



# Volunteering – The Business Case

The benefits of corporate volunteering  
programmes in education



Image: THP Photo Imaging



May 2010



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Cover photo: Nomura's Japanese Club at Oaklands School

May 2010

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## Foreword

The positive effects of employee volunteering on the community sector have long been recognised but there is less understanding of the benefits that volunteering can bring to a business and exactly how this happens.

Generally it is reputation, staff retention, motivation and recruitment that are cited as the key benefits. Less commonly mentioned is the effect that volunteering can have on developing staff.

Notwithstanding a lack of research this benefit was widely held to exist. Indeed the City of London Corporation has worked for a number of years to align our own internal volunteering programme with learning and development, as we believe that staff not only have skills to share but also skills to gain through volunteering. We also believe that strong community investment has a strong part to play in a successful business.

Clearly the premise needed testing and in order to do this the City of London Corporation commissioned Corporate Citizenship to undertake the following research which looks at the impact of volunteering on employees' skills and competencies.

We chose to look at employee volunteering in education. Not only is education the area most supported by City firms but it was also hoped that the research would be of use to the Education and Employers Taskforce – an independent charity that aims to ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers.

The completed research provides a very substantial body of evidence that employee volunteering can develop the skills and

competencies of staff in areas that are relevant to the business. Not only has the research shown that all forms of education volunteering can develop staff skills but it also provides evidence as to which volunteering opportunities afford the best development in each competency area.

The research is particularly useful in furnishing a detailed breakdown of those skills which can be developed through volunteering activities, how they can be developed and to what level.

For itself, the City of London will use this research to increase linkages between volunteering and Learning and Development, ensuring that staff take advantage of the full range of benefits that community involvement offers.

But I hope that this research will also find a wider use as a practical tool. Not only does it give organisations the evidence that they need to integrate volunteering into staff development programmes, but it also provides the tools with which to measure skills growth.

In summary, this research shows clearly that volunteering produces real tangible benefits for the community, for business and for staff. It helps challenge the perception that community involvement is a corporate add-on and takes it right to the heart of the business – the people 'assets' that firms employ.

Alderman Nick Anstee  
Lord Mayor of the City of London  
May 2010

# Executive Summary

## The Purpose of the Research

In recent months, companies operating in the financial services sector in the City of London have experienced unparalleled challenges. In the midst of a recession, the temptation might be to reduce corporate support for their local communities. Such a response would be short-sighted.

However, in order to maintain and build business commitment in this area, there is a need to demonstrate the business case for volunteering. To meet this, the City of London Corporation commissioned Corporate Citizenship to undertake research to examine the skills and competencies employees can develop through active participation in employer supported volunteering programmes in education.

The aim of the research was to investigate the real business benefits that derive from a well-managed volunteering programme. The research breaks new ground by moving beyond the body of evidence showing that employees feel more positively about their employer if they perceive them to be socially responsible. The explicit purpose was to examine the financial value to the business of the skills and competencies developed through volunteering.

## Key Findings

The research study draws on the experience of employees in 16 businesses operating in the City of London. With their support, we were able to track the learning and development experienced by 546 volunteers who support students and staff in schools and colleges across the UK.

The majority of respondents report that volunteering has developed their skills and competencies across a broad range of business-relevant areas. These competencies are strongly related to an individual's personal effectiveness in their work role and include:

- Communication skills, including the ability to communicate clearly and concisely with a wide range of people and listen actively.
- Ability to help others, set individual

performance goals, coach and counsel, provide training and development and evaluate performance.

- Adaptability and ability to be effective in different surroundings and with different tasks, responsibilities and people.
- Influencing and negotiating skills, including persuading others, resolving conflicts and negotiating agreed solutions.

Importantly, the skills development observed by volunteers in this research is not a self-reported gain. The evidence is corroborated by the overwhelming majority of line managers who say that volunteers acquire useful skills from their volunteering experience. Line managers see measurable gains in the same business-relevant skills as those reported by the volunteers themselves. It is also important to note that different volunteering activities are effective in developing different skills and competencies.

In addition, there is clear evidence that the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments are of direct relevance to the companies involved. Nearly all of these skills feature in the mainstream competency frameworks used by companies to monitor and guide staff development; and all of the companies are investing significantly in training and development programmes to build these competencies in their staff.

The research found that the experiential nature of the learning achieved by the volunteers makes it hugely valuable in the skills development process and sets it apart from more traditional approaches to training. Volunteering requires employees to step outside their normal working role and build relations with people who may have a very different world view from their own. Respondents report that moving outside their "comfort zone" in this way is extremely useful in both developing their skills and transferring these skills back into the workplace.

However, if companies are to harness the power of volunteering as a route to learning and

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development, they need to manage the process properly. This research underlines the importance of integrating volunteering activities into mainstream HR processes of appraisal and development.

With regard to the costs involved, it is clear that employee volunteering programmes can be delivered for relatively modest costs. Overall, the research found that among respondent businesses the average annual cost to support each volunteer involved in an education based activity in London is £381 per person per annum. This figure comprises the full cost including direct management costs and all additional costs (for example, transport expenses, time out of the office, volunteering budgets, training etc) involved in running an effective volunteering programme.

The companies involved in this research are typically investing at least £400 per person per annum to develop relevant skills and competencies in their staff – although data from a broader UK survey on training costs suggest that the typical training spend per employee could be considerably higher. This figure, however, is only the cost of a training opportunity and has not factored in the additional support costs such as running a learning and development department and the time lost by an employee being out of the workforce. With these all taken into account, the cost would be substantially higher.

Hence, volunteering assignments represent a highly cost-effective way to develop certain core competencies. However, the argument in support of employee volunteering does not simply rest on a direct cost comparison with other forms of training and development. It is important to consider the wider benefits of volunteering as part of a company's community investment activities. This research has shown that, in addition to developing new skills, the individual employee benefits from improved morale and increased motivation, job satisfaction and commitment to the company, all as a direct result of the opportunities afforded by their volunteering experience.

In addition, working to provide structured support for community partners delivers real social benefits to the partner organisation which gains from the advice, guidance, knowledge and experience of the volunteers. This research did not attempt to outline or assign a financial value to all of these additional benefits associated with the volunteering experience. These positive returns should also be taken into account when we consider the costs and benefits of organising a volunteering programme.

Overall we believe the findings described above give a strong articulation of the business case for supporting employee volunteering programmes.

### Outputs and Next Steps

As well as investigating the business case for volunteering, this research aimed to produce a generally applicable and widely accepted competency matrix and evaluation tool that will allow companies to gather hard data on competency development achieved through volunteering opportunities.

While the focus of this research was on assessing employer-supported initiatives in education, it was important that the evaluation tool used to assess skills and competency development could be applied to a much broader range of volunteering activities.

Building on Corporate Citizenship's previous work in this area, and by utilising the advice and guidance of the wide range of experts involved, the research developed an evaluation framework that is both simple to use and highly effective in delivering robust measurement of the competencies developed through volunteering.

We would now encourage other companies to apply this competency framework and evaluation tool to their own activities to assess the positive impact their volunteers can have – not only on the local community but also on the business itself.





# 1. Context and Methodology

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## 1.1 Background to the Research

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During recent volatile times for the financial services sector, companies operating in the City of London have experienced a range of economic challenges. In the midst of an economic downturn, as companies come under increasing pressure on costs, corporate contributions to local communities may be affected.

However, to cut back on this important aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) would be a mistake. Corporate reputations would suffer and charities would be adversely affected at a time when demand for their services is rising.

With this in mind, the need to demonstrate the business case for corporate investment in community support has never been more urgent. The City of London Corporation therefore commissioned Corporate Citizenship to undertake a research study to:

- Examine the skills and competencies employees can develop through active participation in employer supported volunteering programmes.
- Investigate the financial value of this process of competency development by contrasting the costs of skills gained through volunteering with the costs of other forms of training and development.
- Develop a tool that companies can use themselves to evaluate competency development in the future.

The research study draws on the experience of City-based companies operating in the City of London which offer volunteering opportunities in education institutions. The focus on volunteering initiatives in the education sector was chosen as a focus because previous research undertaken by the City of London "The Impact of City Businesses in Addressing Social Disadvantage" (March 2008) shows that this theme is supported by the majority of large businesses based in the area. Education was also chosen as a result of the City of London's involvement in the research sub-group of the Education and Employers Taskforce, an independent charity that aims to ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers which helps provide young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge and skills they need to achieve their potential.

For the purpose of this research, we were concerned with all volunteering activities

supporting young people from primary through to tertiary education, but activities supporting young people outside the education system (such as training for employability) were not included.

In this opening chapter we:

- Consider in more detail the research questions this study sought to answer.
- Outline the process by which the research tools were developed, concentrating on the competency matrix and evaluation tool used to assess the skills developed through volunteering opportunities.
- Offer advice for companies in applying this competency matrix and evaluation tool.
- Describe the characteristics of the sixteen companies participating in the research and the nature of the volunteering activities they support.

## 1.2 The Research Questions

---

Over the past ten years, there has been much research into the "business case" for corporate investment into the local community where a business operates<sup>1</sup>. There are at least three common themes that tend to emerge when describing the business benefits related to corporate responsibility and community investment:

- Risk management – the way a company discharges its social and environmental responsibilities in the local community can impact on its "licence to operate".
- Brand reputation – people's direct experience of the behaviour of a business in its local community, which can be a powerful factor influencing whether or not one feels favourably towards a company.
- Impact on staff – it is argued that positive views of the business are shaped by the company's commitment to community investment activities, including support for employee volunteering. A review of some research on this topic is discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.

