of Stuart). These could be immensely useful to volunteering organisations wanting to demonstrate the value of their volunteering programmes, particularly where they were unable to commission research. I learned about the dangers of blindly adhering to toolkits, or indeed any guidelines, and also about reporting statistics based on a very small sample. From memory I recall that three of the four people I interviewed on the topic reported that their mental health had improved while volunteering. I was somewhat bemused to later discover my work being referred to in parliament as 'proof' that volunteering can improve mental health; that was 75% of the volunteers I interviewed.

I learned a lot about NHS Research Ethics Committees. The project I was working on had to be completed within 18 months. My early investigations suggested it needed ethical approval from six different NHS Research Ethics Committees. The main learning point here was that it is vastly preferable to conduct 'service evaluations' rather than research since this requires considerably less scrutiny by the ethics committee.

I learned about the wonderful and essential things that volunteers were doing in the NHS. I learned that volunteering

wasn't all about Lady Bountiful running the shop or taking the tea trolley around wards (see Sheard, 1995). I learned about the different techniques used by economists to place a value on volunteering (Handy and Srinivasan, 2004). And I also learned about the dangers of placing a financial value on caring (Cantillon and Lynch, 2017). I learned that volunteering wasn't always about helping others. Most notably, I was inspired by some of the self-help groups I met providing support to others with shared conditions and experiences.

The main point of learning that has stayed with me today concerns the importance of creating a research culture. This was something where IVR were light years ahead of their time. At universities we are encouraged to report on the environment for research as part of the Research Excellence Framework. We recognise that the environment is important for conducting world class research. But the indicators we use are rather blunt. For example, research income, PhD students, investment in facilities. What I learned at IVR was that the essential building blocks of a research culture are often really simple things. For example, going out as a team for lunch or drinks; creating time to listen to people and share experiences; and making people feel part of a collective whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The people at IVR genuinely believed in the value of volunteering: the importance of looking out for, and caring for others. And they brought this into their working environment: making everyone feel welcome and valued.

I eventually left IVR after 18 months, and my career has progressed considerably since then. But much of what I learned has

stayed with me. Reflecting on these experiences I feel a warm glow when looking back to those happy times. I do not think for one minute that my work at IVR has made a substantive contribution to volunteering research. But what I learned about the benefits of collective self-help has stayed with me. My research at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University focused on how participation in social enterprises can impact on the upstream determinants of health and wellbeing; whether through building people's self-esteem, developing their social networks, or simply giving them a sense of purpose (Calo et al, 2019). In essence, this built upon the research I helped carry out at IVR 15 years ago and extends this to new areas. I also have a fairly senior administrative position within my current institution, Queen's University Belfast. I would like to think that universities can learn from the essential building blocks for a research culture that IVR had in place 20 years ago. This is particularly challenging given the financial pressure on the higher education sector. But as IVR showed me, and as decades of volunteering research also highlight, if 'work' can be made fun and enjoyable then people will not only put more into their roles, they will also get more out of them.

Volunteering impact: Understanding and practice

JOANNA STUART

Joanna Stuart was Research Officer (2005–2008) and Senior Research Officer (2008–2017) with IVR. She is currently a freelance researcher, Visiting Fellow with Nottingham Trent University and Research Associate for NCVO and IVR.

At the heart of much of the research from the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) over the last 25 years has been one question: what difference does volunteering make? Understanding impact and demonstrating to funders, government, organisations, volunteers and beneficiaries the impact of volunteering, has been, and continues to be, a key focus of the Institute's mission. Since the inception of IVR in 1997 there has been considerable development in how organisations and the sector understand, talk about and approach the subject of impact. I have been lucky enough to work with many volunteer involving organisations since joining IVR in 2005, researching and evaluating the difference their

volunteers make, as well as supporting efforts to build evidence and the sector's understanding of volunteering impact more broadly. In this essay I chart some of the changes in impact thinking and practice and how recent events, namely the COVID-19 pandemic may shift the dial on how we approach impact within the volunteering field in the future.

Impact in the spotlight

When I joined IVR, the focus on impact was gathering pace amongst volunteer involving organisations and the sector. As noted by Colin Rochester and colleagues, the funding environment and the growing focus on accountability and effectiveness meant organisations had to "go beyond assertions that [volunteering] is 'a good thing' to demonstrate why it is worth investing in" (Rochester et al, 2010). There were growing expectations, particularly amongst funders and donors, that organisations should be evidencing the impact of volunteers in a tangible way. In response, IVR developed the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2004), a DIY guide to help organisations measure the difference their volunteers make. The toolkit provides a conceptual framework for making sense of the impacts of volunteering together with tools that can be adapted by organisations. The toolkit proved popular and, alongside colleagues at IVR, I delivered training to supplement the toolkit and developed two further editions of the guide.

Assessing the impacts of volunteering is a difficult business, and many of the challenges we saw in the early days of IVR still presented themselves ten years later. Organisations

were still, and arguably are still, seeing impact and volunteering impact assessment as something primarily to do for funders rather than for their organisations to use and learn from. This "restricts the types of impacts which are assessed, it dictates how that assessment is done, and it shapes the analysis of the results; it also limits the value of the exercise as a whole" (Rochester et al, 2010). Alongside this, there are also the challenges of causality and attribution. How can you prove that it is volunteering that is causing the change? How much can you attribute directly to volunteering? (see Taylor, 2016).

Enter then more talk and more expectations about the use of randomised control trials posited within some circles as the 'gold standard' for measuring impact and effectiveness. While promising more robust and rigorous data on the impacts of volunteering, RCTs were clearly out of reach for most volunteer involving organisations. As highlighted by Marilyn Taylor (2016), "the control group approaches that some funders still want are often highly resource intensive, methodologically difficult and ethically dubious".

Indeed, capacity to meaningfully focus on impact, measure it and make use of the findings remains a key challenge for organisations. Recent research shows that lack of "staff, time and money, and the complexity of different stakeholders' requirements" are still barriers to moving forward impact agendas within voluntary sector organisations (Cupitt and Ellis, 2022).

A shifting focus

As more organisations focused on impact, the need for support grew, and in 2011 the 'Inspiring Impact' programme was launched to support good practice in the sector. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund alongside others and ending in 2022, the programme focused on bringing together resources and tools to improve impact practice. Importantly, this was about much more than measuring impact but about impact practice; looking beyond measurement to "the activities that an organisation does to focus on its impact" (Cupitt and Ellis, 2022). At the heart of this is the need for organisations to understand what they are trying to achieve and, in the case of volunteering. what difference they want volunteers to make.

Recognising the importance of this, we pivoted our approach in IVR, re-focusing attention on helping organisations articulate the change they want volunteers to make, primarily through the use of theories of change (see New Philanthropy Capital, nd). As part of our VIAT training we spent more time talking through the difference organisations want volunteers to make and how they are planning to get there. More widely, we increasingly used theories of change in our research and evaluation work. One of the most recent examples was the development of a theory of change for volunteer wellbeing based on a rapid evidence review for the What Works Centre for Wellbeing and Spirit of 2012 (Stuart et al, 2020).

COVID-19 as a disruptor

Thinking about the volunteer involving organisations I have worked with over the years, it is clear that a great deal of impact practice within organisations is shaped by funders and their requirements. NPC's research in 2012 highlighted the need for funders to improve their own practices by ensuring their requirements "help charities learn and improve, are proportionate, and align with other funders" (Ógáin et al, 2012). Indeed, the call for a proportionate approach became critical at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic as organisations grappled with meeting the needs of their users, volunteers and staff, and impact assessment needed to take a back seat.

Research on the impact of the pandemic on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, which I have been involved in (King et al, 2022), shows that some funders responded to the challenges of COVID-19 by taking a more flexible approach during the pandemic. They were more light touch with monitoring and impact reporting requirements and more trusting of their funded organisations, allowing them to direct funding to where it was needed and where it would have most impact (King et al, 2022). There were many cases, for example, of grant-makers and local authorities providing emergency funding to volunteer activities and programmes with fewer strings attached (Dyson et al, 2021).

COVID-19 was certainly a disruptor to impact practice but was it also a catalyst for longer term change in the volunteering field? The pandemic has accelerated a move towards more open, flexible, trust-based funding (King et al, 2022). Some argue that we need to move away from impact

measurement towards a more "strategic learning approach… which does not privilege metrics over expertise and lived experience in the complexity of social change" (Cairns and Mason, 2021). At the heart of this is the idea that organisations can be trusted 'to know best' (Cairns and Mason, 2021). However, it is also argued that moving too far towards trust-based relationships risks "funders losing sight of the impact of their grants (or lack of it)" with calls for an approach balancing "flexibility and rigor" (New Philanthropy Capital, nd).

Moving forward with impact

IVR's work and wider research (see Cupitt and Ellis, 2022) suggests that volunteer involving organisations continue to need support in their impact practice. Given the trends we have seen over the last few years, this is likely to include a focus on the impact of online services and virtual volunteering. There is scope to build on and use the sector networks developed and strengthened during COVID-19 for peer support on impact and the sharing of impact tools and resources going forwards.

The collaboration that happened between organisations and agencies during the pandemic opens up potential opportunities to work together more closely on impact practice, including developing consistent approaches to measuring the impact of volunteering. This could enable data and findings to be brought together across organisations to build the evidence base on the impact of volunteering and better make the case for support and investment from government, funders, supporters and other stakeholders.

Finally, funders will play a critical role in shaping future impact practice amongst volunteer involving organisations. Will a shift to flexible, more trusting approaches mean more organisations are able to decide what making a difference looks like and how this should be assessed, rather than being prescribed by the funder? Should funders and volunteer involving organisations work collaboratively on this and what should this look like? What non-financial support can, and should, funders provide to help organisations in their impact practice?

Reflections on Pathways through Participation

ELLIE BRODIE

Ellie Brodie was Research Officer (2009-2011) and Research Consultant (2011-2012) with NCVO and is an advisor on environment and civil society policy, campaigns and strategy.

My involvement with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) began with Angela Ellis Paine (see also memoir of Ellis Paine), then Director of IVR, and one of the architects of a project which became not only a defining moment in my career, but also in the course of my life: Pathways through Participation.

The Pathways through Participation project began in 2007 when Véronique Jochum at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), and Angela at IVR, along with Stella Creasey at Involve worked together on a funding bid to the Big Lottery Fund, as it was called then, for a large project on active citizenship and participation. This was at the end of Gordon Brown's stint as Prime Minister,

2007-2010, as the sun was setting on over a decade of New Labour in power and the era of David Cameron's Big Society (see also memoir of Davis Smith) was being ushered in.

The aim of the Pathways project, as it became known to those of us working on it, was to better understand how and why people start, continue and stop taking part in their community. It aimed to make several unique contributions to understandings of active citizenship. The first contribution was by taking a deliberately broad and inclusive understanding of 'taking part' or 'participation': pretty much everything counted, from buying fair trade chocolate and voting to being a coach for a football club, taking part in a citizen's jury and being a charity trustee. Its second contribution was a focus on the whole of people's lives, their life course, to understand the ins and outs, stops and starts of participation; to analyse how the different activities people undertook had a pattern, or not, as the case sometimes turned out to be. A third contribution was that it was also interested in people who did not participate; the illusive 'non-participants' as they came to be called. Finally, the project aimed to bring all this understanding together in some punchy analysis and practical recommendations for policy makers and volunteer involving organisations to foster and support more people to get involved and stay involved.

NCVO, IVR and Involve were successful and funding was awarded. A lot of funding it was too; enough to fund three full-time researchers, one in each of the three organisations; and I was recruited as the lead researcher sitting within NCVO. Landing this job fulfilled two ambitions: to work for

a major national charity and to do ethnographic and participatory research in local communities.

I clearly remember the scale and ambition of the project, and the hopes and expectations resting on it; on us as the researchers. The advisory group included many of the contributors to this volume, heavyweights in the academic world of research on the voluntary and community sector and somewhat intimidating to a new kid on the block such as myself.

As researchers we were tasked with bringing together disparate bodies of literature using the broadest understanding of 'participation'. Our search terms included 'volunteering', 'individual giving', 'ethical consumerism', 'community development', 'civic participation' and 'civil participation'. We included sociographic research on life course and life history, literature on political theory to help conceptualise different forms of power and on human geography to understand the features of different types of communities. The resulting literature review (Brodie et al, 2009) and the analytical framework of participation we created paved the way for the next stages of research.

After the literature review the research task was to find three communities in England where each researcher could plant ourselves in, one rural, one suburban, one urban, where we could get answers to our core question: why do people start, continue and stop taking part in their communities? Through in-depth ethnographic and participatory research we were to find people's life stories of participation. These people needed to be found and so we went into communities to find them. I found myself creeping into a cricket club to try

and find someone to talk to; peering at community noticeboards to see who and what might be happening there; having a cup of tea with the local Conservative MP, who was a key instigator in the Big Society narrative which was taking hold at the time in the Conservative Party. And having one or two dicey encounters in the quest to find the illusive 'non-participants'; one experience involved interviewing someone in the back of a launderette, which I never wish to repeat!

The analysis coming from the literature and interviews we condensed into various diagrams, graphics and 'participation equations'. I remember the hours spent thinking, squeezing my brain, trying to distil, reduce, condense and cook all the various people's life stories into succinct and informative analysis. I hope this distillation has been a valuable contribution to the field of voluntary sector and volunteering research about the reasons why people start, continue and stop taking part.

