




Welcome to the eighth edition of Volunteer Now's Northern Ireland ENews for the European Year of Volunteering 2011



Volunteer Now Showcase at EYV2011 Roadshow Ireland

Staff and volunteers from Volunteer Now joined volunteer involving organisations in Dublin to encourage individuals and families to get involved in volunteering as part of the European Year of Volunteering Roadshow, which stopped off in Ireland 22nd-26th August.

Visitors had an opportunity to learn CPR with the Irish Red Cross, meet some adorable 'four-legged' volunteers from Irish Therapy Dogs, join in with dance and drama workshops with Imaginosity and introduce their children to the joy of growing flowers organised by Grow it Yourself. Beyond Skin, from Northern Ireland, who use arts, world music and media for peace-building, hosted a talkshop which was broadcast on Homely Planet radio station and focussed on cultural education and exchange. Volunteer Now hosted an Unlocking Your Potential seminar for older people which encouraged them to find their one good reason to volunteer and how they can have a stake and a say in their communities.

The week-long Roadshow which had a different theme each day was attended by 70 organisations from across the island of Ireland presenting them with an opportunity to showcase their activities to the wider public. The Roadshow is touring European capitals, and has already visited Paris, Vienna, Lisbon, Athens and Stockholm. After Dublin the next stop is Warsaw.



Wendy Osborne CEO Volunteer Now is joined by other speakers Dr Yvonne McKenna CEO Volunteer Ireland, Barbara Nolan, Head of European Commission Representation Ireland and Marian Harkin MEP for North West Ireland at the launch of the European Year Volunteering 2011 Roadshow Ireland

KEY THEMES

- * Theme 1 - Recognition and celebration of volunteering
- * Theme 2 - Creating debate about volunteering
- * Theme 3 - Measuring impact of volunteering
- * Theme 4 - Promoting good practice in volunteering

LINKS

<http://europa.eu/volunteering/en>

www.eyv2011.eu/

EYV EVENTS

If your organisation has events planned to celebrate EYV2011 we want to hear from you! Email julie.cusick@volunteernow.co.uk

Check out NI's EYV events at <http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/content/what-happening-northern-ireland>



From Stockholm to Strabane!

Volunteer Now had the pleasure of hosting twenty-two year old Oskar Gustavsson from Sweden, one of 27 relay reporters charged with telling the extraordinary stories of volunteers around Europe during the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Each EYV Relay Team member will produce a series of video, audio clips and articles which will be broadcast and published in the media and on the EYV website.



Oskar, far left, meets GAA volunteers at Gaelic on the Green

Oskar has been a volunteer himself for the past two years with an organisation in Sweden called Tamam. His role is to help young immigrants through mentoring and activities such as teaching them basic filming and editing skills. He also has volunteer experience teaching in Kenya and around Europe.

Arriving at Volunteer Now on 16 August in a blaze of enthusiasm and curiosity, he said: "Today in Belfast I don't think it was the sunshine that created the beauty, the city is genuinely stunning and the people are lovely." Eager to find out what motivates individuals in Northern Ireland to volunteer he embarked in a packed itinerary of filming volunteering projects across the province. One of the highlights was the opportunity to meet with some lively older volunteers who are involved in community radio and also a media project called Around the Block supported by NTV Community Television. The volunteers discussed their motivation for getting involved in volunteering and what it means to them both as individuals and as representatives of our ageing population. He was impressed with their commitment to their roles and by their desire to learn more about the practicalities involved in preparing and delivering community radio.

After four days of filming and interviewing, Oskar felt that many of the volunteers are driven by an honest will to change their community to something better. His journey continued when he left to travel to Dublin where he attended the EYV Roadshow Ireland, his mission there, to handover the filming equipment to the Irish Reporter, David Quinn, bound for Poland.

Right: Oskar interviews Gráinne Devine from Ilex as they walk Derry's recently unveiled Peace Bridge

What Oskar Got Up To...