Alongside these themes, there are numerous other benefits involved in active community involvement such as new routes to market and greater innovation. This research study wanted to move beyond these familiar statements of the business benefits of corporate responsibility and explores an area about which far less is known.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Weiser, J. Zadek, S. "Conversations with Disbelievers: Persuading Companies to Address Social Challenges" (2000) The Ford Foundation.

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1.

The first step was to gather robust evidence of the skills and competencies employees can develop through active participation in employer supported volunteering programmes in education. At this stage, we were seeking to answer the following questions:

- o Which volunteering opportunities in education are routinely undertaken by financial service sector companies in the City of London?
- o Are companies currently assessing the skills and competencies that might be developed through these volunteering activities?
- o How do companies define the desirable competencies that they look to develop in their employees?
- o Is there a link between the competencies developed through educational volunteering and the competencies companies look to develop more broadly among employees?
- o What aspects of the volunteering programme are important to developing skills and competencies in participants?
- o Do companies make the experiences gained from volunteering part of a formal job appraisal or development review process?
- o What are the broader developmental benefits associated with volunteering activities?
- o Is the skills gain observed by the volunteers themselves corroborated by the views and opinions of their line managers?

2.

The second step was to demonstrate the financial value of this process of competency development. In order to achieve this, the research compares the costs of developing skills through volunteering with the costs of developing these same skills through more traditional forms of training. This required answering the following questions.

- o How does a company benefit from the increased skills and competencies that employees develop through volunteering activities?
- o Are the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments of relevance and value to the companies concerned?
- o Are the costs of developing these skills and competencies through volunteering significantly different from more traditional approaches to training and development?

3.

The third overarching objective was to produce a generally applicable and widely accepted competency matrix comprising the skills relevant to business that can be developed through volunteering opportunities. This would form the basis of an evaluation tool that will allow companies to gather hard data on competency development achieved by their employee volunteers.

While the focus of this research was on assessing employer supported initiatives in education, it was essential that the evaluation tool used to assess skills and competency development could be applied to a much broader range of volunteering activities.

The research set out to engage with a wide range of companies, HR organisations and volunteering brokers to inform the development of the competency matrix and evaluation tool. Section 1.5 describes the process by which this evaluation framework was developed. For the moment, we look at the characteristics of the companies involved in the core part of the research study.

## 1.3 Participating Companies

Sixteen firms were recruited to participate in this research study who offer a range of volunteering opportunities in education. These companies are identified in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Participating companies

Aviva
Financial Services Authority
Bank of America Merrill Lynch
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP
BDO LLP
HSBC
BNY Mellon
Investec
CMS Cameron McKenna
Nomura
Credit Suisse
Rothschild
Deutsche Bank
Santander
Ernst & Young
Société Générale

As can be seen, these organisations represent three business sectors – financial services, law firms and consultancies. In broad terms, the approach to education related volunteering activity undertaken by these sixteen firms can be described as follows.

- Support for employee volunteering ranges from giving four days paid time off per year to informal, ad hoc support. The most common policy is to provide one day per year paid time off for volunteering in support of the company's community investment activities.
- The five most frequently offered education related volunteering activities are: reading/number/language partner programmes; individual student mentoring; providing enterprise workshops in schools; supporting an education related charity; and acting as a school governor.
- In terms of the characteristics of the volunteers themselves, they were split fairly evenly between men (43%) and women (57%). They were drawn from across the age ranges, with the majority in the 26 to 35 years age group. In terms of length of service, approximately one third had been with their organisation for more than ten years, while a similar proportion had been with their organisation for less than three years.
- Respondents were also asked about their seniority within the business. The results show that volunteers are drawn from all levels of the organisation – from graduate trainees to vice presidents and directors.
- Before this research, very few of the sixteen companies have attempted to assess in any formal way the skills and competencies gained through volunteering, although some companies are using informal processes of self-assessment feedback among volunteers. Typically, they use questionnaire surveys to ask what skills volunteers feel they have developed as a result of their experience. Responses highlight development in the following areas: communication skills, team working, planning, leadership and management, time management, creativity and diversity awareness.
- While all of the sixteen companies use a competency framework as part of their mainstream people development processes, none of them make an explicit link between this and the volunteering programmes.
- None of the sixteen companies involved in this research had made any prior attempt to calculate training costs saved through potential skills gained in volunteering.

Section 1.8 at the end of this Chapter provides more detail on the main activity of each business and gives a brief overview of the education related volunteering activity they support.

### 1.4 Developing the Assessment Process

---

In conjunction with this background understanding of the approach to volunteering undertaken by the sixteen companies involved in the research, it is important to examine the evaluation tools that would allow us to gather information on the skills gained through volunteering.

The process for developing the main competency framework and evaluation tool is discussed in more detail in section 1.5. This evaluation tool took the form of a 'retrospective' survey, asking volunteers to reflect on whether they had developed skills and competencies through their recent volunteering experience. This type of backward looking survey is the most straightforward to administer because it only requires the volunteer to complete it once at the end of their volunteering assignment.

This main evaluation tool (shown in Appendix B) was distributed in September 2009 and sent to all volunteers in education based initiatives in the sixteen companies. It remained 'in the field' until January 2010 during which time the research team received 546 useable responses from employees based in London who are volunteering in a range of education related initiatives in the sixteen companies. This data is reported in Chapter 2.

More detailed information can be gained from an assessment of an individual's skills and competencies prior to starting the volunteering assignment, and then following up again at the end of the programme. The research team designed an evaluation assessment tool to assess volunteers' skills gain using this "before" and "after" approach (shown in Appendix C). Six companies were able to send out this evaluation tool to a cohort of employees before they began their volunteering activity in September 2009. In total, 82 employees provided an assessment of their skills levels prior to the volunteering activity.

These employees were then invited in early 2010 to repeat the survey after they had been volunteering for some months. Only 31 respondents in four companies provided useable data to this follow up assessment which could be a result of a number of factors including finding the time to take the survey or difficulties in administering or

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completing the survey. The results of this aspect of the research are reported in Chapter 4.

As well as obtaining data from volunteers themselves, the research team gathered corroborating evidence from the line managers of these volunteers to gauge an independent assessment of the skills gained. The survey instrument used to assess line managers' opinions is shown in Appendix D.

The results of this survey, which was distributed between December 2009 and February 2010, are also reported in Chapter 4.

Another key aim of the research was to understand the relative costs to the companies of providing the volunteering opportunities for their employees. We also wanted to gather data on the costs to these businesses of developing the same skills and competencies through more traditional training and development routes. The two surveys on cost data were completed by companies between December 2009 and February 2010. The results of this strand of the research are reported in Chapter 5.

The final strand of the data collection process was the in-depth telephone interviews with the CSR and HR managers within selected companies to draw together information for the case studies reported in Chapter 6.

### 1.5 Developing the Competency Framework and Evaluation Tool

As emphasised in section 1.2, a specific aim of this research study was to create a competency matrix and evaluation tool that any company can use to assess the skills and knowledge developed through any employer supported volunteering opportunity.

In order to achieve this, as well as working with the CSR and HR practitioners in the sixteen companies already identified, the research team incorporated additional expert opinion by engaging with senior representatives from professional bodies in the HR field<sup>2</sup> and organisations that represent the voluntary sectors<sup>3</sup> by convening a series of workshops which ensured that the competency framework and evaluation tool would be relevant, meaningful and applicable to a broad audience.

Thinking on the development of the competency framework and evaluation tool was informed by

work that Corporate Citizenship had carried out with some leading London Benchmarking Group (LBG)<sup>4</sup> members in this area in 2009<sup>5</sup>.

This project worked with a group of nine organisations (Barclays, HSBC, L'Oreal, National Grid, npower, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Prudential plc, Shell UK and the Zurich Community Trust) to develop a consistent way of measuring the outputs and impacts of their community investment projects that enabled them to add up and communicate the results of their whole community programme.

A key element of this work was the development of a consistent approach to assessing the value of employee volunteering. This included the development of an evaluation tool to assess the results for, and impact upon, employees of volunteering opportunities across different projects and companies. It is this evaluation tool that formed the basis of the evaluation tool used in this research.

Some of the key lessons to come out of this original project, which were applied to the current research, were as follows.

- The starting point for assessing the competencies developed through volunteering assignments must be a consideration of the mainstream skills and competencies companies look to develop more broadly among employees. To this end, the research examined the competency frameworks used by a range of leading companies to steer the learning and development of employees across a wide range of different functions.
- In assessing the skills gained through volunteering, companies need to move their focus of evaluation from what they put into their community activities, to the impact that this investment achieves. This shift in emphasis can help to demonstrate the value of the community programme to the business, as well as the broader societal benefits.
- In thinking about development gains from volunteering, it is important to consider some of the broader impacts on the individual in terms of increased self-confidence, pride in the company and motivation. In addition, it is also useful to look at wider behavioural impacts such as the propensity to undertake volunteering again in the future.

<sup>2</sup> These included CIPD, CMI and the City HR Association

<sup>3</sup> For example, NCVO, ACEVO, CSV and brokerage organisations that help deliver volunteering programmes including Business in the Community, City Action and Volunteering England

<sup>4</sup> LBG is the international standard for measuring, benchmarking and reporting community investment. The LBG group is made up of more than 120 companies who come together to use and develop the model.