It is difficult to measure the project's value or impact, and of course I am far from objective having been so intimately involved in it. Being invited to write this memoir is an honour, and perhaps one example of the enduring nature of the research. Another happened shortly after the Pathways through Participation report (Brodie et al, 2011) was published, over ten years ago now. I was giving evidence to an All-Party Parliamentary Group on civil society and afterwards a well-known academic in the field approached me and asked if I knew about the work of Brodie et al. To which I could only respond: "Erm. . .I am Brodie!" That anecdote was rather a boost given the amount of time and energy I had given to the work. More recently I met NCVO's lead on volunteering who

told me that she still used the analysis from the Pathways project in her volunteering training, which was wonderful to learn. And I have drawn on the work recently, in being one of the co-authors of the Vision for Volunteering, which was launched in May 2022.

After leaving NCVO I moved to Scotland to do research and policy work on rural community development. In remote rural contexts such as the Scottish Highlands some of the ingredients for participation stood out exceptionally clearly. These included the importance of meeting spaces, of interpersonal dynamics, of the institutional context and of funding. In a remote location, when the village hall or school closed it could leave nowhere for people to gather, for community groups to meet and host clubs or groups or events. If spaces are lost, as the Pathways project found, "many participation opportunities will be destroyed", which was absolutely the case in the rural places I visited.

The EU's LEADER programme injected funding into rural areas for community projects, including infrastructure projects like fixing a leaking roof or worn-out central heating system in a village hall, and was a lifeline for some of these communities. But LEADER needed local people with the energy and skills to make voluntary activity happen; and projects fell apart when conflict arose between individuals, and such conflicts were difficult to move beyond in areas with few people and long memories. The opposite was also true. I was fortunate enough to do a considerable amount of research on the Isle of Mull. Here the local development institution was thriving, and many people had retired to the island, often

with lots of skills and a drive for a better life; these 'incomers' were often the catalysts to get community activity to happen. They had the skills and resources to see needs and opportunities, and to do the things needed, such as apply for funding, get a board together, etc. The results in Mull speak for themselves. There is a community-owned hydroelectricity scheme, a community-owned abattoir, a community-woodland company, a community theatre. And the list goes on.

I returned to my hometown of Nottingham and took up a job as head of land management for The Wildlife Trusts, following my own pathway of connections and deep rootedness in place. For five years my working world was intimately about the environment, and the impact of people on the climate and on nature. Now, working for myself, I am enjoying finding my way back to the world of voluntary sector research, most recently helping the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) with policy and research projects, including helping to write the Vision for Volunteering. It is a pleasure and honour to contribute to this memoir, and I wish IVR another productive, incisive and relevant 25 years.

Working for inclusive volunteering: Mapping and understanding the data

KIM DONAHUE

Kim Donahue is a research and organisation consultant who has worked for more than 30 years with issues facing the voluntary sector.

Acting as a bridge between theory and practice for the organisations that I work with has been a central theme of my consulting work over the last 20 years. Its focus has included organisational development, practice-based research, evaluation, equalities and inclusion, and most prominently volunteering and volunteer management. The emphasis on volunteering and inclusion has its roots in my association with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) between 2008 and 2018, continuing to my recent work on NCVO's Time Well Spent: Diversity and Volunteering report (Donahue et al, 2020) and, more recently, the Inclusive Volunteering and Disabled People research funded by Spirit of 2012 (Donahue et al, 2022).

Although we have a better understanding of who volunteers now and organisations have got better at collecting data about volunteers, we still have a long way to go to achieving a fully inclusive volunteering culture in the UK. However, IVR research and my own work have made an impact on this by challenging stereotypes about who volunteers and what volunteering looks like and by supporting organisations to reduce the barriers to volunteering, particularly for minoritised communities. Collectively we have helped organisations to be able to better reflect who they serve within their volunteer pool.

The global anti-racism movement and the #MeToo movement have inspired me to reflect on my work in relation to inclusive volunteering and to do more. During this time, I have been writing and doing research related to inclusive volunteering so as to show what volunteering looks like within all sections of the community and to challenge the stereotypes of who 'the helpers' and 'the helped' are. The findings reflect the reality of modern volunteering as well as helping less visible groups to be viewed as 'the helpers' and consequently opening up pathways to participation and the subsequent benefits of volunteering.

Before relocating to London in 2002, I spent 15 years working in the US, much of which was leading a volunteer programme at a regional environmental organisation. I came to London to do a master's degree at the Centre for Civil Society at London School of Economics (LSE) and to reflect on the theoretical framework underpinning my practice and my own volunteer trajectory. I have had a keen interest in volunteering since I was 12 and had my own first volunteering

experience to help elect Jimmy Carter as US president. Even before that I had witnessed my mother leap into action to feed our neighbours when hurricane Agnes devastated our community in 1972. Our working-class neighbourhood in the suburbs of Baltimore was left to our own devices as our houses filled up with river water. I was deeply moved that my mother's first thought in that crisis was to help others, to serve her community. That was a defining moment in my life and inspired a career-long interest in volunteering. I retained a curiosity about what inspires people to give of themselves so generously and about how to harness this power to create positive and equitable change in society.

Having also spent many years before moving to London as an LGBTQ+ activist, and growing up in a working-class community, I did not always see my own story reflected in what was being written and talked about in relation to volunteering and volunteer management. I was determined to change this, and IVR provided a home for me.

I first came to know about IVR as I was listening to a guest lecture about volunteering from Justin Davis Smith (see also memoir of Davis Smith) at LSE in 2002, and my interest in volunteering research was sparked. After graduating from LSE and doing a short stint with a large charity in London, I started a consultancy and began helping organisations with all manner of capacity building, research and evaluation. In 2005, I started working in Tower Hamlets with the volunteer centre and the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), and we did a research project to look at volunteering rates and trends in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Little

did I know that this type of research didn't really exist in any local authority at that time. I was fortunate to have had Angela Ellis Paine, then Assistant Director at IVR, (see also memoir of Ellis Paine) agree to sit on an advisory group for this research. Having had a majority of the volunteers from the volunteer centre come from the Bangladeshi community, it was odd to me that there was little research about volunteers who were not, as the stereotype, middle-class white ladies serving the poor. This experience inspired me to want to make a contribution to the research base, to challenge stereotypes and to make volunteering more inclusive.

Once that connection had been made, I was keen to work with IVR, to learn as much as I could about volunteering research and to highlight the volunteer contributions and challenges for people of colour, working-class folks, disabled people, LGBTQ+ communities and others whose voices and contributions have not been adequately recognised.

Having been associated with IVR as a consultant since 2008 and subsequently with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), I have worked on projects researching and mapping volunteering in organisations large and small across the country. I was particularly interested in how organisations kept track of their volunteers and I was often shocked in the early years at the many organisations who either did not have any data about volunteers or did not understand why they should ask volunteers demographic questions, particularly those, apparently, sensitive questions such as related to sexuality or religion. It was clear to me then, and still is now, that volunteer data was key to inclusion.

I have learned many things in my collaboration with IVR and via the researchers associated with it. Evaluating and testing what works in terms of how organisations capture and use volunteer data has been invaluable to me professionally and the clients I have worked with. Discussing with colleagues the link between theory and practice and implementing some of the theory have undoubtedly benefitted the organisations we have worked with. Challenging the boundaries related to who the helpers are and who they help has supported the sector to reflect on and remove barriers to volunteering and helped ensure that organisations are able to reflect who they serve within their volunteer base and allowed more volunteers to reap the benefits of their volunteering.

For example, IVR's Volunteer Monitoring Guidance and toolkit, developed in 2008, provided tools to help monitor equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to volunteers and encouraged organisations to not only monitor the demographics but to implement good practice in relation to inclusion (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2008).

At IVR, I worked with many infrastructure bodies including volunteer centres, CVSs and regional bodies to better understand who volunteers within their locality and to support organisations to remove barriers to volunteering for all communities. The London 2012 Infrastructure Report (Ellis Paine and Donahue, 2008) that was completed in advance of the Olympic and Paralympic Games looked at volunteering across the capital to help make volunteering open to everyone.

IVR has worked with many local authorities and funders to better understand who volunteers, the barriers that exist

and how to make volunteering more inclusive. I worked on behalf of IVR for the London Borough of Islington, for example, to research volunteering in the borough and to support them to create a volunteering strategy that is inclusive within a borough of extremes of wealth and deprivation. At the same time, we worked with Cripplegate Foundation to investigate volunteering within small groups; linking to the Foundation's anti-poverty work, they used our research findings to inform the local and national policy debate about tackling poverty (Donahue, 2010). Our work helped them understand that volunteering is a powerful way to address isolation and can be an important entry point for new migrants.

The theme of much of my work with IVR has been to give voice to the unheard, to tell the stories of less visible groups, and to make volunteering more accessible to everyone in society. IVR has given me the tools to use my research to shift the narrative about who volunteers in the UK. I have gone on in my consulting career since IVR to support LGBTQ+ organisations, disability charities, anti-poverty organisations, local authorities and infrastructure organisations to understand volunteering within an equalities framework and to dismantle some of the barriers and stereotypes that stop everyone in our society from enjoying the many benefits of volunteering.

We now have a better understanding of who volunteers in the UK, and organisations are better at monitoring volunteers and removing the barriers to volunteering but we still have a long way to go to achieving a fully inclusive volunteering culture. Our research has helped to challenge the stereotypes of volunteers being the realm of white, middle class,

able-bodied, straight people, and this shift is slowly gaining ground thanks to, at least in part, the work of IVR. Good practice in this field is shifting towards equity and inclusion but still there are challenges; and we need organisations like IVR to continue to push boundaries and challenge ideas.

In IVR, I found kindred spirits who were curious about volunteering and equality and interested in understanding more about who volunteers. There are still many assumptions about who volunteers, like the 'posh ladies who serve the poor' or the middle-class white students wanting to gain experience for their career. But I have always been interested in the volunteers who tirelessly help their own communities and those who are less visible, and IVR made a place for that dialogue and that research, and for that I will be forever grateful.

International perspectives on government support

DANIEL STEVENS

Dr Daniel Stevens was Head of Research with IVR (2010-2011), subsequently with World Vision (2011-2022) and currently Global Strategic Outcomes Manager with Open Doors International (2022+).

It was a short time that I worked at the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR), just over a year from the spring of 2010. It was a pivotal time for volunteering in the UK, as in May 2010 the new Conservative and Liberal Democratic coalition government led by David Cameron ended 13 years of Labour government. It brought new ideas, notably the Big Society, and a different approach to public expenditure. In particular, it cut funding to Volunteering England, of which IVR was part (see also memoir of Locke). It was also a pivotal year in my career; I had previously completed my doctorate on civil society in Uzbekistan and then for five years had been teaching and consulting in that country. IVR was my first job back in the

UK, but after a year I returned to international development where I have worked since. In that year I learned so much from colleagues with diverse talents and perspectives and an intellectual curiosity married to a foundational commitment to the value of volunteering. I recall that year with affection.

I also think of that year of changing policy around volunteering and UK civil society in the context of comparative politics: globally, how do governments create frameworks and incentives to support that fragile flower of volunteering? My research had been on civil society in post-communist contexts, in which attempts at totalitarian control of society meant state orchestration of individual volunteering (Giffen and Earle, 2005). This was illustrated in a practice that continued after the fall of the Soviet Union of 'subbotnik' from the Russian word for Saturday; communities would clean their streets, with individuals swept along in the effort by a combination of peer pressure and watchful officials. From a liberal perspective this was fake volunteering. The state shouldn't interfere.

Yet, as during 2010 IVR and the wider volunteering community navigated the challenges of the Big Society (see also memoir of Davis Smith), the reduction of state funding for core institutions and government initiatives, it didn't feel like a moment of opportunity when society could be freed from the control of the state. Of course, the impact of Cameron's government rested not so much in the Big Society slogan and its vision to which he was personally committed, as in the programme of austerity, with its maybe naïve hope that volunteering and charities would plug the gaps in

services. One interesting model during this time was that of 'skills banks', in which individuals would build connection with fellow citizens through the reciprocity of trading skills. But this has given way to a nation of food banks, increasingly divided by the haves and have-nots, with volunteering a luxury good which the economically secure can enjoy. How much volunteering consists now of individuals from different social backgrounds encountering other citizens as equals in the pursuit of shared interests? How much is volunteering characterised by rituals of inequality, such as food bank volunteers transacting with clients? If it's better to give than receive, as a society we don't seem to have been very good at creating opportunities for everyone to be a giver of their time (see also memoir of Donahue).

Having moved back into international development, and observing the role of the state in countries with greater levels of poverty and inequality than the UK, I would conclude that volunteering is something that flourishes in the soil of states which take responsibility to deliver basic services, and enable everyone to have a secure livelihood. These are not small states unleashing big societies. But I remember the comparative international surveys we examined at IVR, which led us to ask questions on why volunteering in some countries was high. A major global survey (Charities Aid Foundation, 2010) placed UK 29th in a table of giving time in which Turkmenistan was first, whereas an aggregate of four international surveys placed Sweden and Netherlands top; and that raised further questions about the emphasis on volunteering for leisure and service delivery, respectively, in these countries (Stevens, 2011).

