

Measuring the value of volunteering in Barnardos- Systems and processes

Workshop presented by Sinéad Hardiman, Volunteer Development Manager

This session looked at the following:

- Barnardos and Volunteering
- Monitoring of volunteer contribution
- Monetary value systems
- Benefits of measuring volunteer contribution
- Points to consider

Barnardos and Volunteering

Barnardos Volunteer programme is coordinated by the Volunteer Development Manager alongside staff and volunteers throughout the country.

Volunteers are placed on current needs, skills and interests of the volunteer and the suitability of location.

Barnardos currently has 257 consistent volunteers supporting the work of the organisation throughout the country, 45 weekend and event volunteers supporting Fundraising activities and opportunities for one off volunteer experiences for the business sector.

The organisation has a multitude of volunteer roles right across the organisation. We have positions in children's services- breakfast club, toy library, early years services, homework groups, reading programmes and arts and crafts, while other positions are available within our support services in administration, helpline, research and information. We also have a network of shops throughout Ireland and volunteer support positions in our Fundraising Dept.

Why monitor volunteer contribution?

Monitoring volunteer contribution can be of assistance in a number of ways

- it provides volunteers with one form of tangible feedback on their contribution, thus giving them a sense of their achievements and contribution
- informs new developments in volunteer programmes
- can assist with funding proposals for small training grants etc
- provides the organisation with a greater understanding of the value of volunteering.

Getting started

The first point to consider in looking at systems to monitor volunteer contribution is the set up of a volunteer activity structure. This system should help you record the number of queries received regarding volunteering, applications received, and follow up on applications, placement of volunteers and hours of contribution.

The volunteer programme in Barnardos currently uses a simple excel worksheet system and colour coding for all information relating to volunteering.

1	Name	Contact number	Email	Area	Date Received	
2	Sinead Hardiman	01 4530355	sinead.hardiman@barnardos.ie	Roselawn	14/01/2009	
3	Joe Bloggs	01-234567	joebloggs@gmail.com	Millbrook	14/01/2009	
4	Joe Bloggs 2	01-234567	joebloggs2@excite.com	Communications	01/01/2009	Comms
5	Name	087 999999	name@hotmail.com	Shop/Helpin	13/01/2009	
6	Name 3	087 967654	name@yahoo.com	Cork	16/01/2009	
7				Candalkin	14/01/2009	
8				Gik	14/01/2009	
9				Dublin	15/01/2009	
10						
11				CS/Shops	20/01/2009	could not place
12				CS_Globnet	20/01/2009	CONFIRMED
13				Dublin_Wow	26/01/2009	
14				Dublin_Wow	21/01/2009	
15				Dublin/Wow	23/01/2009	
16				Dublin/Wow	23/01/2009	
17				Dublin/Wow	23/01/2009	
18				Dublin/Wow/Advocacy	23/01/2009	
19						
20				Westers_shop	29/01/2009	PLACED
21				Blanch/muhuddart	28/01/2009	
22				Carlow	28/01/2009	
23				Dublin/Wow	23/01/2009	
24				Dublin/General	29/01/2009	
25				Dublin_south-wkends	30/01/2009	
26						
27				Dublin-wkends	30/01/2009	
28				Dublin-wkends	30/01/2009	
29				Limerick/Wow-too_young	07/01/2009	
30				Carlow	20/01/2009	Sent applicatin agai
31				Shops/Admstr	14/01/2009	Sent to E.B.
32				AR VOL	03/02/2009	Millbrook
33				Shops/Pl	15/02/2009	Sent to E.B.

The simplicity of the system provides the opportunity to identify immediately areas for follow up etc.

The second area for consideration looks at assigning role descriptions to volunteer activity. Not only does this provide the volunteer with clear boundaries and clarification of the nature of their role, but can also assist an organisation in defining key volunteer activity areas and popular roles.

It may also be of assistance in looking to monetary value systems. Clearly defined volunteer roles can help in considering a monetary value per hour, depending on the availability of financial information within the public domain. Useful comparison information can include average industrial wage.

Thirdly, consideration should be given to gathering information pertaining to volunteer contribution. Within Barnardos we currently manage with staff and volunteers the collection of volunteer hours each month. Hours are submitted to the Volunteer Service once a month on a record sheet for inclusion in an overall hours list.

Some possible financial measurement tools

- Compare volunteer hours to the equivalent in staffing terms. Based on a 37 hour week over 52 weeks the following comparison can be made:

$$20,000 \text{ hours} / 37 \text{ hour week} / 52 \text{ weeks} = 10.3 \text{ full time staff}$$

- Based on a 37 hours week, the following comparison can be made

$$20,000 \text{ hours} / 37 \text{ hour week} = 540 \text{ working weeks}$$

- Current minimum wage can also be used to provide a basic financial contribution

$$€ 8.65 \times 20,000 \text{ hours} = €173,000$$

- Financial contribution based on average salary scales in public sector or equivalent area
Administrative support worker -Hours x average wage per hour (example)

$$€ 12.68 \times 100 \text{ hours} = €1268$$

- Other methods include assigning both a wage rate and benefits package per volunteer as organisation do with staff
- Monitoring in kind contribution of volunteers based on expenses unclaimed

Benefits of assigning value system to contribution

The age old story of not valuing what comes free rings true. Volunteers sometimes do not see the massive contribution they are making to an organisation in every respect. Beginning the process of monitoring contribution can help both volunteers and staff understand the impact volunteering has. While assigning monetary value is not ideal, if seen as a basic value system only, it can be a helpful starting point in measuring the impact of volunteering within your organisation.

Points to consider

Measuring the impact of volunteering is a complex process, involving more than just the monetary value of an individual's contribution.

The samples above are purely quantitative in their nature, and do not reflect the wealth of volunteer contribution to any organisation.

Assigning monetary value to volunteer roles should be done in conjunction with both staff and volunteers to ensure an understanding of why it may be necessary to do so. The cost of involving volunteers should also be considered in measuring the value of volunteering. This will assist with budget allocation, and ensure that the volunteer programme does not become under resourced.