<sup>5</sup> *Making a Difference, Corporate Community Investment: A Whole Programme Approach to Measuring Results (2009) Corporate Citizenship*

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The resulting evaluation tools developed for this research will allow any organisation to:

- Gather robust evidence of the competencies employees can develop through active participation in employer supported volunteering programmes.
- Track how employees engaged in specific volunteering assignments develop specific skills in business relevant areas.
- Assess the level of the skills gain through a robust process of assessment by the volunteers themselves and the line managers to whom they report.
- Demonstrate the financial value of this process of competency development and skills gain to the employing organisation. At a minimum this could involve a cost comparison with alternative forms of skills development (e.g. internal and external training programmes) but could be extended to include a more sophisticated cost benefit analysis.

In addition, it is important to note that although the evaluation tools developed for this research were applied to employees volunteering in initiatives linked to the education sector, the competency framework and evaluation tool are relevant, meaningful and applicable to any type of volunteering activity.

The workshops and discussions undertaken for the current study produced some valuable insights that needed to be taken into account in refining the design of the competency framework and evaluation tool. These included the following.

- Colleagues from the HR function were keen to ensure the evaluation tool looked at the motives behind an individual's decision to become involved in volunteering, and whether their experiences gained through volunteering were assessed in appraisal processes. As we will see in Chapter 2, both these issues have an important impact on the learning gained from volunteering activities.
- Companies consulted for the current study were broadly supportive of the evaluation tool that had already been developed. There was virtually no disagreement with the competencies identified in the draft framework. The competencies were felt to be universally applicable and relevant to most roles in all companies. However, it was felt to be important to include a new category on financial skills to reflect the experience of volunteers who act as school governors.

- The evaluation tool must address two major challenges usually associated with assessment techniques – resources and knowledge. This evaluation tool was designed to be simple to complete and practical so that filling it in would not be time consuming for require any training to do it.

Building on Corporate Citizenship's previous work, and by responding to the advice and guidance of those involved in the consultative process, the research team has created an evaluation framework that is both simple to use and highly effective in delivering robust measurement of the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments.

The competency framework and evaluation tool was an innovative development, allowing companies to assess the impact of their volunteering activities in a way that none of them had done before.

### 1.6 Lessons from the Data Collection Process

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Finally, before moving on to consider the results of this research, it is worth discussing some of the lessons to emerge from the application of the evaluation framework:

- Many companies found that simply considering how volunteers might develop skills and competencies through volunteering changed attitudes within the business to a certain extent. Raising awareness of this research with colleagues in HR made them more willing to consider the potential of volunteering to improve skills.
- When applying the evaluation tool to education based volunteering activities, timing is important. In particular, incorporating it within the period across which volunteering is being undertaken, for example the school term. The research found that before and after surveys in particular needed a long lead in time within companies, especially to reach those volunteering for the first time.
- The evaluation tool was designed to be administered either in a Microsoft Excel format or online using survey software such as Survey Monkey. Volunteers were comfortable using either approach; the decision often rested on whether the companies involved were familiar with and had access to the relevant software.



- Some companies were concerned that the evaluation tool might not be completed by volunteers unless it was anonymous. While there was no requirement on respondents to identify themselves, we did ask if people were prepared to be involved in follow-up research; 10% of all volunteers gave their name and contact details.
- The value of providing incentives to complete the survey was discussed by participating companies. Only one (Aviva) chose to provide a small incentive – respondents who identified themselves were entered into a draw to win an ipod. However, all the companies involved received acceptable response rates to the survey from eligible employee volunteers, therefore it would appear that incentives are not necessary to achieve a good response.
- Finally, several companies suggested that using the evaluation tool when designing new volunteering projects would also be a useful exercise. Mapping expected outcomes in this way can help companies and their community partners to identify and agree on project goals at the outset, as well as monitoring progress during the programme and assessing skills gained at the end of an assignment.

### 1.7 Results and Analysis

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The main body of the report outlines the findings from the research:

- Chapter 2 looks in detail at the skills and competencies developed through volunteering and considers:
  - The motivations driving people to get involved in volunteering
  - The skills and competencies developed by different types of volunteering activity.
  - The aspects of the volunteering experience which are most important in the skills development process.
- Chapter 3 examines wider aspects of the volunteering experience including the impact on career development and the influence it has on employees' attitudes toward their employing organisation.
- Chapter 4 considers the corroborating evidence from the line managers' survey and looks at the results from the "before" and "after" questionnaires.
- Chapter 5 looks at the data gathered from the

financial analysis. This section of the report addresses two specific questions:

- Are the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments of relevance and value to the companies concerned?
  - How do the costs of developing these skills and competencies through volunteering compare to more traditional approaches of training and development?
- Chapter 6 looks at the in-depth experience of a sub-sample of companies involved in the research by presenting a number of case studies that deal with the challenges and benefits of employer supported volunteering programmes.
  - Finally, Chapter 7 draws together the conclusions from this research study.

### 1.8 The Companies Involved in the Research

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The following paragraphs give more detail on the companies that participated in this study and describe the nature of the education related volunteering activities they support:

#### **Aviva**

Aviva is the world's fifth largest insurance group, and the largest in the UK. Its main markets are Europe, Asia Pacific and the USA, and its key activities are long-term savings, fund management, and general insurance. Aviva employs 59,000 people globally, and is headquartered in London, employing 2,050 people in the City.

In 2009, more than 2,300 Aviva employees were involved in community activity in working time. Aviva has three national volunteering programmes, which include the Global Action Plan; working with primary schools on environmental issues. Other national programmes include the Citizenship Foundation, which Aviva created by developing teaching modules on citizenship with a focus on economics and finance. These Citizenship Foundation modules are now delivered by volunteers. The third national programme is the Learn and Thrive initiative, which involves educating displaced adults about money and benefits.

Aviva was an early pioneer in this research programme and sent the evaluation tool to all of its volunteers throughout the UK. This was received



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very positively and the company obtained returns from almost 400 volunteers. The data relating to those involved in volunteering in education based initiatives in London (almost 100 employees) is presented in Appendix A. This is separate from the results reported in the main body of this report as the draft survey used by Aviva was not entirely compatible with the later version used by the other companies.

### **Bank of America Merrill Lynch**

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions and is a global leader in corporate and investment banking and trading across a broad range of asset classes, serving corporations, governments, institutions and individuals around the world. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the marketing name for the global banking and global markets businesses of Bank of America Corporation. The company serves clients in more than 150 countries.

Employees are given two hours a week to volunteer, with manager approval. Volunteers engage in a range of activities, including supporting education, such as school governorship, becoming reading/number/language partners, student mentoring and giving lessons and workshops on financial literacy and employability. Bank of America Merrill Lynch has 6,500 employees in London of which approximately 800-1000 volunteer in any given year. The company's principal community partners in London for education-related volunteering include Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership, the East London Business Alliance, Young Enterprise, Mulberry School for Girls, Swanlea School, Bow School and Osmani Primary School.

### **BDO LLP**

BDO LLP is an award-winning, UK member firm of BDO International, the world's fifth largest accountancy network with more than 1,000 offices in over 100 countries. The BDO financial services group provides an integrated, full service capability to firms across the whole of the financial services market.

In October 2006, BDO LLP introduced a community volunteering policy that allows employees six days a year to use flexibly for volunteering. Individuals are free to choose the focus of their voluntary work whether it be environmental responsibility or charity fundraising. In the first year after the policy introduction the company had over 7% employee uptake. In 2007/2008 14% of employees used the policy.

Education related volunteering opportunities in London include secondary school student and university student mentoring, as well as rugby coaching, and local school enterprise days, where 11 to 16 year olds undertake business linked activities. Employees at BDO LLP are also encouraged to become governors at local schools.

### **BNY Mellon**

Established in 2007 from the merger of Mellon Financial Corporation and The Bank of New York Company, BNY Mellon is a leading provider of financial services for institutions, corporations and high net-worth individuals. Headquartered in New York, it has \$22.3 trillion in assets under custody and administration and \$1.1 trillion in assets under management. The company operates in 32 countries and has around 42,000 employees worldwide. In London, BNY Mellon employs 2,954 people.

BNY Mellon's Community Partnership Programme offers all employees two days paid volunteer time annually. In London, the company engages with a huge range of community partners, including Keyworth and Culloden Primary Schools, Community Links, The Career Academy, Fairbridge, The Whitechapel Mission and The Prince's Trust.

Opportunities for employees to volunteer include reading partner schemes, CV workshops, mentoring and e-mentoring, interview skills workshops and business workshops. Volunteers can also get involved with the internship programme, or can sit on the board of a local school as a governor. In the EMEA region, 12% of the workforce volunteered during 2009 while 225 employees engaged in volunteering last year in London.

### **CMS Cameron McKenna**

CMS Cameron McKenna LLP is a founding member, and the UK headquarters, of CMS. CMS operates in 27 jurisdictions, with 53 offices in Western and Central Europe and beyond. CMS was established in 1999 and today comprises nine CMS firms, employing over 2,400 lawyers. CMS is headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany.

Volunteering opportunities are available for all staff and initiatives range from specialised pro bono legal advice to general volunteering initiatives. London based, education related volunteering opportunities at the firm include reading and number partners, mentoring students, photographic projects, CV and career planning

## Volunteering – The Business Case

workshops and a twinning scheme, which links volunteers up with young people in schools to help them learn about law and current legal and moral issues. CMS Cameron McKenna works with Whitmore and Hackney Primary Schools, the East London Business Alliance and Citizenship Foundation.

### **Credit Suisse**

Credit Suisse is an international investment bank and financial services company providing companies, institutional clients and high-net-worth private clients with a wide range of financial advisory services. The business is active in over 50 countries and employs more than 47,000 people world wide.