Clearly, international comparisons are complex (see also memoir of Ockenden) and point to the need to explore how far specific volunteering policies or programmes make the difference. Probably it is more significant that states prioritise the basic needs of all citizens, enabling them to have time to volunteer, and that there are visions of the common good in society of how citizens can give their time; then volunteering contributes so much to our wellbeing. Of course, as these reflections indicate, government may need restraint so a plurality of visions can emerge. I wish IVR all the best as it continues to ask these questions and inform policy debates.

Worlds of difference in health and social care

MATTHEW HILL

Dr Matthew Hill was Research Officer (2008-2011) and Senior Research Officer (2011-2017) with IVR and is now Head of Insight, Evaluation and Research at the Health Foundation.

I considered being appointed Research Officer at the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) my first 'proper job'. Albeit that appraisal was to be constantly challenged by strangers at parties and girlfriend's parents over the next eight and half years. Either way, it certainly wasn't part of a grand career plan. I'd completed an MSc in Development Studies at SOAS University of London and then worked in India, where I'd got most out of, and I think had most to offer to, various research projects. I wanted to pursue this interest back in the UK social sector so was thrilled to get the job at IVR. I started in December 2008, when it was still part of Volunteering England. Lehmann Brothers had collapsed a few months

earlier but austerity and stark cuts to voluntary sector infrastructure were a few years off yet.

The theory and practice of volunteering was all new to me so my first weeks were spent reading up on the seminal texts and reports (see for example Beveridge, 1948; Hedley and Davis Smith, 1992; Musick and Wilson, 2007) and getting my head in the key survey data (see for example Low et al, 2007). Though I had somewhat fallen into the subject, it quickly became clear that volunteering research would provide a powerful lens to engage with a wide range of policy agendas. In my first few years I was able to contribute to research in youth, local government, voluntary sector infrastructure, the environment, and international development. But over time my work coalesced into health and social care and the role that volunteers did, could and should play, working on a range of projects across hospices, care homes and hospitals. It was a huge privilege to interview dozens of staff, volunteers and patients across the country, including some in the last days of life. Four things stood out from this programme of work in health and social care.

First, overarching policy narratives continued to lag behind the realities of practice on the ground. Most notably, there continued to be a live debate around whether volunteers should be involved in health and social care at all, despite millions already being involved across the whole spectrum of frontline and support roles (Naylor et al, 2013). Frustratingly, this type of policy immaturity around volunteering persists to this day, and I believe continues to prevent it getting the recognition, support and critical attention it deserves. Arguably,

volunteers are needed more than ever with the burgeoning backlogs in care, the crisis in social care and continued challenges around health inequalities that the COVID-19 pandemic has only made more urgent.

Second, a preoccupation of our research was to theorise the distinctive contribution of volunteers across all of those different roles. This was in part driven by fears over job substitution but this understanding was also critical to underpinning good management and effective assessment of the impact of volunteers in health and social care. For example, our work in palliative care tried to build on McKee et al (2010) and their characterisation of volunteers as inhabiting a "unique third culture of care that fuses elements of formal care with the informal visiting of friends and neighbours" to explore how volunteers played a role in bridging the institution to the wider community (Morris et al, 2015). The force of this connection was well articulated by a volunteer manager in a hospice I undertook research in:

> If [death] is witnessed only by the professionals that are dealing with something - you can still pretend that it hasn't happened but when a member of your local community stands next to you at a time of grief and trauma and says to you I can see what you are going through and I'm here to support you - it just makes a world of difference [Volunteer Manager].

Third, there were acute differences between different health and care settings depending on their history, organisational

context, funding model and staff orientation to role. This was seen especially keenly in care homes where IVR worked with colleagues in the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) as the evaluation partner on the Volunteering in Care Homes Project (Hill, 2016). The project was broadly a success and contributed some excellent resources to the relative blind spot of social care by linking up nursing and residential homes with local volunteer centres to develop innovative volunteering roles. The homes themselves were all well rated in terms of standard of care provided, and the key staff generally had positive motivations for engaging volunteers, but the support offered to volunteers tended to be much less formal, substantial and considered than in some other settings. Indeed, this informality showed up in the research process itself. After unsuccessfully trying to contact one particular home I was told that the lady who printed out the business emails had been off on long term sick leave so the manager wouldn't have picked up any of my messages.

Fourthly, I became increasingly fascinated by the shifting position and power of volunteers in this sector, and I took up this theme in my PhD at Northumbria University supervised and very caringly guided by Professor Irene Hardill (Hill, 2017). By drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical triad of field, capital and habitus, I attempted to track the way wider social trends of bureaucratisation and commercialisation had resulted in a narrower conception of volunteering. I found that these processes had resulted in an increased valuation of financial, hierarchical and skilled delivery capital. This often benefited volunteers who were giving their

professional skills, for example therapists or hairdressers, in terms of their status, access to resources and power in decision-making, albeit usually decisions directly related to their role. At the same time there was a declining valuation of moral, representative and distinctive delivery capital. In the hospice setting this particularly reduced the power of what were termed 'traditional' volunteers, usually older women who had been involved since the hospice was set up and had sometimes had a hand in its establishment. The most interesting functioning of these dynamics was through covert and latent power but there were also instances of more overt conflict. In another project I'll never forget a chief executive of a hospice describing how they had introduced a substantial mandatory training package with the primary aim of making long standing volunteers leave. Volunteers they saw as invoking illegitimate claims to power in the organisation.

Reflecting on my time at IVR, it was certainly a period of intellectual development and stimulation, and that was helped by the space for wider theoretical and policy debates through my concurrent doctoral study. Yet, by far my most enduring memory is around the inspiring colleagues and the uniquely nurturing team ethic. When I joined this culture was still set from the top of Volunteering England but it continued through various future incarnations on the Institute. What's more, the team was able to make a positive contribution despite the inherent constraints of undertaking commissioned evaluation and research and working in an aspect of social policy that was firmly on the periphery of more dominant government agendas.

I look back on my time with both pride in the contribution we made and gratitude for the example others set personally and professionally. I can't think of a better place or group to have cut my research teeth in. I've been genuinely moved to read the other contributions in this volume and am delighted IVR is establishing roots in its new home at University of East Anglia.

Volunteering in a time of austerity: Everything changes, everything remains the same

ANDREW CURTIS

Dr Andrew Curtis was Senior Research Officer with IVR (2012–2017), subsequently Senior Researcher with the Local Trust and, currently, acting Head of Evidence and Learning with Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

In 2016 I attended an early viewing of Ken Loach's I, Daniel Blake. Like most who saw this film I was moved by this story of austerity Britain, one of food banks and vindictive benefit sanctions. Yet I was not surprised. There was little in the film I had not heard in frontline accounts four years earlier when I started working on an Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) project called 'Volunteering for Stronger Communities'. You could ask what any of this had to do with a project on volunteering research. This was the question put to me when I started debriefing on the fieldwork, which was

conducted in 15 areas in England in 2012, back at IVR. The answer, it turned out, was everything.

I had joined IVR in the summer of 2012. It was then based in Volunteering England, which was gearing up for a merger with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). It felt a good fit for me. My PhD had examined social capital, a theory central to the conceptual thinking of IVR (see also memoir of Locke). My time at IVR, which ended up being five years, was almost entirely commensurate with the Institute being part of NCVO. The merger had been driven in part by the new financial realities facing national non-profit infrastructure in England and the loss of funding as a Strategic Partner of the Government's Office for Civil Society. When I joined IVR the impact of the recession, the public spending cuts more widely and the increasingly punitive benefits regime were really biting. Whilst many of the external volunteering enquiries in 2012 centred around Games Makers at the London Olympics and Paralympics, the Stronger Communities project took me far away from the feel-good games.

In this memoir I want to reflect on those times, providing a highly subjective account of researching in a shifting political context and doing so in a changing organisational environment. I will use the Stronger Communities project as an example, but will not explore the findings of the research in any depth, which are published elsewhere (Curtis, 2015). Nor does the memoir act as an exhaustive account of Volunteering England, IVR or NCVO during this time, which have been explored in more detail elsewhere (Rochester, 2013; Davis Smith, 2019; see also Brief History by Rochester and Grotz). I will also reflect on

methodological shifts and the implications of being reliant mainly on commissioned research and evaluation.

The funding model of IVR had evolved. Prior to this it had been supported by mainstream funding through Volunteering England's position as a Strategic Partner with the Office for Civil Society and its predecessors. It was now more reliant on winning and conducting commissioned research to raise the majority of its income. Whilst this model is not unusual for non-profit organisations, it poses questions for a research institute. Working for a multitude of commissioners meant dealing with occasionally competing agendas, as well as taking into account the policy direction of NCVO itself. Whilst larger projects, like the National Lottery funded Stronger Communities, were well resourced, some of the other work we tendered for in this time had tight budgets, which were difficult to cover costs and overheads, thus making it hard to deliver robust research within the allocated funding. The quality of the research was, rightly, always prioritised in IVR, yet this could impact on staff time and full-cost recovery for the organisation. A critical question for NCVO management was whether NCVO was subsidising under-costed projects commissioned by large well-funded organisations; it was a fair question. It was the case that IVR focussed on the outputs rather than billing by the hour.

Added to this was the certainly disparate nature of the projects undertaken, the golden thread being volunteering. I see this thematic diversity as a strength. In my time I looked at youth social justice projects, volunteers working with people living with motor neurone disease, people with offending

histories volunteering, and place-based funding run at a local level by volunteers. However, the increasingly competitive commissioning environment with ever tighter budgets meant there was little time for reflection and bringing all this learning together. I feel we managed this well enough in my time at IVR, but the financial realities meant there were inevitably opportunities missed for broader learning about volunteering.

This is why I wanted to use the Stronger Communities project as an example due to being a well-resourced and more immersive project, funded over a longer time period than most of the projects I worked on. Stronger Communities had originally been conceived in less fraught economic times. It was part of a broader programme, delivered by Volunteering England, later NCVO. Unusually, the evaluation was split from the research project, which focused on broader issues. As part of the research I visited all 15 areas that were part of the project, latterly there were two more in-depth case-studies, one in Liverpool and the other in Devon, which focused on Exeter and the coastal town of Ilfracombe. It was in the latter where I first visited a foodbank as part of the project. It was not just food on offer, but shoes and clothes, as well as vital advice. The projects were not short of volunteering examples, but many raised wider ethical and political issues. This was the era when benefits sanctions, ushered in by the 2010 coalition government, escalated, with some people being required to 'volunteer' as part of their Jobseeker's Agreement, including notoriously the case of Cait Reilly who was required to conduct 'work experience' for free at Poundland, a private business, despite having a more

career-relevant volunteering role at a museum. She won her appeal (Griggs, 2013).

In the Stronger Communities project there were multiple examples of Jobseekers being sent to volunteer centres to look for volunteer opportunities and needing to get paperwork signed as part of their Jobseeker's Agreement. One of the volunteer centre managers talked about volunteering's name being 'dragged through the mud'. That is not to suggest this was a coherent, nationwide policy. Rather these were manifestations of a punitive culture. For example, contrastingly, in the research there were other instances of people being sanctioned for volunteering, that is giving time which was deemed should have been used for job seeking. I heard some harrowing stories, some first-hand accounts, others anecdotes and hearsay, the latter including stories relating to suicides linked to benefit sanctions. You cannot publish unsubstantiated rumours in a research report, as a member of the advisory group rightly pointed out. But no one doubted the desperate situations people faced. It was a grim time, but hardly unprecedented. During that period Anjelica Finnegan was looking at benefit related volunteering schemes under the Thatcher governments of the 1980s (Penny and Finnegan, 2019), as well as latterly looking at contemporary welfare reform for NCVO (Finnegan, 2016). Volunteering is situated in the political climate it operates in. Everything changes, everything remains the same.

As well as broader social changes, I found that during this time, while we were bidding for projects, the commodification of research and evaluation also increased. With everything

unitised and costed in proposals, certain methods would be seen by commissioners as a luxury. Colin Rochester (see also memoir of Rochester), a member of the IVR Advisory Group, often advocated the methodology of non-participant observation, which had seemingly slipped from fashion. When costing out research plans there was rarely time for this within the limited budget, what with desk research, surveys to distribute, and interviews to be conducted. How could observation be justified to commissioners in terms of value for money? In Stronger Communities there was a bit more scope for this, especially in the more detailed case-studies.

For me this was also about physical presence. At the most basic level this meant getting on a train and/or bus and visiting the areas. In many of these places, always welcoming, it felt very distant from London and the centre of power, and not just geographically. Some of these areas would later be crudely dubbed 'Leave' areas, and latterly 'former Red Wall'. I did not recognise the, at times contemptuous, coverage of these areas in parts of the liberal media. My advice is to get on the train, try not to miss your connection, run for the bus. Do the miles, do the waiting around, even if this only produces an hour or two of interviews that can be unitised and costed. Travel expands the mind, after all.