- Met volunteers taking part in the One Good Reason 'taster' day at the Mac theatre
- Spoke to volunteers at Good Morning Strabane
- Interviewed Garbhan Doherty, from L'Derry's City of Culture 2013
- Interviewed volunteers at Gaelic on the Green, part of the Ulster GAA's urban project in North Belfast
- Spoke to local athletes taking part in the 2011 World Police and Fire Games in New York
- Toured Belfast with the Community Relations Council, speaking to community workers and volunteers on interface areas

Interested in Measuring Softer Outcomes?

There is a growing range of tools for measuring 'impact' within the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS). This need to find ways of measuring outcomes has been driven by the increasing demand from funders, to quantify the achievements made by not for profit organisations, as well as the Sector's desire to provide evidence to demonstrate the added value they offer. However, the diversity of organisations within the CVS means that there can't be a 'one size fits all' approach for measuring impact.

The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit is just one method which is specifically focused on measuring the impact of volunteering. It is also sensitive to the fact that capturing changes in softer outcomes, such as self esteem, confidence and sense of community cohesion are important. The Toolkit is a handbook which provides customisable tools and guidance on how to carry an assessment out. The importance of measuring the impact of volunteer involvement has been recognised by NI Government, and is a key priority area included in the Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland which was launched in May by the Department for Social Development.

There are many benefits from taking time to measure some of the impacts that volunteering is making to your clients as well

as your volunteers, staff members and wider community. These include:-

- Identifying what works well and how volunteers can be better managed;
- Providing feedback to volunteers on the difference and contribution they make;
- Raising the profile of your organisation; and
- Providing evidence that can be used in funding applications and to demonstrate impact to existing funders.

There is support available for those groups who wish to use the toolkit. Volunteer Now is delivering training on the 29 September 2011 from 10am-3.30pm to help people to get to grips with the handbook. This includes pointing out key considerations when planning an impact evaluation i.e. adapting tools such as questionnaires and topic guides, carrying out data collection, analysis and report writing. The course is £30, which covers the cost of the handbook. The actual training is free.

To read more about the toolkit and what the training has to offer, go to

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/supporting-organisations/measuring-impact/volunteering-impact-assessment-toolkit>



Fair Volunteer Recruitment Procedures

Research evidence is showing that volunteering is at a 'cross roads' in NI, with 'formal' volunteer numbers at best static since 1995 (282,000, 21% of population) whilst informal volunteering has fallen substantially from 600,000 in 1995 to 470,111 in 2007 (35% of population) (*It's All about Time*; Volunteer Development Agency, 2007). This finding challenges the preconception that people will volunteer, 'no matter what'. There is also an issue of supply and demand, 60% of voluntary and community sector organisations surveyed, in *It's All About Time*, said that volunteers are becoming harder to recruit, yet 77% said that they couldn't operate without them. A mapping report completed in 2011 by Volunteer Now shows that many organisations are still struggling to recruit sufficient volunteers.

Organisations therefore need to make sure they are being as effective as possible when trying to attract volunteers. Note use of the word attract – you need to go out and make people *want* to come and volunteer for you! Having clear information about the opportunities available, selection procedures and the expectations of both parties will be helpful from the start. Spend some time finding out what the volunteer wants from volunteering to see if you can meet their needs – they might just stay longer with you! Only ask for essential information and consistently apply procedures that are appropriate to the role, this will also make it a lot easier for them to get involved. Tell them if they have not been successful, give feedback if you can but if they are successful give them a chance to try out the volunteering before they feel it is too late to back out. Do everything you can to make sure you get a good match between the volunteer and the role, and protect the volunteer, yourself and your organisation not least those who will be working directly with the volunteers – take up references if you think it will help, carry out Access NI checks if the roles come under the regulated activity definition. Be fair, be consistent and your efficiency now will reap greater benefits in terms of well recruited, happy, committed volunteers.

The top tip this month is therefore **to plan for recruitment and use clear, consistent steps that engage volunteers with your organisation.**

Using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all volunteers will help you meet the **sixth indicator** in the Investing in Volunteers Standard.

Next month: Volunteer induction



Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the Department for Social Development.

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now is about **connecting** with individuals and organisations to **build** healthy communities and create positive **change**.