Credit Suisse supports a range of philanthropic initiatives across all of the countries in which it operates. In addition to corporate philanthropy, the company encourages employees to become active volunteers and donors through a variety of schemes including the Charity of the Year program, Professional Development in the Community programmes and various tutoring and mentoring initiatives with local partner schools.

Approximately 2,500 London-based Credit Suisse employees were actively involved in volunteering in 2009 of which 10% were engaged in educational activities. This encompassed a number of activities including working with the Tower Hamlets EBP, where more than 100 Credit Suisse volunteers spend half an hour per week over lunchtime with a child or small group of children leading reading, maths, IT, chess or music activities. They also support day workshops and provide mock interviews to local school children. In addition, volunteers provided support for employability workshops at the University of East London; helped the Career Academy and Young Enterprise programmes; and acted as school governors and board members.

### **Deutsche Bank**

Deutsche Bank is a leading global investment bank, with a presence in Europe, North America, Asia and key emerging markets. Deutsche Bank employs 77,053 people globally in 72 countries. The company policy is to grant each permanent employee two days paid leave each year to volunteer on the Bank's programmes, at their manager's discretion.

The Bank employs 8,500 people in London. Within the company's UK operations, about 15% of Deutsche Bank employees are involved

in volunteering across 30 different programmes including team challenge events. In London, the principle community partners for education related volunteering are CSV, Project Shoreditch, the University of Greenwich, Young Enterprise, the British Museum, Youth Sport Trust, Brokerage Citylink, Spitalfields Together and ELBA Legacy 2020.

Volunteering opportunities at Deutsche Bank in London, relating to education, include number partners, language partners and reading partners in secondary schools, mentoring in a secondary school, homework clubs, Learn2Earn and Personal Economics workshops and school board placements.

### **Ernst & Young**

Ernst & Young is a global professional services firm and a leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services, employing 144,000 people globally. It has 4,500 employees in its London operations. The firm provides volunteering opportunities around its main areas of focus: education; entrepreneurship and the environment. It gives its employees a minimum of two days paid leave a year to volunteer for a charity of their choice or through one of the firm's organised programmes. In its latest financial year over 20% of its people across the UK volunteered.

Its award winning education programme focuses on supporting young people to achieve their potential by developing long-term partnerships with state schools. Ernst & Young links its offices with both primary and secondary schools. It is committed to developing deep rooted links with schools local to its offices, especially those with particular challenges, providing a programme of activities over a sustained period of time aimed at benefiting all aspects of a school. It believes that by building deep, sustainable relationships it can deliver demonstrable long-term value to the students. In London it partners with six schools. At Alma Primary School, for example, Ernst & Young runs a stocks and shares club and a school literacy programme. The firm education programme also engages its employees in leadership coaching with teachers, school governors, enterprise competitions, business skills workshops, reading partners and language mentoring, careers experience events and student mentoring. At schools like Harris Academy or Bacons College volunteers seek to use their business skills to engage and inspire students in the world of work and business.

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### **Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP**

Freshfields is an international law firm with over 2,400 lawyers in 28 offices around the world, operating in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the US. Freshfields policy is to grant employees one day paid leave each year to volunteer, with many employees taking more time than this to volunteer, at their manager's discretion.

There are 2,000 employees in the UK, with over 210 involved in education related volunteering initiatives. Community partners engaged with the firm through education related volunteering opportunities include Redlands Primary School in Tower Hamlets, Haggerston Secondary School in Hackney, Cardinal Pole School, Career Academies UK, Sutton Trust's Pathways to Law initiative, Teach First, Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership and the Inspire Education Business Partnership in Hackney.

Potential volunteers at Freshfields are offered a wide variety of education related initiatives, including language coaching, reading and number partners, school governor positions, student mentoring and Oxbridge interview preparation.

### **FSA**

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) is an independent non-governmental body, given statutory powers by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. The FSA is a company limited by guarantee and financed by the financial services industry.

Volunteering programmes organised by the FSA cover three areas: education, employability and regeneration. Employees are able to take up to 20 hours paid leave a year to volunteer, as well as an additional 7 hours for team challenge events. Approximately 20% of the organisation's 3,000 workforce are involved in volunteering.

FSA works with Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership and focuses its volunteering efforts on a range of local schools including Cyril Jackson Primary School, Bishop Challinor Girls School, Holy Family and Tower Hamlets College. Volunteering opportunities range from financial literacy lessons; reading, maths and computing partners; help with CV writing; mentoring young people on work placement schemes; and supporting Young Enterprise programmes.

### **HSBC**

Headquartered in London, HSBC is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world. HSBC's international network comprises around 8,000 offices in 88 countries, including Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa. There are 52,000 employees working at HSBC in the UK, and these people are able to take part in a range of volunteering activities, taking time off to do so at their line manager's discretion.

In 2009, 16,400 HSBC employees in the UK were engaged in volunteering. Nationally, the company has 2,500 employees volunteering on financial literacy programmes, and these are delivered to 1,400 schools which are registered to participate. In London, education related volunteering is focused on two initiatives; Young Enterprise, a UK charity, and Students in Free Enterprise, international non-profit organization. Other opportunities for employees wishing to engage in education related volunteering organised by the company include: school governor positions, Teach First, and the What Money Means programme, which aims to improve financially capability education in primary schools

### **Investec**

Investec is an international, specialist banking group that provides a range of financial products and services to clients in three principal markets (the UK, South Africa and Australia). It has 1,200 employees in its London operations, and 30% of these staff have signed up to volunteer.

The company offers all employees one day per year paid time off to volunteer for one of Investec's charitable partners, although more can be requested through the individual's line manager. Investec funds and supports five charities – all of which are related to education, the environment or enterprise. There are two initiatives particularly relevant to this research.

Arrival Education runs innovative projects to help young people engage with education to develop their life chances. Around 30 Investec volunteers are involved with two main programmes run by Arrival, a coaching programme and 'Success Skills' workshops.

Morpeth is a school in Tower Hamlets which Investec has supported over the last five years. Investec volunteers are involved primarily in a literacy mentoring programme. Since February 2009 13 volunteers from Investec have been visiting the school every fortnight for an hour over lunch.

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### **Nomura**

Nomura is a leading financial services group with worldwide reach. Nomura EMEA forms a vital part of the global structure, providing services across 18 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Nomura employs more than 13,000 staff in the region, around 3,500 of which are based in London.

Nomura offers a range of volunteering opportunities in which employees can take part at their manager's discretion. Education-related volunteering activities in London include schools' partnership programmes with Oaklands Secondary and Southwark Park Primary schools. Employees volunteer as reading partners, number partners, French partners and science partners. At Southwark Park, Nomura employees get involved in the chess club, while at Oaklands, volunteers act as business mentors and run a Japanese club. There are also specific workshops around developing communication and employability skills for secondary students. Nomura is truly committed to the longevity and development of these partnerships, as part of this, members of the senior leadership team sit on the school governor boards of both schools.

### **Rothschild**

Rothschild is one of the world's leading independent investment banking organizations providing investment banking, corporate banking and private banking and trust services to governments, corporations and individuals worldwide. Rothschild operates globally in 49 offices in 34 countries, including the Americas, Europe and Australia. The company employees around 2,000 staff around the world, and there are 760 employees working at Rothschild in London.

It is company policy for employees to be able to take 2 days paid time off to volunteer, and in 2008/9 and 2009/10 more than 30% of the London staff were involved in volunteering opportunities. There is a Community Committee, chaired by Anthony Salz, Executive Vice Chairman and the company's main education related volunteering is run through relationships with two schools: Bow School of Maths and Computing and South Camden Community School. Programmes include mentoring, reading partners and Teach First coaching.

### **Santander**

On the 11th January 2010 Abbey National plc, which included the Bradford & Bingley savings business, changed its name to Santander UK plc.

Santander is an international banking group with over 90 million customers and 180,000 employees worldwide. It operates in three principal markets; continental Europe, UK and Latin America.

In the London head office, Santander employs approximately 2,000 people. Santander supports staff volunteering through a matched time scheme where it gives up to 35 hours a year of paid work time to enable employees to help their favourite causes. Through its Community Days scheme, staff are encouraged to take a day out from the office to volunteer with a local cause, and in 2009, numerous employees supported several educational schemes within schools. Santander engages with Young Enterprise, Career Academies, Barnet EBP and The Citizenship Foundation as part of its education related volunteering programmes in London. Volunteering opportunities include mentoring, guru lectures and helping pupils to understand more about running a business and the world of work.

### **Société Générale**

Société Générale employs 163,000 professionals in 83 countries across Europe, Middle East & Africa, the Americas and Asia-Pacific. In London, the Group employs 2,300 staff providing services across corporate & investment and private banking, investment management and security services, plus car fleet leasing and equipment financing. Corporate Responsibility activities are focused mainly on environmental impact reduction to be carbon neutral by 2012, and on a citizenship programme aimed at meeting community needs through charitable giving and volunteering initiatives.

Société Générale engages in a range of education related volunteering opportunities in London, including school partnerships providing help with maths, reading, French and computing. In addition, the company arranges school governor positions and mentoring for students and senior staff at community organisations. Société Générale works with the UK Career Academy, East London Business Alliance, Business in the Community, the City of London and two Education Business Partnerships in order to deliver its volunteering programmes.



## 2. Understanding the Skills Developed through Volunteering

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## 2.1

### Introduction

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In this chapter we present the main analysis of the study and consider the extent to which involvement in volunteering activities can contribute to the development of specific skills and competencies. In addressing this issue, we also consider a number of wider aspects of the volunteering experience including:

- The motivations driving people to get involved in volunteering
- The specific skills and competencies developed through the volunteering experience
- How different types of volunteering activity are better at developing certain types of skills and competencies
- Those aspects of the volunteering experience which are most important in the skills development process.