By 2017 my time at IVR was over. Despite surviving multiple NCVO restructures, almost annually, this time felt different. The direction of the wind had changed; no attempts at rational discussion would alter that. That era at IVR remains one of great contrasts. It was simply one of the best times of my life professionally, and I produced research I was proud of

with colleagues, both in IVR and across NCVO more broadly, whom I valued highly. But this was within a wider organisation seemingly in constant flux, and at times with priorities greatly different to my own. When I look at back at that time I see one of professional achievement and personal change; my oldest child was a baby when I joined, my youngest daughter was born during my time at IVR. And I see a period of political turmoil that has never truly gone away but has been overshadowed by subsequent events. Times change. My children are on the cusp of secondary school, and I'm a commissioner of research now. Whilst many narratives place 23 June 2016 and the EU referendum as the beginning of seemingly endless political turbulence, for me the story predates that. Although many of the communities I visited faced intergenerational and systemic inequality, the reforms brought in by the coalition government 2010-2015 exacerbated them. In 2020 the National Audit Office (NAO) tragically identified at least 69 suicides related to welfare reform sanctions, suggesting there could be many more (National Audit Office, 2020). The rumours were substantiated in the end, but the conversation had long since moved on.

A transitory career: Variety, statistics and policy

META ZIMMECK

After training as a social historian and carrying out research on the employment of women in clerical and professional occupations, including in the Civil Service, Meta then specialised in research on volunteering, government-voluntary sector relations and organisational management and development. She has carried out quantitative, qualitative and policy-based research for a portfolio of clients in local and central government, academic institutions, voluntary organisations and businesses. She worked for both IVR and VE on a number of different research projects and for VE as policy strategist and head of secretariat on the Commission on the Future of Volunteering. Currently she and her partner, Colin Rochester, are working on a study of the production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by voluntary action during the pandemic.

Years ago I realised that mine was a 'transitory' career (Onyx and Maclean, 1996), which "features continuous, and not necessarily coherent, changes of fields and employers; takes place in a variety of organisational settings; and prioritises variety, innovation and quick results" (Zimmeck, 1998). My career in England since 1975 has progressed from postgraduate student looking at the employment of women in the British Civil Service 1870-1939 to jobbing researcher on historical projects to high-class audio typist for the Royal Courts of Justice, which qualified me for a mortgage on my flat, to researcher on housing and homelessness to researcher on the voluntary sector and volunteering. By 1997 I was, to say the least, a versatile researcher, but my only experience of volunteering had been as member and chair of a tenants' association and board member of several housing associations and a chair of one. Familiarity with housing associations, which were then deemed to be part of the voluntary sector, enabled me to land a job with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) as project officer on the Voluntary Sector Strand of the Redefining Work Project and introduced me to the seductive joys of research on the voluntary sector and volunteering. It also introduced me to Volunteering England and its predecessor the National Centre for Volunteering and the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) and kick-started over 20 years of productive contact.

The RSA's Redefining Work Project was an investigation of how economic and social factors were changing the nature of work. My job was to focus on workers in the voluntary sector and on volunteers. Justin Davis Smith was on the project's Steering Group, and I quickly took advantage of his

involvement by energetically mining Volunteering England's archive (see also memoir of Brewis). My conclusion, surprisingly upbeat, was that employment in the voluntary sector and volunteering were more egalitarian and inclusive; offered more and better opportunities for non-linear careers and portfolio ways of working, which fit in with people's 'real lives'; and provided greater satisfaction and fulfilment.

After the publication of this report I was commissioned by IVR, with Justin Davis Smith, Mike Locke and Colin Rochester on the Steering Group, to carry out a review of volunteer management. This allowed me to do some joined-up thinking about what I had learned through my research on employment in the civil service and the RSA project and apply it to volunteering management. Many, if not most, volunteers were seeking the same things that civil servants and 'redefined' workers were: a job that was meaningful in an environment that was conducive to these aims, rather than a 'human' resource' in rationalised, bureaucratised and professionalised organisations, which was, in effect, the direction of travel promoted by volunteer management professionals. So, stealing shamelessly from Weber, I extrapolated a typology of organisations, the 'bureaucratic' and the 'collectivist-democratic', to a typology of volunteer management, the 'modern' and the 'home grown'. I concluded that volunteer management should not be a case of one size fits all and that proponents of 'modern' management needed a reality check. By the end of the project I knew that my sympathies lay in a 'home grown' approach and they were somewhat impolitic in an organisation that promoted 'modern' volunteer management and its professionals (Zimmeck, 2001).

In late 1999, following a quickie research trip to the North West in search of government bodies' financial support for volunteering, much to my surprise Justin Davis Smith seconded me from IVR to fill a short-term post as acting head of the Voluntary and Community Research Section in the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) of the Home Office. My principal task was to provide expert advice on the voluntary sector and, in particular, volunteering to support the Active Communities Unit's submission to the Treasury's Cross-Cutting Review 2000, which determined priorities and funding allocations. This involved me in manic research to provide supporting information for Ministers' evolving topics of interest and in begging calls to friends and colleagues for advice and top-up information; and quite a lot of guesswork.

I then was hired to do the same job as a proper civil servant. Although my work involved abstruse machinations for consulting and responding to colleagues' unfolding policy interests and fighting off criminologists for funding, over the next six years I managed a programme of blue-sky research, programme evaluations, bespoke analysis and briefings. In the early days of New Labour much of this was about volunteering. I carried out a survey of volunteering in prisons, which indicated that bureaucratic changes in management had impacted negatively on existing volunteers, and an evaluation of mentoring and befriending, which resulted in recognition of and funding for the less glamorous befriending organisations. I was responsible for the sections on people's involvement in their neighbourhoods and active participation in communities for the 2001 Home Office Citizenship

Survey (HOCS), now Community Life Survey (Attwood et al, 2003). I worked hard to ensure that the previous work done by Volunteering England in its National Surveys 1981, 1991 and 1997 were recognised and, so far as possible, used as the basis of the HOCS questionnaire.

When plans for the 2005 HOCS were being considered and Volunteering England failed to get funding from the National Lottery for another iteration of the national survey, I suggested both to policy colleagues and IVR that it might be possible to gather additional data not included for reasons of space in the HOCS through an additional piggyback survey which would revisit respondents to ask more detailed questions on volunteering. At that point I was wearing two hats as civil servant and member of IVR's Advisory Group, and that seemed to me to be an elegant win-win solution to the need to gather more detailed data on volunteering. This came to fruition in the report on Helping Out (Low et al, 2007).

I left the Home Office after RDS ruled that researchers should be moved after a maximum of four years of service in the same post and transferred me to research on ankle bracelets for ex-offenders. I was rescued by Christopher Spence, Volunteering England's chief executive, who invited me to apply for the post of public affairs strategist, at which I was successful. I had two main tasks. The first task was to draft policy documents in support of the organisation's position as the integrated national volunteer development organisation for England. These included submissions to the Cabinet Office's Third Sector Review on the modernisation of the network of volunteer centres, which set out a ten-year plan

to ensure provision of volunteer centres in all local authorities; upgrading their services; increasing their capacity to plug into local, regional and national initiatives; and their sustainable funding through cost sharing among central government departments, local authorities and volunteer centres (Volunteering England, 2006; 2007).

The second task was to act as head of secretariat for the Commission on the Future of Volunteering, established by the England Volunteering Development Council in 2006 and then behind schedule. My role included servicing the Commission and organising the consultation (Zimmeck, 2008), which produced a total of 1,190 contributors, a massively ambitious and labour-intensive project with enormous potential. I have to say that I thought that the published report (Commission on the Future of Volunteering, 2008) could have been written without the effort and expense of the consultation. It focused on formal volunteering in large bureaucratic organisations and emphasised volunteer management in institutional settings: recruitment, retention, hard-to-reach groups, employer-supported volunteering and issues of professionalisation such as training. And it very much avoided telling truth to power. It broke my heart.

Later I reappeared at IVR as a research consultant under the aegis of Nick Ockenden. The projects included: a review of recent government policy documents on the third sector and volunteering to feed into the Commission on the Compact's refresh of the Compact Code of Good Practice (Zimmeck, 2013); a secondary analysis and report on Volunteer Scotland's Volunteer Survey 2011, which made up for the survey's lack

of significance-tested tables; and a report on the Join In Survey about the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games volunteers; these last two reports were for information only and were not published.

So my professional relationship with Volunteering England and IVR has lasted formally from 1997 to 2013 and continues today in warm relations with the reconstituted IVR under the genial direction of Jurgen Grotz.

Unlike many of those who are providing their recollections of IVR, I have experienced comings and goings as part of my transitory career. I brought to the table knowledge and skills from outside the world of volunteering and the voluntary sector. As I think back, two things strike me. The first is the lack of integration in the functionality of the two organisations. IVR's programme was shaped by research themes and opportunities of commissions and funding, more so than by Volunteering England policy development. I remember when I was attempting to formulate Volunteering England's submissions to the Cabinet Office on the modernisation of the volunteer centre network, I was disappointed by the lack of priority given to research on the issues. There may be all sorts of wrinkles that I did not know about which structured the relationship between Volunteering England and IVR, but I think there could have been synergies which would have increased their joint efficacy. The second is IVR's lack of high-level statistical capacity. Given that IVR through the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteering England initially 'owned' statistical information on volunteering through its benchmark national surveys of 1981, 1991 and 1997, and marketed itself

as the main authority on research on volunteering, I could not understand why it did not protect its market share by upgrading its quantitative skills. If it had done so, it would not have needed me to sort out a couple of small surveys, and, more to the point, it would not have lost out to other research centres.

Connecting and disconnecting with the complex web of volunteering

FIONA POLAND

Fiona Poland is Professor of Social Research Methodology, leading the Inclusion Research Theme in the School of Health Sciences at the University of East Anglia (UEA), is UEA Lead for Volunteering Research, and co-leads the NIHR ARC East of England Inclusive Involvement in Research for Practice-Led Health and Social Care Theme. She is journal editor of Quality in Ageing and Older Adults.

Tracing my 50 years' involvement with volunteering research and voluntary action, and with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) has taught me to appreciate the value of volunteering, as I have reflected on how to use these experiences as lessons to add value to and with volunteering and volunteers. When I thought about ways to share this, I realised that relating a deceptively simple story over time with 'stopping points'

could powerfully illustrate and explore how volunteering had grown in complexity. I realised that my first introduction to personal volunteering as a teenage Community Services Volunteers (CSV) volunteer on placement with Cheshire homes depended on already complex mutual volunteering involvements. The following decades of engagement in volunteering research demonstrated the further interweaving of resources and collaborative understandings as global associations grew and multi-level volunteering relationship-building helped support IVR to find a novel home in the higher education institution, the University of East Anglia. I will reflect in turn on six successive volunteering stopping points: as a CSV and Cheshire Homes volunteer; as a volunteer member of community research organisations including the Association for Research in the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC); as Project Coordinator for the Greater Manchester Research Exchange, a charity encouraging specialist university-community linking through volunteer study projects; as volunteer trustee for Manchester's Sikh Family History Project; as research-collaboration with volunteer befrienders for carers of people with dementia on a five year national research project on volunteer befriending; as University of East Anglia Volunteering Research Lead to collaborate with IVR in linking its voluntary sector and volunteering networks to an academic university research environment.

I came to volunteer for Cheshire Homes in a 1973 gap year between school and university. This experience introduced me rather abruptly to a wide range of different people and understandings I could not otherwise have known

and which have remained with me lifelong. As a volunteer care assistant with people with disabilities I had to recognise how many inequalities of everyday living and income may be inflicted on people, whether people with disabilities or paid carers, for apparently arbitrary reasons. But I was also brought to recognise how creative and courageous so many people could be in resisting such injustices. This was a time when it was all too common for people with disabilities to be publicly refused access and dignity. I would, for instance, accompany one of the residents of the home to take a bus into town to pursue their music journalism, but where, routinely, bus drivers tried to refuse him access because his visible disabilities 'might upset other passengers' and where he simply refused to take no for an answer and in his turn, routinely, made his own way up the otherwise inaccessible steps and into the body of the bus. Complexity in volunteering here was in my being able to access this volunteer placement through the Community Services Volunteer having established a system of networking, overseeing placements, matching and monitoring, and through Cheshire Homes having training and oversight of volunteers being brought in to diversify relationships within the Cheshire Homes staff and resident communities. I was so grateful then, but with mixed feelings now, that residents had to patiently explain to volunteers how to provide the support they wanted.

To better understand my later new post-university role in 1978 as a social services researcher for an Inner Cities Programme to evaluate voluntary organisations and volunteer contributions, I became an early volunteer member in 1979

of the Social Services Research Group (SSRG) and, within the same year, of the newly founded Association for Research for the Voluntary and Community Sector (ARVAC). Again, both volunteer associations taught me much about how volunteer actions could shape and amplify community voices and encourage independent thinking. In the case of the SSRG this meant voluntarily sharing evidence of responses and roles of local communities to build new types of social services provision such as community living for older people and reminiscence projects (Poland and Bacha, 1986). In the case of ARVAC this meant exploring how to share and build resources for research to be generated by and for local communities, and how to ensure this could promote community interests in local and national policies; for instance, to recognise neighbouring in neighbourhoods, refugee and asylum-seekers as contributing to communities and localities.

Through this work, in the early 1980s I joined as volunteer trustee for many voluntary groups such as the Manchester Sikh Family History Project, as I increasingly appreciated the importance of volunteering in articulating and resourcing the achievements and voices of diverse cultures and in distinctively contributing new values and international, and sometimes critical, connections to Manchester's history of associations and events (Poland, 1984). Having been able to access some government Inner City funding and then developing a variety of ways to draw on and build resources, the Sikh Family History Project continued to be largely volunteer-led and made a visible and valuable impact on Manchester's multi-cultural community. It recently celebrated

its 40th anniversary, curating and telling powerful stories of migration, intercontinental family network-building and local mutual cultural support through Sikh community activities.