## 2.2

### Existing Literature

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While the current study aims to break new ground, it is important to recognise that there is a large body of existing research relating to the skills development process experienced by employee volunteers. To date, much of this research has focused on three themes.

1. The motivations for individuals to volunteer. This research typically identifies a range of intrinsic motives (e.g. satisfying the desire to give something back to society) and extrinsic motives (e.g. gaining experience to boost career progression).
2. The process of competency development through employee volunteering. Much of this work identifies a similar set of competencies which are commonly developed through volunteering. In general, these tend to be 'people focused' and include time management skills, coaching skills, communication skills and leadership skills.
3. The business motives for supporting employee volunteering programmes. This body of literature shows that the common business benefits associated with community investment include risk management, brand reputation and improved staff morale and motivation.

In each of these areas there is a wealth of existing research that provides solid evidence of the real returns to the business and the individual of active involvement in volunteering. In this section, we consider the findings from some of the most relevant studies to answer three key questions.

1. Do employees develop skills and competencies through their volunteering experience?
2. If they do, which specific skills can be developed through different volunteering activities?
3. What aspects of the volunteering experience support the learning and development process?

### 2.2.1

#### Skills Development

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The link between corporate supported volunteering and skills development is long-established. Research from the early 1990s, for example, shows that volunteering can assist in the development of valuable business skills in employees. One such study from the USA found that employees who actively volunteer gain leadership traits regardless of the type of volunteer experience or profession they are in (Pidgeon, 1991).

More recent research from a variety of sources reinforces this link:

- According to one survey of businesses in the USA, 60% of responding companies use employee volunteering in developing employee skills (Points of Light and Allstate Foundation, 2000).
- In a separate study, over 50% of corporate executives and CR managers interviewed believed that volunteering helps employees build and/or enhance professional and leadership skills and abilities (LBG Associates, 2004).

Such studies provide valuable evidence of the potential value of volunteering in the skills development process. However, none of these studies provide conclusive proof that the volunteering experience is the direct factor contributing to the acquisition of skills and competencies.

This criticism was reinforced in research undertaken by Peterson (2003) which suggested that many existing studies are not without bias. The problem is

that these studies report the perceptions and attitudes of those who have an interest in the volunteering programmes – either the Human Resources or CSR managers who are responsible for the initiatives. The current research approach addresses this criticism by examining directly the experiences of the volunteers, and corroborating these findings with evidence from their line managers. These groups may have less of a vested interest in the success or otherwise of the volunteering programmes.

The overwhelming evidence is that participation in volunteering assignments can help employees develop skills and competencies that are relevant to the business. Indeed, a recent survey by the Skills Employability Laboratory found that volunteering is increasingly being linked to core business strategy in terms of up-skilling employees and boosting productivity levels (Skills for Employability, 2008).

Other research has also found that organisations are using volunteering to address business objectives, including providing an opportunity to develop skills in employees. For example, a survey from the USA by the Conference Board and Point of Light Foundation (1993) found that:

- 31% of organisations used volunteering as part of their strategy to address critical business issues
- Over 60% agreed that volunteering builds teamwork skills in employees.

It is worth noting that this study is of particular relevance to the current research as almost three quarters of programmes under consideration targeted volunteering opportunities in the education sector.

Hence, at this general level, the research evidence suggests that volunteering is becoming part of mainstream corporate strategy and the links to skills development are increasingly being made.

### 2.2.2 Developing specific skills and competencies

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Moving from these general findings, it is important to consider which specific skills volunteering assignments can help to develop. Research undertaken via a national telephone survey of 1,093 employed adults in the US by Deloitte (2005) shows that:

- 93% of those surveyed agreed that

volunteering offers the opportunity to enhance leadership skills

- 89% agreed it helps enhance problem solving skills
- 88% agreed it develops decision-making skills
- 82% agreed it helps enhance negotiating skills.

Another well-respected survey, commissioned by the Chartered Management Institute in the UK (CMI, 2006), found that 60% of managers agreed or strongly agreed that international volunteering assignments are an effective learning and development tool. More specifically, this research suggested that managers believe this type of volunteering can develop:

- Problem solving skills
- Communication skills
- Strategic understanding (e.g. in the education sector by working as a trustee)
- Coaching skills
- Teaching and mentoring skills
- Networking skills
- Technical skills such as designing databases and project management.

While this research examined the experience of VSO business and management volunteers who completed overseas assignments, it nevertheless has important lessons that are applicable to volunteering assignments closer to home. In particular as discussed in section 2.3, the research provides valuable lessons on the development processes underpinned by the volunteering experience.

A survey by the Institute of Volunteering Research among staff at Barclays Bank (IVR Research Bulletin, 2005) found that managers saw the greatest impacts on their staff in terms of increased communication and leadership skills, with over 55% of managers reporting gains in both skills.

Again, the strength of these findings rests on the robust research methodology which included focus groups and interviews with both employee volunteers and staff who had not volunteered. These findings were corroborated by evidence from Barclays' managers and representatives from the placement organisations that helped coordinate the volunteering activities.

One final study is that undertaken in 1998 by Corporate Citizenship (Tuffrey, 1998). According to



## Volunteering – The Business Case

the research reported in this study, the specific competencies which showed the most developmental gain were:

- Communication skills
- Skills related to working together (e.g. collaboration, influencing and team work)
- Creative thinking.

Equally importantly, this study found that employee involvement is a flexible and effective method in developing competencies as long as the process itself is managed properly; suitable opportunities are identified and the outcomes are evaluated. This finding resonates strongly with the results of the current study which shows the importance of understanding two aspects of the volunteering experience – both the motivations of the employee for undertaking the volunteering assignment and whether the experience of the volunteer is captured in a formal assessment process after the event.

These aspects can have an important influence on the effectiveness of the learning process and are explored in more depth in section 2.3 of this chapter.

### 2.2.3 The learning process through volunteering

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As discussed, the research by the CMI provides useful insight into those aspects of the volunteering experience that aid the learning and development process. Specifically, this study found that the following factors were important in helping to develop new skills.

- Responsibility – the volunteering assignment puts employees in a position of authority with accountability for results.
- Communications – volunteers are required to interact with all levels of management and different types of people.
- Creativity – having to be resourceful and find ways around problems.

The research highlights the fact that all three of these factors are not necessarily experienced by the volunteer in their normal work role. These findings mirror closely the results of the current study, examined in section 2.6 of this chapter.

Similarly, a metastudy undertaken by the Point of Light Foundation (2007) found that there are five

main factors that help ensure an employee volunteer programme is successful at developing workplace skills:

- A team based approach
- Effective support structures
- Adequate financial resources
- Robust evaluation procedures
- Full compliance with adult learner theory.

While most of these factors are self-explanatory, the last point merits further examination. It is worth considering what we can learn about the volunteering experience from established models of adult learner theory, such as those developed in the 1970's by Malcolm Knowles who built on earlier theoretical work by John Dewey and Maslow. This body of knowledge suggests there are several pre-conditions that are needed for optimal adult learning. In broad terms, these are:

- Involvement in the planning and evaluation of the learning process
- Relevance of the content area to the job or one's personal life
- Experiential activities
- Focus on problems rather than content.

Employee volunteering does not necessarily meet the first two conditions, although it is not difficult to design it so that it does. In particular, getting volunteers involved in the design and structure of the volunteering programme is straightforward and can be very beneficial for the organisation itself.

In addition, ensuring the volunteering activity is related to the work that employees undertake is becoming an increasingly standard feature of many employer supported volunteering programmes. In this way, companies can maximise the benefits to the individual, the business and the charitable partner, by ensuring that the assignment utilises workplace skills of relevance to all three parties.

The final two conditions identified above are certainly met by most skills-based volunteering activities. For example, the majority of volunteering, particularly in education, is practical and experiential based; often providing an opportunity for volunteers to solve problems. One of the key lessons from this current study is the importance of this experiential approach – in simple terms, learning by doing – in the skills development process.

## Volunteering – The Business Case

It is important to treat volunteering in the same way a company would treat any other learning and development processes. In other words, volunteering programmes should be given the same care in design and evaluation of learning outcomes as other corporate learning and development programmes.

### 2.3 Motivations for Volunteering and the Impact on Job Performance

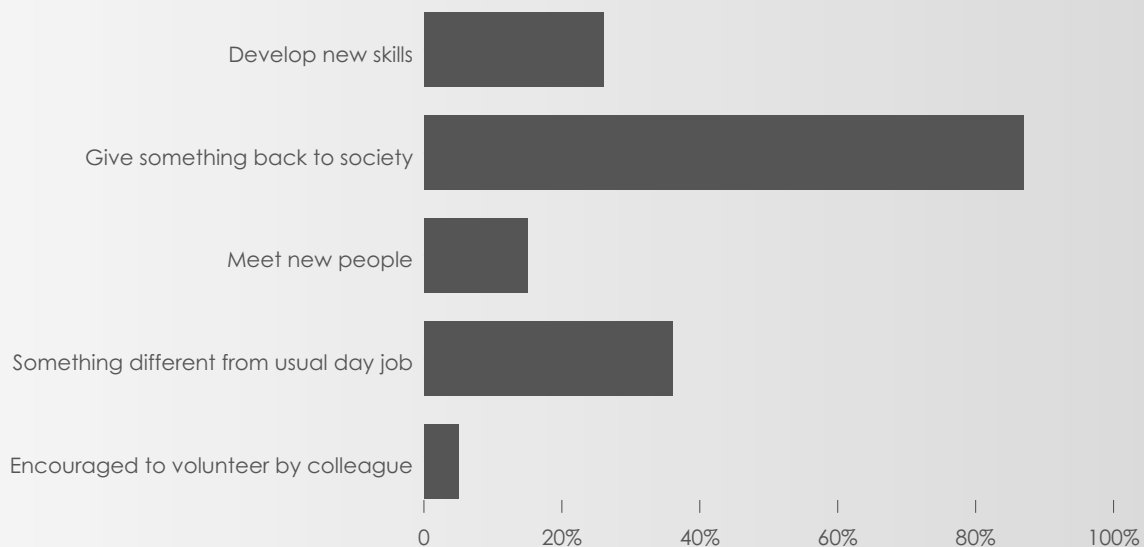
The main body of this chapter reports the findings of the current study. The starting point for this analysis is the motivations for getting involved in volunteering. The results show that the main driver for participating in volunteering activities is the desire to give something back to society. This should come as no surprise given the nature of volunteering.

Respondents to this survey were however asked to provide more than one motive for volunteering if appropriate. As can be seen from Chart 1, two other motives emerged as relatively strong drivers:

- The desire to do something different from one's normal work role (cited by 37% of respondents)
- The opportunity to develop new skills – this was considered to be an important factor by one in four of the volunteers.

This is a key finding in itself. It suggests that, even though the companies involved in the research do not currently make skills development an explicit component of volunteering opportunities, a significant minority of their employees who choose to participate in these activities do so in order to develop their skills and competencies.

**Chart 1**  
The main motivation for volunteering



Respondents were also specifically asked if the skills and experience they had gained from their volunteering activity forms part of their formal appraisal process. The data show that 37% of respondents report that their volunteering experience has been or will be part of their appraisal.

It is interesting to see how these two factors – whether a volunteer hopes to achieve skills gain from the start, and whether volunteering is recognised in an employee's appraisal – influence an employee's assessment of whether or not the volunteering experience has helped them perform better in their job. The results are as follows:

- Across the sample of respondents as a whole, 41% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the skills and experience gained from their volunteering experience has helped them perform better in their job. A slightly smaller proportion (35%) either disagrees or strongly disagrees with this statement, while 23% are neutral.
- In contrast, among those respondents who felt motivated to volunteer to develop their skills, the proportion of those who agreed that they are performing better in their job rises to 61%.
- In addition, among those whose volunteering activities are part of the appraisal process, 58% agree that this experience has helped them perform better in their job.

These findings suggest that the factors motivating an individual's or an organisation's reasons to undertake or support volunteering can have an important influence over perceptions of the value of the experience to an employee's work role.

Put simply, if people approach volunteering with the aim of improving their skills, they are more likely to report an improvement in their job performance as a result of their participation.

In addition, if companies make the experiences gained from volunteering a formal part of the appraisal process, employees are more likely to report the positive impacts on job performance.

As highlighted by the case studies included in this report, those companies that make this link at the outset of the volunteering assignments are more successful in ensuring employees draw out the wider benefits of skills development.

## 2.4 Developing Specific Skills and Competencies

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The data in Table 2 shows the level of skills development across the sample of respondents as a whole. As can be seen, the majority of volunteers report skills development in the following areas that could be considered to be strongly related to their individual or personal effectiveness.

1. Communication skills (66% of respondents asserted that their skills had undergone some development or significant development in this area)
2. Their ability to help others (65%)
3. Adaptability (54%)
4. Influencing / negotiating skills (45%).
5. Team working (43%)
6. Leadership skills (41%)
7. Willingness to continually improve (41%)
8. Planning and organisation (40%)
9. Decision making (39%)
10. Problem solving (39%)
11. Ability to build relationships and networks (39%).

Finally, it is evident that there are three areas of skills or competencies that only a small minority of respondents believe can be developed through volunteering. These are technical or professional skills; business awareness; and financial skills.

Cross referencing these results with the demographic information outlined in Chapter 1, it appears that factors such as age, gender and the individual's seniority within the company do not strongly influence the results. In the same way, whether the individual has previous experience of volunteering or not has very little influence on the skills they gain from taking part in the specific activity they are currently involved in.

However, there is one variable that does have a positive influence on the process of skills development. Across the board, among those responding for whom volunteering is part of the appraisal process, proportionately more report that they have developed the skills and competencies identified.

This positive correlation reinforces the findings in section 2.3 suggesting that companies which create a more formal link between volunteering

**Table 2**  
Skills developed through volunteering

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	14.8%	27.4%	42.0%	11.6%	4.2%	526
Team working skills	25.7%	24.8%	32.6%	10.3%	6.7%	525
Communication skills	9.5%	21.9%	47.4%	18.9%	2.3%	525
Influencing & negotiation skills	24.4%	23.2%	32.8%	12.6%	7.0%	525
Problem solving skills	30.2%	23.2%	29.3%	9.3%	8.0%	526
Leadership skills	27.9%	22.2%	30.6%	10.6%	8.7%	527
Planning & organisation skills	30.0%	23.4%	29.3%	11.0%	6.3%	526
Decision making and exercising judgement	29.6%	24.2%	29.8%	8.8%	7.6%	524
Helping others improve	13.1%	17.9%	39.2%	25.3%	4.6%	526
Financial skills	54.9%	8.6%	8.4%	2.1%	26.0%	526
Building relationships and networks	23.5%	27.1%	29.8%	8.7%	10.8%	527
Willingness to continually improve	24.4%	26.7%	31.4%	9.9%	7.6%	525
Business awareness	45.2%	15.7%	13.1%	2.5%	23.5%	527
Technical / professional skills	46.1%	14.5%	15.8%	3.0%	20.6%	525

and mainstream HR practices reap the rewards as more employees report seeing significant development in the skills they gain through volunteering assignments.

## 2.5 Skills Development and Type of Volunteering

As we saw in Chapter 1, respondents to this survey were involved in a range of different volunteering assignments related to educational initiatives. The top five most common volunteering experiences in descending order were:

- Reading, language or number partners (38% of respondents were involved in this type of volunteering activity)
- Student mentoring (17%)
- Enterprise workshops (11%)
- Supporting an education-related charity (10%)
- School governorship (9%).

In this section we consider the extent to which these different types of volunteering activity are effective in developing specific skills and competencies. A summary of this analysis is provided in a series of five tables in Appendix E which give an overview of the skills developed through each of these different activities.

### 2.5.1 Reading, language or number partners

This type of scheme essentially involves volunteers working with individual pupils in schools to help them develop their confidence and abilities in either reading, languages or mathematics. Reading, language or number partner programme involve anything from 30 minutes to one hour classroom contact time per week. In addition, volunteers spend anything from 30 minutes to 2 hours in travel time to and from the school. Typically these programmes last for 10 to 12 weeks (per term).

A detailed analysis of the data shows that overall this form of volunteering is appropriate to developing many of the skills and competencies under consideration in this research study. In particular, respondents report that they found this type of volunteering activity was helpful in developing skills in two areas: communications; and influencing and negotiating. The following quotes illustrate the type of development experienced by these volunteers.

*“The skill that I have used the most is influencing. It is very important to influence my reading partner in a positive way of the benefits of reading.”*

*“Communicating with a very different audience to those in a work context.”*

*“The Reading Partners scheme helps me to be organised as I need to take time out of my week to prepare and attend once a week during lunchtime. It challenges me to be creative and gives me skills to deal with situations that are new and often challenging.”*

Finally, despite this positive feedback of the development to be gained through participation in this type of volunteering activity, it is important to understand the limitations. In particular, a third of volunteers in this area reported they had not developed team working skills as a result of their activities – perhaps not surprising given the one-to-one nature of the partnerships.

### 2.5.2 Student mentoring

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Student mentoring is similar to a partners programme in that it requires the volunteer to work with an individual student to help in their academic development. What distinguishes a mentoring programme is that it goes beyond providing help in one narrow area to encompass broader aspects of attendance, application and attainment of the pupil. As with any other mentoring relationship, the exact nature of the help and advice provided is determined jointly by the student and the mentor.

A student mentoring programme can involve anything from two hours a month to two hours per week. For example, a particularly intensive mentoring programme working with a youth at risk in a leadership programme could take up to 40 hours a year.

As we saw with the partners' programmes, volunteering in a mentoring role is helpful in

developing many of the skills and competencies outlined in Table 2. However, proportionately more volunteers involved in mentoring programmes reported skills gain in the following four areas:

- Adaptability and being effective in different surroundings (62% of mentors experienced some or significant skills development in this area, compared with 54% of the total sample).
- Influencing and negotiation skills (53% of mentors reported skills gains in this area, compared with 45% of the total sample).
- Decision making and exercising judgement (47% of mentors reported skills gains in this area, compared with 39% of the total sample).
- Developing skills and ability to help others improve; and guide and evaluate their performance (79% of volunteer mentors reported skills gains in this area, compared with 64% of the total sample).

The observations of volunteers involved in mentoring schemes point to the benefits of this activity in terms of skills development.

*“Gaining coaching skills and experience.”*

*“Planning and organising sessions beforehand prior to meetings with my student. Understanding the confidentiality is vital and will help in future for management roles. It improved communication at all levels.”*

*“Working with teenagers you have to be firm but also communicate in a way that relates to them so it helped me understand their perspective as well as my communication skills.”*

*“Better at evaluating and carrying out appraisals.”*

*“Communication, networking and building relationships are probably the most skills I have developed.”*

Finally, it is worth noting that 99% of volunteers involved in a mentoring programme reported that their experience had increased their understanding of and empathy with other people.