Also in the 1980s, when volunteer-institutional partnerships and resources were still diversifying, the Greater Manchester Research Exchange charity was set up to encourage specialist university-community links through volunteer study and research projects. Over its first six years I was a paid intermittent part-time Project Coordinator. Again, this charity was enabled by a complex of well-established volunteer and charitable practices, shared ideas, collaborative partnerships. Its trustee group included multidisciplinary academics from four of Manchester's universities, increasing over the next five years and including community members and very experienced volunteers with a long history of promoting community action. This work underlined for me how no volunteer placement could be standardised or ready-made; nor could anyone take for granted who might be the 'main beneficiary' of volunteering activity. Rather, making things work to meet expectations of people with often very different experiences of life and localities, including Manchester, always demanded extra effort, listening and flexibility to negotiate and align expectations. Examples of what volunteer partnerships here produced were wide-ranging: marketing campaigns to engage working class men with HIV prevention, curating neighbourhood history resources to be more accessible, or accountancy skills to help run local credit schemes.

Pursuing an academic research career from the 1990s to today, I needed to try to find other ways to build on and develop

community-academic collaborative learning. This repeatedly and graphically reinforced the need to negotiate expectations to provide meaningful, well-supported and safe volunteer roles even when volunteering was both partner and topic in research. One clear example was from 1999 when I was volunteer befriending coordinator and research team member with a five year nationally funded clinical research programme looking at the costs and effects of volunteer befriending (Charlesworth et al, 2008). This revealed differences about whether 'objectivity' and 'distance' and 'standardisation' were advantages or disadvantages in building evidence in this area. Volunteer befrienders and research partners could not agree what a 'proper befriending' role was if it purposely excluded acts of friendship. Discussion throughout was needed to explore how to support volunteers in continuing to feel valued even if the research found that the form of volunteer befriending being trialled was not better or more cost effective than other forms of support. Building in new forms of lay involvement through regular accessible feedback on research progress and volunteer experiences for everyone involved including community partners and carers, together with agreeing good practice in supporting and working inclusively taught me life lessons which underpinned my more recent roles in co-leading and co-producing Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in large funded research programmes, such as the National Institute for Health Research funded Applied Research Collaboration East of England, Inclusive Involvement research programme. This programme aimed to evidence and promote new forms of volunteer community involvement as intrinsic to research

development. It also provided momentum for helping PPI to be appreciated more widely as essentially volunteer-based and as such an even better-led activity. The logic seen here was that good PPI must incorporate good volunteering practice.

Since 2019, many of these strands have combined to validate my novel University Volunteering Research Lead role in supporting the trans-location of IVR from its voluntary sector home with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations to the University of East Anglia. Facilitating this has involved complex negotiations and has meant recognising what viewpoints, understanding and discourses different parties might bring to negotiation. It was essential for partners to mutually recognise, support and engage with the project of evidencing and promoting the worldwide importance of volunteering values and knowledge while maintaining credibility and influence to sustain this work (Grotz et al, 2021a).

This developmental journey has therefore helped me always try to be open to the multiple purposes and interests people bring to volunteering and to the other activities and partnerships needed for volunteering to be recognised, so as to evidence the value of volunteering and to assist volunteering to flourish as worthwhile and enjoyable.

Beginning at the beginning, and getting stuck there

ANDREA KELMANSON

Andrea Kelmanson is a charity organisation development consultant, working particularly on strategic review and planning, volunteering policy and board development, as well as in roles as interim CEO. She managed volunteer programmes for Community Service Volunteers (CSV) (now Volunteering Matters) (1971-1988), and was Deputy Director of the National AIDS Trust (1988-1992) and CEO of the National Centre for Volunteering (and its predecessor The Volunteer Centre UK) (later Volunteering England) (1992-1997).

About a thousand years ago, after five years of study I received a Diploma in Art and Design (Fine Art) and I emerged wondering "What on earth am I supposed to do now?". I drifted into a job working with young volunteers, having applied only because I had been a volunteer myself, and thought that as a result I knew all about volunteering. The job was with Community Service Volunteers (CSV) (now Volunteering Matters), which

had been created in 1962 by Alec Dickson, who four years previously, had formed Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Two things were remarkable about CSV:

- One was the belief that volunteers had the potential to change the world but that young people weren't being invited to join in because in those days people thought that young people weren't old or wise enough to demonstrate that potential.

- The other was CSV's 'non-rejection' policy. I didn't realise it at the time, but that proved to be fantastic discipline because we were obliged to find a placement for anyone and everyone who wanted to volunteer. However much we may have thought an individual shouldn't or couldn't be a volunteer, we had to find a placement for them.

While I was at CSV I was given a sabbatical year to study for a BA by Independent Study at North East London Polytechnic (now University of East London, UEL). My programme was founded on an individual study into the management of voluntary organisations. Whilst that was interesting, and I did well, with hindsight it transpired that the main thing I took from that experience was meeting and getting to know my tutor, Mike Locke.

Advance a few more years, four of which were spent working in the field of HIV/AIDS, and I turned up as CEO of The

Volunteer Centre UK, which became the National Centre for Volunteering; that in turn became Volunteering England in 2004, and was subsumed into the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in 2013.

Whilst I was running The Volunteer Centre UK the idea emerged of forming an institute for volunteering research of some kind. I inherited the seed of the idea from my predecessor, Foster Murphy, but as we investigated it emerged that now the time was right. This was mostly because a newly created charity sector funder, the Lloyds TSB Foundation, had indicated its interest in funding such an institute to Justin Davis Smith, my Research Director at The Centre. He and his predecessor Diana Leat had built a body of research into volunteering (see also memoir of Davis Smith). I then took the idea to Mike Locke at UEL and introduced him to Justin, and the rest is history as this book so clearly illustrates.

The time was right looking across the political and social policy arena. Central government had become more aware of the contribution of volunteering. John Major's Conservative government 1990-1997 had introduced the first nationally funded programme to encourage people to volunteer, Make a Difference, and the incoming Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair 1997-2007 was developing policies which featured the role of volunteering in talk about social capital and community responsibility (see also memoir of Locke). National and international networks of researchers, among them Justin and Mike, were growing in numbers and in promoting research on volunteering and voluntary organisations. Although it is difficult to ascertain this historically with any

certainty, the potential for research to inform policy seemed to be enlarging, and our new Institute looked well placed.

I left the National Centre for Volunteering in 1997, not because I was fed up with volunteering, but because I could no longer bear to spend so much time trying to work effectively with a difficult Chair and board of trustees.

Then, I started doing freelance consultancy; some more stylish consultants might say "I set up a consultancy practice". I've been doing that for nearly 25 years. I work exclusively with charities and specialise in organisation development, strategic review/strategic planning and governance review and development. I also occasionally deliver interim CEO assignments, generally with organisations facing a crisis or seeing themselves at a crossroads. Almost everywhere I have worked as a consultant, I have had something to say or do around volunteering. Often I need to ask questions about how far the trustees see and understand themselves as volunteers; but also across the whole organisation I am often find myself working with themes concerning volunteers and volunteering.

My recent experience suggests that thinking about volunteering is stuck in pretty much the same place it was stuck 25-30 years ago. A recent piece of work was with an organisation that slipped into using volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In its work supporting carers, because their paid staff couldn't go into people's homes, they developed new arms-length support packages, and as the pandemic diminished, they slipped into involving volunteers to deliver that support work to their clients. They were so very thrilled with themselves, despite experiencing all kinds of problems in

recruiting and delivering on plans for an increasingly large 'army' of volunteers. All of that involved me in having discussions about the fundamentals of volunteering with an organisation I believe in 2022 should have known better.

My consultancy experience, recently and currently, is of being seriously stuck in very old and very familiar conversations about topics such as "How do you see the difference between paid staff and volunteers", and "Just because you don't pay them, it doesn't mean you don't need to ask volunteers what they want to give and what they want to get from their involvement with you". I'm having to raise basic questions such as how you can provide volunteers with thoughtful 'bespoke' placements, as well as decent support. It's a bit like never getting past Book 1 French.

I've always believed volunteers and volunteering have the potential to change the world. I know for certain that volunteers have the potential, and often the experience, to change their own worlds; but only if the process of volunteering is seen, valued and developed in a way that is respectful of those two outcomes, and allows them to be achieved.

But from my experience, the reality is that, despite the great work by IVR and other colleagues in developing knowledge of volunteering, I still find myself working as a consultant with voluntary organisations who carry on as though volunteering has only just been invented. Again and again, they begin at the beginning, appearing never to have learnt anything or even heard there is a body of knowledge to learn from.

So from my experience, IVR's challenge for the next 25 years is to get to grips with the challenge of not only to go on

developing knowledge about volunteering but also to open up conversations about what there is to learn and where from. Especially among small and medium-sized volunteering organisations, how can IVR help them see there is a world of knowledge to draw on?

A personal journey through the theory of volunteering

COLIN ROCHESTER

Colin Rochester is an author and researcher, formerly lecturer with the Centre for Voluntary Organisation, LSE (1987-2000) and Roehampton University (1999-2007). Since 2018 he has been an Honorary Research Fellow with the Centre for Philanthropy, University of Kent.

It would have come as something of a surprise if I had not become involved with the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) at an early stage. During a series of convivial lunches in the early 1990s I had become a friend and colleague of Justin Davis Smith, who was to become the first of its Directors. Together with Rodney Hedley, who was a colleague of mine at the London School of Economics (LSE) Centre for Voluntary Organisation, we discussed various aspects of the emerging world of voluntary sector scholarship. We shared a concern about the lack of knowledge about the history of voluntary

organisations on the part of those who worked in them and an agreement that there was a need for a kind of text book that would bring together what was known about the changing landscape of voluntary action. As a result we launched the Voluntary Action History Society in 1991, with Justin as secretary and me as chair, and co-edited 'An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector' (Davis Smith et al, 1995).

I became a member of the Institute's Advisory Committee in, I think, 1999 and remained a member until IVR's parent organisation, Volunteering England, was taken over by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in 2013. In 2007 I was invited to become IVR's first, and only, honorary academic adviser. In addition to these roles I was actively concerned with the organisation in a number of other ways, including writing articles for its journal, Voluntary Action, undertaking projects, and taking part in IVR events. From this perspective I should like to offer two sets of reflections. In the first of these I consider the ways in which the development of my thinking about the theory and practice of volunteering was inextricably linked to my involvement with IVR and, in the second, I record my thoughts about the work of the Institute and consider its achievements and its limitations.

Perspectives and paradigms

My first major research project was, like IVR itself, funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation; it looked at the organisational issues raised for those who managed very small voluntary agencies and led to the publication in 1999 of a handbook which we called *Juggling on a Unicycle* (Rochester,1999a) to

capture the problems of running what were later to be called 'micro' agencies. Prompted by Justin to write something for the second issue of the IVR's new journal, *Voluntary Action*, I took a new look at the findings of this project with a focus on volunteering and produced an article entitled 'One size does not fit all: four models of volunteer management' (Rochester, 1999b). As a result my personal research interest became increasingly focused on the relatively unfamiliar area of voluntary action which I came to summarise as 'unmanaged volunteers involved in non-bureaucratic settings'.

This interest was maintained by my involvement in IVR projects including as a member of the steering committee for a project on a study of leadership in small, volunteer-led groups and a commission to look at the specific form of student community action exemplified by work of the University of Bristol Law Clinic (Rochester, 2000). The major breakthrough happened, however, in 2006 when I was commissioned to produce a literature review for the Independent Commission on the Future of Volunteering chaired by Baroness Neuberger. In my acknowledgements to the report of this review *Making Sense of Volunteering* I paid tribute to the contribution of "Angela Ellis Paine and her colleagues at the Institute for Volunteering Research" who "pointed me in the direction of key sources and filled my rucksack with the books, articles and reports that gave me much of the core reading" (Rochester, 2006).

Making Sense of Volunteering was well received. Admittedly it made little impact on the Commission's report but, unlike that, it did not sink without trace. On the strength of it I was invited to take part in a number of events in which I

highlighted my conclusion that that the theory and practice of volunteering has been dominated by a single perspective: a default setting which regarded volunteering as unpaid work or service. "Volunteers are seen as junior members of a workforce recruited and managed by large, formally constituted organisations which deliver services to other people, predominantly in the broad field of social welfare" (Rochester, 2006). My review suggested that other views about volunteering were also important but were given little attention in the academic and practitioner literature.

The two perspectives which came to be known as the 'civil society' and 'serious leisure' paradigms are easily distinguished from the dominant unpaid work or 'non-profit' paradigm in terms of the motivation for volunteering; the areas of activity in which they are involved; the organisational context within which volunteering takes place; and the kinds of role played by volunteers. Within the civil society paradigm, the motivation of volunteers is driven by self-help and mutual aid: they are active in providing shared support and campaigning for social change; are typically involved in associations and self-help groups; and, as members of a self-managing group, take on leadership roles and exercise personal responsibility rather than being managed by others. The motivation of volunteers active in the sphere of serious leisure tend to be intrinsic rather than extrinsic: gaining satisfaction from their activities and the development of their skills, they are generally found in the fields of arts, culture, sports and recreation; many of them are involved as members and officers of local clubs; and their roles include

taking part in sports and activities as well as directing, conducting and managing performances and teams.

Combining these three key perspectives created a fuller, richer and more diverse map of the universe of voluntary action and posed a challenge to much of the narrow thinking about what volunteering is and what volunteers do.

As my ideas developed from the original literature review and were refined by colleagues at IVR and others I floated the idea of producing a full-length book to explore new ideas about volunteering. Newcomers to the field looking for an introductory text relied on a collection edited by Justin Davis Smith and Rodney Hedley, *Volunteering and Society* (Hedley and Davis Smith, 1992). This was an excellent piece of work but its value was diminished by the fact that it had been published as long ago as 1992 and a good deal had happened in the meantime. I found excellent co-authors who were willing to join me on this venture in the persons of Angela Ellis Paine, who from 2008 was IVR's Director, and Steven Howlett, who had been a senior member of its staff before moving to Roehampton University. The book was entitled *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century* (Rochester et al, 2010) in tribute to its 1992 predecessor. It had many of its roots in the Institute's philosophy and experience and became a worthy successor to the earlier text. Its success and the encouragement I received from working with Angela and Stephen gave me the confidence to broaden the boundaries of my thinking and produce Rediscovering Voluntary Action (Rochester, 2013), a critical review of where I thought the voluntary sector had lost its way.

Reflections on my experience of IVR

The foregoing outlines the ways in which my involvement with IVR had made a significant impression on my intellectual development and the shaping of my ideas on voluntary action but I should also like to add a few more personal reflections. In the first place I should not have remained part of the enterprise for so long if it wasn't for the company of the other people involved with it. I enjoyed contact with the various members of the staff team who were part of IVR over the years, young, enthusiastic and eager to learn. This sketch is too short to enable me to mention them by name but I worked particularly closely over the years with Angela Ellis Paine (see also memoir of Ellis Paine) and enjoyed and profited from that contact. As well as the members of IVR staff I also enjoyed working with those who served, many of them for a number of years, on its committee. I particularly benefitted from the wisdom and friendship provided by Duncan Scott, its chair, and learned a great deal as well from him and my fellow committee members.

It will be clear that I found my relationship with IVR and the people who were part of it both enjoyable and profitable but I should not end this note without mentioning the limitations or disappointments of my involvement. I think that IVR had three main functions: to set an agenda for the development of a better understanding of the theory and practice of volunteering; to provide volunteer-involving organisations and other interested parties with the research they wanted; and to provide Volunteering England with the research outputs that would help them promote the development of volunteering

policy. The initial funding of the IVR was a blend of mainstream funding from its parent organisation and the income derived from providing research services to interested parties. Over time the Institute came to rely more and more on the latter, and the space for it to pursue its own agenda rather than that of its fee-paying customers became more constrained. While the outputs of its research projects was first rate, its ability to shape the volunteering research agenda was comparatively limited, and this remained a source of regret to me and will pose a major challenge to the reborn IVR at the University of East Anglia. But, while I end this personal view of the original Institute's life and work with this significant reservation, I remain convinced that it played an important role in the development of knowledge about volunteering and I warmly welcome its renaissance in its new home.

Reflections and Prospects

Making a difference: National policy-making

BARONESS SCOTT OF NEEDHAM MARKET

Baroness Scott of Needham Market is a member of the IVR Advisory Panel, has been a member of the House of Lords since May 2000 and has held a variety of front bench positions including Communities and Local Government, building on her membership of Suffolk County Council between 1993 and 2005. Her interest in the community and voluntary sector was born out of this this work, and she has worked with Volunteering England and NCVO, as well as being a Trustee of Community Action Suffolk, the infrastructure body for the county.

Government, business and civic society are too often seen as different tribes, each with their own objectives, ways of working and language. This is natural and entirely legitimate. But the truth is, none of the big issues facing us today can be addressed unless all sectors pull together.

This can be no better seen than in the COVID-19 vaccination programme in the UK. Government provided funding for its development and deployment, the academic sector and 'big pharma' developed and produced it, and the NHS, bolstered by a huge voluntary effort, rolled it out within months of its being approved.

As a politician, and a Parliamentarian, I have always sought ways to act as a convenor of these groups, seeking to understand how they interact, and to encourage the development of common ground.

It's what attracted me to joining the IVR Advisory Board. An opportunity to bring a political focus to its work, and to bring robust research focus to public policy involving volunteers. IVR has made important contributions to Select Committee reports in recent years by providing timely and thoughtful evidence.

A small but active group of Peers regularly make contributions to debate which highlight the contributions and challenges of the voluntary sector.

Here is one example from a debate in the House of Lords during the debate on 'Social Care and the Role of Carers' on Thursday 24 June 2021 Social Care and the Role of Carers, which recognises the vital role evidence from must play if we want to make a difference.

> My Lords, I will focus my remarks on the wonderful work done by voluntary and community groups during the pandemic - as well as the rest of the time - particularly in the area of social care. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

I declare an interest as a trustee of Community Action Suffolk, the infrastructure body for the county. I am also a member of the advisory body of the Institute for Volunteering Research in Norwich. I can recommend that all Peers with an interest in these matters take a look at the research being done there.

Volunteers bring a user-based focus and use their personal commitment, time and skills to make the social care system more resilient. In this way, society becomes more resilient. However, they are complementary to - and not a substitute for - properly resourced public services and professional staff. Volunteers can play a significant role, but government needs to use the existing knowledge and evidence as the basis on which to build effective and sustainable volunteering efforts.

Covid-19 has highlighted much of what we already knew from this evidence. The voluntary sector best supports individuals when it is linked with statutory services and not kept disconnected from them. A key achievement of Community Action Suffolk throughout the pandemic has been to have a seat at the table to ensure that the response of all the voluntary organisations in the county is dovetailed with statutory services. That way, we have been able to link volunteers with shielded individuals, support food banks, assist school testing programmes, and much more.

The Institute for Volunteering Research has shown just how important these infrastructure bodies are. As the demand for their services and the volunteer base grew, their role became more important. But not all areas have these. They are underfunded and not universal.

As people return to work, the sustainability of the volunteer base is in question. Older people are re-evaluating their lives in the same way as are so many of us. Further research by the IVR has shown that attempts by national government since 1948 to direct volunteer efforts centrally have been largely ineffective. Further research by the ESRC has shown how the devolved Administrations have taken a significantly different approach during the pandemic.

Levelling up should not just be about infrastructure in certain geographic areas. There are huge variations in social capital, access to community assets and people's capacity to help one another. Government departments need to use the available evidence and consider working with funders to create an observation study to find a clearer picture of the disparities which exist and to build a response to them.

(Baroness Scott of Needham Market, see Hansard, 2021)

Making a difference: Addressing imbalances and inequalities in research on volunteering

CHRIS MILLORA

Dr Chris Millora is Senior Research Associate and Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow based within the UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia (UK).

I first heard that the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) made the University of East Anglia (UEA) its new home when I was just starting my doctoral research at UEA on local volunteering and learning in the Philippines. I thought this was perfect timing to be involved with a reputable institute that has been leading pathbreaking research in the area of volunteering. I was well aware of IVR's work in generating research

on the theory and practice on volunteer involvement for many years. A particular piece that helped shaped my thinking was a working paper that challenged dominant definitions of volunteering entitled *A rose by any other name... revisiting the question 'what exactly is volunteering?* (Ellis Paine, 2010). Reflecting on this paper and reading through the memoirs in this volume, I was struck at how, over the years, IVR does not shy away from asking difficult questions about volunteering, questions such as "How does voluntary action facilitate wellbeing?", "Does volunteering challenge or enhance inequalities?" or something as fundamental as "What exactly is volunteering?" as in the working paper cited above.

Asking difficult questions is a vital aspect in pushing forward research in volunteering. Knowledge production in this field has been attracting scholars and practitioners for many decades. Volunteering has been viewed from several perspectives, from management and civic participation to education and public service. In my view, this field has been bridging the chasms between 'theory' and 'practice' as much of this research is being used by policy makers and practitioners alike. It could also be argued that volunteering practices are embedded across many, if not all, communities around the globe. However, we know that volunteering is called by many different names, ensues different expectations and is framed by differing values. Therefore, putting strict parameters on what counts as volunteering, a highly complex and contextual social practice, tends to marginalise forms of volunteering that might not fit dominant 'standards'. As others already pointed out, there are indeed

inequalities and imbalances in the way knowledge in volunteering is framed, produced and disseminated.

When tracing the inequalities in volunteering knowledge production, several have argued that much research in this area continues to be dominated by Global North frameworks. Lukka's contribution in this volume on the need to interrogate and challenge the persistence of the colonial legacies of volunteer work is a powerful starting point in understanding these disparities in knowledge production. I agree with Lukka that there is a need to step out of the so-called dominant frameworks, which while regarded as 'global' or 'international', are often imbued with Northern conceptions of volunteering (see also Hazeldine and Baillie Smith, 2015). This skewed understanding of a 'universal concept' of volunteerism may mean that certain forms of volunteering are privileged over others. What is more, research and experience tell us that these frameworks do not remain at the level of discourse or abstraction, but they have very real life, practical implications. How we understand volunteering influences how we 'do', 'design' and 'value' volunteer involvement. Therefore, imbalances in knowledge production in volunteering could translate to enhancing inequalities in real life.

To level this imbalance, the task seems to be beyond simply conducting more research in Global South contexts. Indeed, scholars have noted how even studies of volunteering in these communities tended to use frameworks developed elsewhere, often those from Northern scholarship. Perhaps a useful starting point is in understanding how diverse communities themselves understand and practise

'volunteering', or whatever term they use to describe these helping activities. In-depth accounts of local volunteering, for instance, reveal how in certain contexts, volunteering is less about providing services for free in or through volunteer organisations, but more about helping their local church, sharing resources, reaching out to neighbours or responding collectively to shared issues. In the Philippines, where I do most of my research, volunteering is associated with the pre-colonial concept of 'pakikipagkapwa' where a person helps another because he/she is an extension of one's self, rather than being a different, less-privileged other needing help (see also memoir of Lukka).

In understanding volunteering in context, it might also be worth looking at the sorts of methods that we use to study volunteering. Cross-country comparisons, global surveys and measurements only tell us part of the story. Community-based research approaches such as ethnographies of volunteering (Chadwick et al, 20221) have the potential to generate valuable understanding on how volunteering is practised as part of everyday life of diverse communities. Such an in-depth approach could reveal the ways volunteering might be embedded in and shaped by relations of power. We also see the value of participatory and volunteer-led approaches to research where volunteers themselves take on the role of researchers not only to produce 'new' knowledge but also changing and improving their practices.

For many of us who are conducting research in this field, there are examples within IVR's research portfolio that show the potential of intercultural, cross-country dialogue and

collaboration in addressing these knowledge imbalances. For instance, I was involved with the IVR more recently when we worked together on answering yet another difficult question: how can volunteer-state relationships facilitate equal and inclusive societies? This was the central enquiry addressed in the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism (SWVR) of the UN Volunteers entitled *Building Equal and Inclusive Societies* (United Nations Volunteers Programme, 2021). IVR was part of an international consortium led by the UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, also at UEA, alongside partners at the Center for Social Research at the University of Malawi and the Kathmandu University School of Education. With 15 case studies of volunteer organisations, mutual aid groups and local NGOs spanning Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Arab States and the Latin America and the Caribbean, the report investigated how volunteers worked with, or sometimes despite of, government institutions to bring about social change in their communities.

However, much can also be said about how we set out to conduct this research as a team working from various fields, such as education, international development, gender, youth studies and in various contexts in the UK, Philippines, Lebanon, Nepal, Malawi and Brazil. Despite the challenge of quick turnarounds and managing a cross-country research project, we were able to engage in meaningful dialogue, analysing data as collaboratively as possible and bringing in insights from our own fields and contexts to enhance the research. As the pieces in this collection demonstrate,

collaborative enquiry is indeed an important ethos that underlines IVR's work, a commitment that I was privileged to witness and experience.

During the pandemic, as cities locked down, IVR managed to cross boundaries and bring people together through convening online seminars and dialogues. For instance, the IVR website hosts a number of videos of volunteers and organisations talking about volunteer responses to the pandemic, from Mongolia, Hong Kong and India to Kenya, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. These videos became the springboard for an online conversation on this topic, drawing experiences from such diverse contexts and sharing best practice solutions to then an extremely disorienting issue.

Working collaboratively across context and engaging in intercultural discussions further emphasises that volunteering looks differently in different places. Often, I came out of these sessions with more questions than answers. However, it is in talking to and thinking with each other that we were able to see connections, patterns and, at times, shared solutions. Over the years, IVR has built a truly global network, and it is vital that the Institute taps into such a network to answer difficult questions on volunteering together, and perhaps come up with more. IVR is also well-positioned to 'test out' new approaches to volunteering research methods which could perhaps generate new insights to old problems. As IVR turns 25 years, I am confident that their commitment to intercultural dialogue, collaboration and innovation will continue for the next 25 years and many more years to come.