### 2.5.3 Enterprise workshops

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This type of volunteering activity supports programmes such as Young Enterprise which are delivered to schools and colleges across the country. The schemes aim to offer students experience and insight into business and the world of work. One of the principle activities is supporting students to work together to manage their own company.

Running enterprise workshops involves the volunteers working with teachers to design and deliver sessions which help students in all aspects of the scheme – including areas such as business planning, presentation skills and developing ideas to produce and sell products and services. The amount of time volunteers spend organising enterprise workshops varies greatly. Among respondents, the average time spent was three hours per session, with volunteers typically helping to organise four or five sessions per term.

Volunteers who have participated in the planning and delivery of enterprise workshops reported some or significant gains in skills and competencies across all the areas under consideration by this research. Indeed, in terms of reported skills development, this activity proved to be one of the most effective types of volunteering assignment. Respondents particularly highlight skills development in the following areas.

- Adaptability and being effective in different surroundings (72% of volunteers helping with enterprise workshops experienced some or significant skills development in this area, compared with 54% of the total sample).
- Team working skills (55% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 43% of the total sample).
- Communication skills (75% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 66% of the total sample).
- Influencing and negotiation skills (54% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 45% of the total sample).
- Leadership skills (58% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 41% of the total sample).
- Planning and organisation skills (51% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 40% of the total sample).

- Building relationships and networks (51% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 38% of the total sample).
- Willingness to continually improve (52% of volunteers on enterprise workshops report skills gains in this area, compared with 41% of the total sample).
- And finally, this area was one of the most effective in developing business awareness, with 23% of volunteers in enterprise workshops reporting a skills gain in this area, compared with only 16% of the total sample.

Some of the quotes provided by respondents on their experience of enterprise workshops explain why this is such an effective method of skills development for the volunteers.

*“Working with younger people gave me the chance to test my leadership and interpersonal skills in a non-work environment; this challenged me greatly and improved me. Also listening to the experiences of others who have been through very challenging experiences was inspiring and eye opening.”*

*“Working with students is challenging in many ways and requires that you hone the skills mentioned in this questionnaire to ensure that they get the maximum out of the sessions, whilst you grow at the same time. By their questioning you, challenging established ideas and offering new insights everyone gains. The volunteering experience for me has been an amazing two way growth experience.”*

*“Working with 11-16 year olds certainly helps improve your communication skills and general confidence levels. Also, the students normally have to work in groups with you as a business facilitator. You need to be a good team player and also good at leading teams to get the most of the groups.”*

*“Presenting in front of 30 teenagers sharpens your presentation skills and improved my ability to interact with people.”*



### 2.5.4 Supporting an education related charity

This heading encompasses a range of different ways in which companies can assist organisations in the education sector with the skills, experience and knowledge of their volunteers. For some businesses it will include providing pro bono professional services such as legal advice, marketing expertise or help with financial management. In other cases it involves more “hands on” support such as working with the British Museum to organise educational initiatives. Again, there is a great difference in the amount of time volunteers spend on this type of activity ranging from two to three hours per month to regular weekly assignments.

Volunteers involved in this type of activity reported that it was particularly helpful in developing skills in three areas, as outlined below.

- Team working skills (52% of volunteers working with educational charities reported skills gains in this area, compared with 43% of the total sample).
- Building relationships and networks (47% of volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 38% of the total sample).
- Financial skills (20% of volunteers, compared with 10% of the total sample working with educational charities).

Perhaps most importantly, this was seen to be among the most helpful type of volunteering activity for developing financial skills such as planning budgets. Proportionately twice as many respondents who volunteered for educational charities reported that they had developed skills in this area, reflecting the nature of this type of volunteering assignment. It was second only to school governorships for developing skills in this area.

### 2.5.5 School governors

Taking on the role of a school governor is in some respects the most challenging volunteering activity considered in this research study. Those in this role are expected to make important collective decisions about the running of the school. As members of the school’s governing body, governors are expected to provide strategic management advice, offer challenge and support to the school’s management

team and ensure accountability of decisions.

Acting as a school governor can be the most time intensive activity depending upon the precise role of the volunteer. Respondents to this survey reported spending up to one day per month in undertaking the duties of a governor, although not all respondents devoted as much time as this. The average amount of time among the 50 respondents was six days per year.

The School Governors’ One-Stop Shop<sup>6</sup> describes the responsibilities of a governor as follows:

- Promoting high standards of education and achievement
- Planning the school’s long-term future
- Setting the school’s aims and values
- Appointing senior staff including the Head Teacher
- Budgetary allocation and control.

Volunteers who are school governors clearly value the opportunities this role offers for developing their skills and competencies. Respondents particularly highlight their development in the following areas.

- Team working skills (71% of school governor volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 43% of the total sample).
- Influencing and negotiation skills (67% of school governor volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 45% of the total sample).
- Problem solving skills (55% of school governor volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 39% of the total sample).
- Decision making skills and exercising judgement (53% of school governor volunteers, compared with 39% of the total sample).
- Developing financial skills such as planning budgets (39% of school governor volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 10% of the total sample).
- Business awareness (33% of school governor volunteers reported skills gains in this area, compared with 16% of the total sample).
- And finally, this area was the most effective in developing technical and professional skills with 33% of school governor volunteers reporting a skills gain in this area, compared with only 19% of the total sample.

Looking at the responsibilities of a school governor it should come as no surprise that volunteers in this

<sup>6</sup> A charity which recruits volunteers to become governors in schools across England.  
[www.sgoss.org.uk](http://www.sgoss.org.uk)

role are reporting significant gains in their skills and competencies in these areas. This positive link between volunteering and skills development in these business related areas is reinforced by quotes from volunteers about the school governors' experience.

*"I was elected vice chair of the finance committee, which helped build my confidence in meetings when talking to senior management and has helped me become more of a team member."*

*"I gained exposure to a different way of doing things – giving me experience in managing people and problems in a different arena where skills can be transferred across and a different approach taken."*

*"I became the Vice Chair of the finance committee which was very important to me to develop that side of my business acumen. I also am involved in the development of the Head Teacher and participate in their review, which is building people management skills I didn't possess."*

### 2.5.6 Summary of skills development

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The findings from this analysis can be summarised as follows (see also Table 3 at the end of this Chapter for a visual summary of this information).

All of the five volunteering opportunities explored in this Chapter show a development in skills.

- The most popular type of volunteering – involvement in reading, language or number partner schemes – is useful for developing a wide range of skills and competencies. In particular, proportionately more volunteers report developing their communication, influencing and negotiation skills.
- Acting as a student mentor is also a good way of developing a wide range of skills. Four out of five volunteers report that this one-to-one activity is especially helpful in developing their skills and abilities to coach people, and helping them to improve by guiding and developing their performance.
- Getting employees involved in helping schools run enterprise workshops is a highly effective way of developing business relevant skills. Volunteers undertaking this activity report significant development across a number of areas – particularly leadership, adaptability,

team working and building relationships and networks. In addition, this is one of the most effective ways of helping employees to increase their business awareness.

- Volunteers who supported educational charities reported that this activity was particularly helpful in developing team working skills and the ability to build relationships and networks.
- Finally, volunteering as a school governor provides significant opportunities for skills development, particularly in team working, influencing and negotiation skills. In addition, this type of volunteering activity is extremely useful for developing hard business skills including financial skills such as planning budgets, business awareness and in developing technical and professional skills.

In summary, companies wishing to use volunteering activities to support and encourage the development of skills and competencies among their workforce need to look carefully at the volunteering opportunities they offer.

There will always be important "trade-offs" that need to be taken into consideration. For example, some activities, such as a reading partners programme, are less time intensive, easier to organise and perhaps more appealing to employees. Other activities such as a school governorship role are more challenging and require more commitment from employees.

However, the evidence here makes clear that alongside these types of considerations, different volunteering activities have the potential to offer greater or lesser opportunities for skills development. It is up to the company to decide how it balances the different requirements of its volunteering programme to maximise the benefits to its employees, its partners in the education system and the business itself.

## 2.6 Aspects of Volunteering that Support Skills Development

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Having shown that participation in volunteering offers significant opportunities to develop a range of skills and competencies, in this section we go on to explore what is it about the volunteering experience that helps the skills development process? Respondents were invited to reply to this open-ended question which generated over 160 responses which were analysed to identify the issues and draw out common themes. It is clear



that there are four major factors that are strongly influential in the skills development process. In descending order of importance these are:

- Being exposed to a new environment
- Having the opportunity to interact with a wider group of people
- Being required to take on a leadership role
- Developing empathy and understanding.

### 2.6.1

#### Exposure to a new environment

---

Many respondents cited this aspect as being highly influential in the skills development process. For some, this was simply the opportunity to develop new skills and competencies by undertaking activities that are not available in their normal working role. The following quotes are typical of many that highlighted this aspect of the learning process.

*“Working with younger people gave me the chance to test my leadership and interpersonal skills in a non work environment, which challenged me greatly and improved me.”*

*“Volunteering gave me the opportunity to develop skills by undertaking activities that were not available in the work context, or only available in a limited way.”*

For others, being thrown into a new environment meant they had to establish relations with and build trust among a new group of people – whether they were the students or teachers. This process was cited as an important aspect in developing their skills and competencies.

*“Having to continually appraise and adapt to situations that are outside of my normal day to day job putting me outside my “comfort zone”. These situations forced me to develop these skills more than otherwise they would have been.”*

*“The reading scheme required me to adapt my skills in a completely different environment and was an insightful experience.”*

*“Being in a different situation to that which is normal in my day to day job. This new environment allows you to develop certain skills.”*

Finally there were those who found the biggest challenge – and so the biggest learning point – was interacting with the pupils and students themselves. For these people, the volunteering required them to make meaningful connections in a different way; encouraging the development of new approaches to and styles of communication.