The road ahead

JURGEN GROTZ

Dr Jurgen Grotz is the Director of the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) at the University of East Anglia (UEA).

The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) has faced many ups and downs over the last 25 years. All involved with the Institute are now apprehensively looking at clearly uncertain and challenging years ahead. This part of the book will address the programme of IVR's work over the coming years. As its current Director, it falls to me to try and set out the plans for collaboratively shaping its future. In keeping with the personal reflections of the other authors in this book, I will first, however, share my own journey to leading IVR today and also describe the Institute's most recent history.

I grew up as the son of a blind mother and a refugee father, hearing how people talked about us when I was guiding my

mother, realising that people were oblivious to the fact that neither my mum nor I were hard of hearing. Hearing so much of this, with nothing pretty or showing insight, I know this triggered my lifelong interest in how people speak of and deal with difference, and how this is shaping institutions and policies. Don't get me wrong. I know I am privileged, white and male, characteristics I share with many of my colleagues in academia, but I also know I am an immigrant and single parent, personally experiencing and feeling society's response to difference. This constantly reminds me of my own and others' biases.

I travel and learn from other cultures. This took me to producing my master's thesis, where I became the first to translate 'The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons' into German. At that time living and studying in China, I also developed a taste for research and hunger for critical thought. Over the years since, I realised that I actually love research, I really do and have been hooked on it ever since handing in my PhD thesis at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1996, where I analysed and critically reviewed Chinese Braille. For me research is the most fun I would ever have outside marriage and parenthood. And now, in my later years, I can add the joy of solitude, watching trout and grayling, by the bank of a small clear stream, listening just to birdsong.

This love of research, following my academic training, has since kept me on the look-out for work to give my curiosity and critical faculties as much room as possible. Given my own marked interest in how society responds to difference,

I was at first surprised not to immediately find space for my curiosity in higher education employment, but, rather, in organisations like the Royal National Institute for the Blind (now Royal National Institute of Blind People) and the Big Lottery Fund. Here, over several years I learned much about voluntary and community organisations and about researching within and with them, and in particular about the often-flawed interactions between the academy and voluntary action. Later, as an independent researcher I also came to work for United Nations Volunteers, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Volunteering England, local authorities, museums and more, to my delight, being allowed, paid even, to facilitate, to interview, to survey, to my heart's content. Thinking back now, I had so much data to revel in, and so much to think about critically, it was pure bliss. I still remember fondly how after I had interviewed staff at local authorities and in voluntary sector organisations to assess the effectiveness of the 'Compact', a New Labour initiative, I had the privilege to interview William Plowden, one of the excellent thinkers in this field, and could compare and contrast what I had found with his assessment (Plowden, 2003). His assessment turned out to be entirely accurate.

Through that time I retained close links to academia as a visiting fellow, first at Roehampton University and then at the University of East Anglia. In these roles, having grown suspicious of dominant thinking on difference, I began to critically assess the conceptual misalignment in government relationships with voluntary action (Grotz, 2008a; 2009) which was leading to policy debacles like the slow and silent

disappearance of the 'Compact'. As part of this I developed concepts such as the 'Third Sector Fallacy' (Grotz, 2008b) and was exploring negative effects of volunteering (Grotz, 2010) eventually presenting the concept of the 'The Benefit Fallacy' (Grotz, 2011). Professionally, those were my most formative and fulfilling years, fuelling my sense of being able to find ways to promote voluntary action reflecting individual and collective agency through research, and the feeling of actually making a difference.

So, IVR was neither my first job nor the job that shaped me. In fact, I deliberately chose IVR, which had been a client of mine, when I successfully applied to become its Research Manager, ten years ago, in 2012. This brought me into contact with good people, in a good place, to enjoy our work together. It also offered me an opportunity to work with academic colleagues in a range of disciplines across the UK in all areas relevant to volunteering, including criminal justice (Corcoran and Grotz, 2016) and the thrilling chances to work with colleagues world-wide. I could consolidate some of the knowledge I had gathered, co-editing *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations* (Smith et al, 2016), working directly with 203 contributors, born in 73 countries. The handbook now has over 120,000 chapter downloads worldwide and over 200 citations, showing how high is the demand for the work of IVR.

However, the time of publishing that handbook, coincided with the emergence of a profound and existential threat to IVR. This threat eventually meant I was to take over the reins of IVR, when its vision was at greatest risk.

The writing had been on the wall since the merger of Volunteering England and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in 2013, as Colin Rochester and I point out in the Brief History of the Institute for Volunteering Research above, bringing ever-increasing demands on IVR to generate income rather than to pursue independent research. Then in 2017 IVR's staff, including me, were made redundant with no plans to continue its activities or maintain its brand within NCVO. Thankfully, I was offered the opportunity to find a new home for IVR, in my own time and with my own resources, confirmed in an email 11 July 2017 from Karl Wilding, the then Director of Public Policy and Volunteering at NCVO. There was no 'golden handshake' nor any transfer of my post to UEA. Finding a new home for IVR was a daunting task that would take two years.

My last day as the Research Manager of IVR at NCVO and my first day as Research Associate at UEA were in August 2017. I had successfully applied for a post at UEA to research Patient and Public Involvement on a two day a week, fixed-term contract. Thankfully, I had been a Visiting Fellow at UEA since 2012 and it was in that role I began to pursue the IVR transfer to UEA. After lengthy negotiations, in November 2018, I was finally given permission by UEA to formally pursue a transfer. The agreement between NCVO and UEA was signed in June 2019, the first of several major milestones. Dylan Edwards, the then Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences said:

> We are delighted that the Institute for Volunteering Research is coming to UEA. We believe this will greatly strengthen the impact of our research for the millions of individuals and communities who are involved in and affected by volunteering.

Once IVR had a formal base at UEA, I successfully applied for the new post of Director of IVR, although this was only part-time, on a two-year fixed term contract. The two years negotiating a transfer had come at enormous financial and personal cost. So why would I choose to do this? I can give three reasons: petulance, payback and persuasion.

I felt the need to redress NCVO senior decision-making at that time. Decisions had been announced, without giving compelling reasons, which would have let IVR achievements and potential disappear, without recognising or showing appreciation of the achievements of the excellent staff of IVR, whom I managed during that process. I did not want to just stand by, so like a petulant child I went about showing that this was wrong and that I was right to believe that IVR could realise its further potential.

Also, in 2013, the then Director of IVR, Nick Ockenden, had been gracious and supportive, when I needed it most, following a bereavement, in giving me time with a one year sabbatical, to look after my family. Four years later, at a new stage of my life, after Nick had moved on, I was able and ready to look after IVR in its time of need; payback.

Finally, I firmly believe in the values and vision IVR represents and I enjoy working for what I believe in. This literally

brings its own reward to me, not based on remuneration or career and advancement considerations, so persuasion underpins my continued efforts for IVR.

Of course, I could not have this done on my own. As the saying goes, a friend in need is a friend indeed, and I quickly learned, within fewer than ten phone calls, who the real friends of IVR were. Professor Fiona Poland was undoubtedly a particular friend to IVR during this time. Without her tenacity and skill, the transfer of IVR to UEA would not have gone as smoothly as it did. In addition to that instrumental role, she is one of the few to have continuously provided me with pastoral and academic support, desperately needed over so many frustrating and challenging months, and still a benefit for me now. The other senior guide I could count on by my side is Colin Rochester, IVR's past honorary academic adviser, and my trusted mentor since our first meeting at Roehampton University in 2004. Then Mike Locke, editing this book, who has co-edited the previous IVR anniversary publication (Davis Smith and Locke, 2007) and now chairs IVR's Advisory Panel. He has been IVR's longest-standing and most steadfast friend. No words can ever express how indebted I am to them all.

The initially small group of supportive collaborators at UEA, including Laura Bowater, Richard Clarke and Linda Birt, has grown steadily into IVR's four Research Groups, and was of crucial importance to IVR's recent and continuing achievements. A constant source of strength and support are also the members of IVR's new Advisory Panel, re-established after the formal move to UEA and holding its inaugural meeting in its new home on 19 November 2019.

Furthermore, over the two years negotiating the transfer, I actively maintained IVR's national and international networks while beginning to build new local connections. The support and encouragement of colleagues from these networks remain a constant source of new energy and strength, both in showing the real and pressing demand for IVR and in their continuing to assist IVR and me personally, in many, much appreciated, ways. You can read some of their accounts in this book and find their names on the publications on our joint efforts.

When IVR could resume its activities formally in 2019, with those networks and partnerships intact, we were almost immediately able to take on new major research projects. The first was a partnership with three universities, delivering a Rapid Evidence Assessment of the Impacts of Volunteering on the Subjective Wellbeing of Volunteers, which reported in October 2020 (Stuart et al, 2020). Next came a collaboration with six universities and with the four national voluntary sector umbrella organisations, exploring voluntary action mobilisation in the four UK nations during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a book by Hardill et al (2022). Simultaneously, IVR helped produce a book on *Patient and Public Involvement in Health and Social Care Research* (Grotz et al, 2020), undertook research on Employer-Supported Volunteering for Network Rail (Grotz et al, 2021b), was part of a UEA lead consortium delivering the research for the State of the World's Volunteerism Report (United Nations Volunteers Programme, 2021), a flagship report for the United Nations, and continued to provide evidence and expertise to local volunteer involving organisations and their strategic planning (Grotz et al, 2022).

With this record of successful research and scholarship, in July 2021, IVR gained recognition as a full Research Centre at UEA, and support for it was extended to 2024. In June of its anniversary year, 2022, IVR also received the prestigious UEA Annual Engagement Achievement Award for its outstanding inclusive collaborations during the COVID-19 pandemic. After five years of hard but fulfilling work which tested every aspect of its values and vision, IVR has re-emerged as strong and valued as before.

IVR's most recent local collaborations have centred on working with local authorities on volunteering infrastructure and with local NHS bodies around the new 'integrated care systems' and 'social prescribing'. The pandemic has thrown into sharp relief great variation in local volunteer involving infrastructure and its relations with the newly-emerging 'social prescribing' as a major health policy programme. Both local authorities and local health providers have ambitions to increase levels of volunteer involvement while recognising they lack any comprehensive, up to date local base line data, or the experience and knowledge to support what volunteering may specifically require to succeed within their strategic planning. IVR is actively providing such expertise.

IVR's move from a national, English, voluntary sector organisation to UEA had brought about the welcome opportunity to extend its national research to all four nations of the UK. IVR's national collaborations could now include work on the devolving policy environment of the last decade, which has seen government in Whitehall largely remove itself from direct

involvement with voluntary action, not replicated in Scotland which is still maintaining very strong links between government and voluntary action. Northern Ireland and Wales are also writing their independent story in this devolved policy arena. In England, however, again and again, national policy bodies such as select committees of the House of Lords, call for evidence with IVR repeatedly supplying expertise and evidence. Looking ahead, in England, the most recent and pertinent political developments appear as key national volunteering infrastructure organisations, the Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM), National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), NCVO, Volunteering Matters and Sport England, collaborate to create a 'Vision for Volunteering'. Such a vision had existed in the early 2000s, and IVR is able to provide both historic and current evidence to support this enterprise. It might also be significant to note that the former chief economist of the Bank of England, and in 2022 the UK Government's Head of the Levelling Up Taskforce, Andy Haldane, has highlighted the role of volunteering in society in generating economic, social and cultural capital at local levels. This might support suggestions of a possible shift to re-building engagement between the government in Whitehall and the voluntary and community sector.

IVR's very existence from the start, has been linked to international collaborations, as Justin Davis Smith explains in his memoir. It is therefore striking that, 20 years on from the IVR evaluation of the first International Year of the Volunteer for the United Nations (Davis Smith and Ellis, 2002), IVR was part of the UEA-led international consortium providing

academically robust evidence for the latest report by United Nations Volunteers Programme (2021). Indeed, as far as we can ascertain, IVR remains the only research centre in a higher education institution solely dedicated to volunteering research, globally, and is a consistently welcomed partner in international collaborations.

The need for IVR to provide robust evidence on volunteering, locally, nationally and internationally, continues. Therefore, IVR's programme of work continues building on its original aims to undertake:

- research on volunteering, particularly with relevance to policy and practice;
- disseminate research findings;
- making links with academic research and volunteer-involving agencies nationally and internationally on research, teaching and policy so as to build a body of knowledge on volunteering.

Albeit, now with 25 years' experience of achieving and evidencing impact, IVR has re-set its strategic direction for doing this. In its new home, as a Research Centre within UEA, IVR is seen as offering unique knowledge and partners to support UEA's efforts to have significant societal and economic impact. It does so by connecting UEA activities with communities of place and experience, specifically with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, making the research topic

of volunteering real, heard and seen, with clear aims for IVR's high quality research:

- adding to the societal and economic impact of UEA research by making a positive difference to the community in which UEA operates, showing how volunteering improves health, wealth and social cohesion, supporting consistent and mutually respectful partnership and knowledge transfer;

- making a positive difference to staff careers by developing joint projects, increasing grant capture and publications, professional development and volunteering opportunities;

- making a positive difference to student employability and satisfaction through more and better learning and volunteering opportunities;

- enhancing UEA's reputation as IVR is seen as the national thought leader and go-to point for government, voluntary sector, public sector and private sector, to access high quality volunteering research, knowledge and evidence;

- extending UEA's global reach as IVR is seen as a centre of excellence for volunteering research that attracts student and academics from around the world;

- accessing research funding for co-production, becoming a net contributor of financial support for volunteering research with the community to generate new knowledge and evidence about volunteering;

- being a trusted supplier of independent, competent, reliable and high-quality information about volunteering, through applied research, making available, wherever possible, in open access and accessible formats;

- supporting volunteer-involving organisations by other means, to include more and better opportunities for student volunteering and professional development for volunteer managers.

IVR has set two strategic short-term objectives for 2022–2024 to critique current models of volunteering and to shape policy and practice on volunteering involvement in anchor institutions.

The conversations about volunteering in the UK over the last five decades have broadly been conducted within what a 'dominant paradigm' (Rochester et al, 2010; Rochester, 2013). Research on volunteering, however, has been driven primarily by 'instrumental' and 'transactional' models, although evidence of volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic suggests multiple alternative perspectives. IVR will actively work with colleagues across disciplines in research studies, in organising academic events and publications to examine critically the 'dominant paradigm'. This will include addressing

and questioning the role of volunteering in democracy, such as: 'What are the boundaries between state and voluntary action?' and 'What are the negative impacts of volunteering?'

UEA is currently promoting a range of community involvement activities within Norwich and East Anglia pending its plans to sign a 'Civic University Agreement' in 2023. IVR's work is already well-placed to support these activities having covered key themes such as: 'the role of employer supported volunteering', 'learning from the pandemic – the role of voluntary action', 'connecting communities', and 'the role of mutual aid associations'.

Drawing this part of the book to its close I will take a moment reflecting on my personal role in the coming years. It is evident from the deep furrows on my forehead and my white beard, literally, that I am in the later part of my career. Even, if I am given the chance to lead IVR beyond 2024, and to continue to pursue my love for research, my mind is clear that I will retire in 2028. So the reins of IVR will again need to change hands. My personal ambitions for the next six years are humble, the main one being to leave IVR stronger and more vibrant than when I took over. Intellectually, I am keen to explore the disconnect in the discourses of volunteers and the institutions that seek to involve them and the contradictions this exposes.

Today, IVR has regained its strategic direction, has clear aims, and continues to build what is now an impressive body of knowledge with strong networks and trusted partners world-wide. Perhaps less for me to do there then, over the coming years.

But I must acknowledge what my colleagues have contributed earlier in this book. IVR is not just a name or an idea. IVR is a community. My main aim for the coming years therefore is to become better at inclusive leadership, through which IVR, as a community, will drive and sustain its future. Not just one person but moving together, a research community, united by an ambition to drive IVR's vision of:

> working towards a world where the power and energy of volunteering is well understood, where no one gets 'used', for individuals to be confident and feel safe about their decisions to volunteer and policy decisions are based on solid evidence and scientifically-robust knowledge.

Those of you who know me well, may now think: "That's way too serious for Jurgen". And that is true. If the next years don't hold at least some enjoyment for IVR, for all our partners and collaborators, and for me, I am doing something seriously wrong. Enjoyment is the biggest motivator for ongoing volunteering and volunteering research. Whatever we do at IVR should be at least a little bit fun, otherwise we shouldn't be doing it. And, while I organise them, face to face meetings shall again involve German sweets at least at times, you may know which ones; online meetings shall include music whenever possible, whether you like my choices or not; and completely random facts that fall from my befuddled mind shall distract you, so that conversations don't become boring. Minds shall be open, conversations shall be kind, and different knowledges shall have equal value. And,

despite being German, I shall continue to attempt ‘humour’, for example, when closing a presentation or a piece of writing, as surely practice can in time make me perfectly amusing?! QED.

Obituaries

Duncan Scott

By now many colleagues will have heard the terribly sad news that our colleague and longstanding Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) stalwart Duncan Scott has passed away. He died on 18th May 2020 after a severe stroke.

Duncan was a pioneer and champion of voluntary sector research in the UK, and at the forefront of landmark discussions which led to the formation of VSSN back in the 1990s. He promoted voluntary sector studies in academia, through his long career as a Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Policy at the University of Manchester. He researched, wrote and spoke about a wide range of topics, often with a practical focus, including funding voluntary organisations, volunteering and service delivery contracts, social enterprise, rural deprivation and voluntary action and qualitative research methods.

Beyond this, and perhaps more significantly, he was a tireless advocate for community-based research. He recognised the importance of supporting those in voluntary organisations and community groups who needed to get vital research done quickly, but who had neither ready access to all the resources

on offer in universities, nor the sometimes breezy academic confidence about research methods. He played significant advisory and committee roles with, for example, the Institute for Volunteering Research, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation, Third Sector Research Centre and of course VSSN.

Duncan was very supportive of new researchers and doctoral students, finding creative ways to bring people together to discuss common issues and concerns in voluntary sector research. In the early 2000s he convened several significant sessions through VSSN around qualitative research. This drew from and formed the basis of several important publications with colleagues, including 'Moving Pictures: Realities of voluntary action' (2000); 'Close Work: Doing qualitative research in the voluntary sector' (2005) and 'Researching voluntary and community action: The potential of qualitative case studies' (2005). Duncan was always keen to discuss the messy practice of carrying out research, and often implored colleagues to bring case study research in the voluntary sector alive, to act as witnesses, to "show us that you've been there!"

Many of us will have worked with or come across Duncan in our research, and will treasure fond memories of his self-deprecating humour, his commitment, his support, gentle challenges, insight and wisdom, and in the end of simply having spent time with him.

Rob Macmillan, Sheffield Hallam University

Pat Gay

In November 2021 we heard the sad news that our friend and colleague Pat Gay had died. Pat was one of the founding members of the Institute for Volunteering Research, to which she remained hugely committed until the end. For many years she travelled from Suffolk to London regularly to come to our team meetings to share her brilliant ideas, and enthusiasm for the subject.

Pat cared deeply about all things volunteering, but had a particular and enduring interest in health and volunteering: both the health benefits of volunteering, and volunteering within health and care settings. This had started during Pat's time at the King's Fund and the Oxford Regional Health Authority when she had been involved in a series of projects on volunteer management and the role of volunteers in befriending psychiatric patients. It was an interest extended beyond her work, into various roles within the community as Pat got involved in various voluntary bodies including the drug and alcohol organisation ADFAM National; as non-executive director of her local Primary Care Trust; and with several other organisations concerned with health and health

inequalities. Following her appointment as Research Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute, Pat's interests in volunteering extended into new areas, as she began to study the link between volunteering and unemployment. Volunteering and health, however, remained her passion.

With colleagues at IVR and beyond, Pat published a number of different studies of volunteering. Mostly notably, this included new work on volunteering and the transition to retirement, whilst also continuing to write about volunteering and employability, volunteering and health and volunteer management.

But Pat brought far more than her sharp intellect and deep insights to our team. We will remember her as someone whose thinking was ahead of its time, and who cared deeply about what she studied and all whom she studied with. Pat was an extremely warm and welcoming person who gave so much to the people around her – including passing on her love of running, and freshly baked cakes! She was an inspiration but also definitely had her feet on the ground, a researcher through and through. We are hugely grateful for what Pat added to our research field and to our lives, and will miss her greatly.

Notes on Contributors

GEORGINA BREWIS PhD is Professor of Social History based at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. She was Research Officer with IVR (2003-2005) and Head of Research (2009-2011).

ELLIE BRODIE was Research Officer (2009-2011) and Research Consultant (2011-2012) with NCVO and is an advisor on environment and civil society policy, campaigns and strategy.

ANDREW CURTIS PhD was Senior Research Officer with IVR (2012–2017), subsequently Senior Researcher with the Local Trust and (from 2019) Research and Evaluation Manager with Paul Hamlyn Foundation and is currently their Head of Evidence and Learning.

JUSTIN DAVIS SMITH PhD was founder and Director of IVR (1997-2007) and subsequently Chief Executive, Volunteering England (2007-2013), Executive Director, NCVO (2013-2016) and (from 2016) senior lecturer and course

director of the charity master's programme, Bayes Business School.

KIM DONAHUE is a research and organisation consultant who has worked for more than 30 years with issues facing the voluntary sector.

ANGELA ELLIS PAINE PhD joined IVR as Research Officer in 2000, becoming Assistant Director in 2005 and Director in 2008. She left in 2011 to become Research Fellow with the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham, and in 2022 moved to the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes, City, University of London as Lecturer in voluntary sector management.

JURGEN GROTZ PhD is the Director of the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) at the University of East Anglia (UEA). With three decades of experience in applied research across the academic, public, private and voluntary sectors, his mainly interdisciplinary work on volunteering and volunteer involvement focuses on participative approaches and public involvement. He co-edited the *Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations* (Smith et al, 2016) and co-authored *Patient and Public Involvement in Health and Social Care* (Grotz et al, 2020), co-edited *Mobilising Voluntary Action in the UK: Learning from the Pandemic* (Hardill et al, 2022) and is co-authoring *Volunteer Involvement: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (Grotz and Leonard, 2022).

MATTHEW HILL PhD was Research Officer (2008-2011) and Senior Research Officer (2011-2017) with IVR and is now Head of Insight, Evaluation and Research at the Health Foundation.

ANDREA KELMANSON is a charity organisation development consultant, working particularly on strategic review and planning, volunteering policy and board development, as well as in roles as interim CEO. She managed volunteer programmes for Community Service Volunteers (CSV) (now Volunteering Matters) (1971-1988), and was Deputy Director of the National AIDS Trust (1988-1992) and CEO of the National Centre for Volunteering (later Volunteering England) (1992-1997).

FIONA LETTICE PhD is Professor of Innovation Management in the Norwich Business School and Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at the University of East Anglia.

MICHAEL LOCKE was joint founder of IVR in 1997, as Reader in the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London, and with IVR as Associate Director (1997-2001), Senior Research Fellow (2001-2007) and Assistant Director (2007-2008), joining Volunteering England as Director of Public Affairs (2008-2011) and subsequently leading on volunteering policy for Volunteering England and NCVO (2011-2014).

PRIYA LUKKA was a Research Officer with IVR (1999-2003); she is a macroeconomist in international development working with government policy-makers to improve outcomes for groups of people most marginalised by economic systems, through understanding the impact of policies on debt, trade and tax. She writes on a range of issues, including on global economic governance and climate colonialism; she is also a Board Advisor for a number of organisations working for social justice.

CHRIS MILLORA PhD, is Senior Research Associate and Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow based within the UNESCO Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia (UK). Chris' 3-year project 'Literacies of Dissent: youth activism, learning and social change explores the learning and literacy dimensions of youth social movements in the Philippines and Chile'. His first book, *Volunteering, Learning and Social Change: an ethnography of local volunteering in the Philippines*, will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2024.

NICK OCKENDEN worked at IVR from 2005 as a Research Officer and Research Manager before becoming its Director in 2010. Following the merger of Volunteering England and NCVO, he was Head of IVR and Head of Research at NCVO (2014-2017). He subsequently joined ActionAid Denmark (2018-2021) and currently works as a freelance research and evaluation consultant. He was Honorary Research Fellow,

Birkbeck University of London (2009-2012) and Visiting Fellow, Northumbria University (2011-2017).

FIONA POLAND is Professor of Social Research Methodology, leading the Inclusion Research Theme in the School of Health Sciences at the University of East Anglia (UEA), is UEA Lead for Volunteering Research, and co-leads the NIHR ARC East of England Inclusive Involvement in Research for Practice-Led Health and Social Care Theme. She is journal editor of Quality in Ageing and Older Adults.

COLIN ROCHESTER is an author and researcher, formerly lecturer with the Centre for Voluntary Organisation, LSE (1987-2000) and Roehampton University (1999-2007). Since 2018 he has been an Honorary Research Fellow with the Centre for Philanthropy, University of Kent.

DANIEL STEVENS PhD was Head of Research with IVR (2010-2011), subsequently with World Vision (2011-2022) and currently Global Strategic Outcomes Manager with Open Doors International (2022+).

BARONESS SCOTT OF NEEDHAM MARKET is a member of the IVR Advisory Panel, has been a member of the House of Lords since May 2000 and has held a variety of front bench positions including Communities and Local Government, building on her membership of Suffolk County Council between 1993 and 2005. Her interest in the community and voluntary sector was born out of this

this work, and she has worked with Volunteering England and NCVO, as well as being a Trustee of Community Action Suffolk, the infrastructure body for the county.

JOANNA STUART was Research Officer (2005–2008) and Senior Research Officer (2008–2017) with IVR. She is currently a freelance researcher and Visiting Fellow with Nottingham Trent University and Research Associate for NCVO and IVR.

SIMON TEASDALE PhD is Professor in Management at Queen's University Belfast. He was Impact Assessment Officer with IVR (2006-2008).

META ZIMMECK, after training as a social historian and carrying out research on the employment of women in clerical and professional occupations, including in the Civil Service, then specialised in research on volunteering, government-voluntary sector relations and organisational management and development. She has carried out quantitative, qualitative and policy-based research for a portfolio of clients in local and central government, academic institutions, voluntary organisations and businesses. She worked for both IVR and VE on a number of different research projects and for VE as policy strategist and head of secretariat on the Commission on the Future of Volunteering. Currently she and her partner, Colin Rochester, are working on a study of the production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by voluntary action during the pandemic.

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