*“It is a totally different set of requirements influencing an 8 year old boy and helping him rather than helping an adult, most of who are already confident rounded individuals.”*

*“My communication and influencing skills improved as I had the different experience of trying to establish trust with children rather than adults.”*

*“Having to interact with children who are not always well-behaved is a good test for my patience and problem-solving.”*

### 2.6.2

#### Interacting with a wider group of people

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The second most frequently cited learning point was the opportunity that volunteering gives for working with new people. In some cases this is related to the benefits afforded by working alongside colleagues from the volunteer's own company who they would not normally work with.

*“Going to a school once a week with colleagues from other departments that I don't work with allowed me to meet new staff and learn about other roles.”*

*“Through the volunteering I did a lot of networking which has helped me progress into my current role of coordinating networks within the bank.”*

For others, the learning came from working alongside new teams of people in the organisation where they were volunteering.

*“Interacting with a wider circle of people and learning from others and the challenges they face.”*

*“Volunteering gave me the experience of working with people from another social, educational and professional sphere.”*

### 2.6.3 Taking a leadership role

---

For a significant minority of respondents their volunteering experience allowed them to take on a leadership role. For some, this was the first time they had been offered such an opportunity; for others it allowed them to develop their leadership skills in a new setting.

*“Volunteering gave me the opportunity to work within a team of people that were senior to myself and showed me that I did have all the abilities and skills required; and more in some cases!! I learnt how to apply and assert them – and have the confidence to become a team leader in a safe environment which built and increased my self confidence no end.”*

*“As someone who does not normally like to take the lead I found that the volunteering experience helped me develop my interacting skills and become more confident when working with others. I felt more inclined to put my views and opinions forward with the rest of the group of volunteers when I was personally involved with the process and mentoring activities. The more you interact with others helps your confidence to grow.”*

*“Being in a different environment, out of my comfort zone. Meeting new people in a non-structured environment where I had to take initiative myself and had opportunity to develop my leadership style.”*

### 2.6.4 Empathy and understanding

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Finally, a significant minority of respondents suggested that the most important aspect of the learning gained from volunteering is the need to relate to people in very different circumstances to one's own. To a certain extent, such responses are related to the process of coaching and mentoring skills development we identified in Section 2.6.

However, many respondents went further and suggested the challenge of working with young people required the development of a very different approach to managing, leading and engaging with people – something which they are able to apply back in the workplace.

*“I had to gain the trust and interest of a group of relatively underprivileged children of varied ethnic and social backgrounds.*

*This required me to gain some empathy, adjust the tenor of my 'mentoring' to gain engagement and willingness to participate. It also required me to develop patience with participants who were less able and also to build some motivation skills to keep the children's attention and excitement. These skills do read across into normal business life.”*

*“The experience taught me how to adapt in a multi-cultural group and highlighted the different social backgrounds in our local communities that we must all try and give to however we can.”*

*“Entering the alien environment of a school was quite a challenge (it's been a long time since I attended!). I had to liaise with a variety of pupils and staff of differing levels and understand their issues and challenges. I am a better listener as a result and definitely have a greater appreciation for different cultures to my own. This definitely assists in my day to day working life.”*

### 2.6.5 Summary of the learning process

---

We have seen that respondents highlighted four specific aspects of their volunteering experiences that have helped them to develop and learn skills and transfer them back into the workplace. These relate to operating in a new environment; interacting with different people; having the opportunity to take on a leadership role; and the need to develop empathy and understanding.

It is clear that there is a certain degree of overlap between these four areas. All four relate to the fact that volunteering requires individuals to step outside their normal working role and build relations with people who perhaps have a very different “world view” from their own.

The strong message from the individuals who have direct experience of volunteering is that these challenges provide a powerful impetus to the learning process. Skills and competencies that are acquired and honed through working in a new and different environment are more readily assimilated and seem to be more easily transferred back into the workplace.

This finding resonates with theories of learning that were briefly explored in section 2.3 of this chapter. The qualitative comments of respondents support the fact that volunteering is a valuable experiential learning process. It allows the volunteer to develop

skills, adopt new approaches and experiment with new management styles.

However, as previously discussed that for a genuine learning experience to occur, the volunteer does need to have the opportunity to reflect on the learning and have the proper analytical skills to apply their experience. This again places a responsibility on the employing organisation to integrate the volunteering programme into mainstream HR processes of appraisal and development in order to derive the maximum benefit from the experience.

In summary, those involved in this research reinforce the message that volunteering can be a powerful experiential development process that allows the individual to learn and develop skills and competencies. It differs strongly from traditional approaches to classroom-based management education that focuses more on teaching rather than learning.

### 2.7 Conclusions

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This chapter has examined the skills and competencies that are developed through volunteering activities. The key findings are:

1. The majority of the 546 respondents to this survey reported that volunteering has developed at least some of their skills and competencies across a broad range of business relevant areas. The specific competencies that are most frequently developed by all types of volunteering assignments are strongly related to an individual's personal effectiveness. These are:

- Communication skills
- Ability to help others
- Adaptability
- Influencing and negotiating skills.

2. It is very clear that different types of volunteering activities are better suited to developing particular skills and competencies. Some of the key observations are as follows:

**Student mentoring** is particularly helpful in developing the volunteer's skills and abilities in coaching and helping others to improve by guiding and developing their performance.

Evidence from those who have participated in **running enterprise workshops** reveals significant skills development across a number of areas – particularly leadership, adaptability, team working and building relationships and networks.

The role of **school governor** is perhaps the most challenging volunteering activity considered in this research study and the one which delivers very significant skills gains. Respondents particularly highlight their development in team working, influencing and negotiation skills. In addition, this type of volunteering activity is extremely useful for developing hard business skills including financial skills such as planning budgets; business awareness; and in developing technical and professional skills.

The most common volunteering activity, **reading, language and number partnering**, was particularly helpful in developing many of the skills and competencies studied here and particularly helpful in developing skills in the area of communication and influencing and negotiating.

**Supporting an education-related charity** was particularly helpful in developing team working skills, building relationships and networks, and financial skills.

3. Companies need to think carefully about their rationale for supporting employee volunteers. A balance needs to be struck between supporting volunteering programmes that deliver real social benefits, are attractive and engaging for employees, and offer returns to the business itself.

When skills development is a key consideration for companies, the evidence from this research clearly demonstrates which type of volunteering activities are best suited to the development of specific competencies. These findings are summarised in Table 3 at the end of this chapter.

4. There are distinctive features of the learning process associated with the volunteering assignment that sets it apart from more traditional approaches to training and development. Volunteering often requires employees to step outside their normal working role and build relations with people who may have a very different world view from their own. Respondents report that moving outside their "comfort zone" in this way is extremely useful in both developing their skills and transferring these skills back into the workplace. The results confirm that volunteering is a valuable experiential learning process that

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allows the volunteer to develop skills, adopt new approaches and experiment with new management styles.

5.

The motives behind an individual's decision to undertake volunteering have an important impact on the benefits they perceive to get from the experience. Among the significant minority (25%) of those who seek to develop new skills through volunteering, almost two thirds believe they are performing better in their job as a result of their involvement.

6.

In a similar way, among those whose volunteering activities are part of the appraisal process, the majority (58%) agree that the experience has

helped them perform better in their job. In addition, for this group, proportionately more report that they have developed the skills and competencies considered by the research.

7.

These findings reinforce the importance of integrating volunteering activities into mainstream HR processes of appraisal and development. Companies that make serious efforts to use the volunteering activities to develop the skills and competencies of their employees reap real benefits from so doing.

**Table 3**  
Developing skills through different volunteering activities

- ◆ Very effective in developing this skill/competence
- ✓ Useful for developing this skill/competence
- Less effective in developing this skill/competence

	Reading, language or number partners	Student mentoring	Enterprise workshops	Supporting an education charity	School governor
Adaptability	✓	◆	◆	✓	✓
Teamworking	–	✓	◆	◆	◆
Communication	◆	✓	◆	✓	✓
Influencing negotiation	◆	◆	◆	✓	◆
Problem solving	✓	✓	✓	✓	◆
Leadership	✓	✓	◆	✓	✓
Planning & organisation	✓	✓	◆	✓	✓
Decision making	✓	◆	✓	✓	◆
Helping others improve	✓	◆	◆	✓	✓
Financial skills	–	–	–	◆	◆
Building relationships	✓	✓	◆	◆	✓
Willingness to improve	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business awareness	–	–	◆	–	◆
Technical / professional skills	–	–	–	–	◆



# 3. The Wider Personal Benefits of Volunteering

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## 3.1 Introduction

---

In this chapter we turn to the wider benefits of the volunteering. Specifically:

- The impact of the volunteering experience on career development
- The personal impact in terms of improved self confidence, well being and job satisfaction
- Broader personal benefits associated with volunteering.

Before presenting the findings of our analysis, it is worth considering briefly what previous research studies have to say on these issues.

## 3.2 Existing Literature

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While employees volunteer for a variety of reasons, career development can be cited as an important factor. According to a Home Office survey<sup>7</sup> 23% of employees who volunteered listed the opportunity to 'experience career benefits' as an incentive to participate. This finding is in line with the results of this research reported in section 3.3.

Interestingly, the research evidence from America suggests that more employees see career development benefits in volunteering. According to a Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey referred to previously 86% of the 1,093 employees surveyed believe that volunteering can have a positive impact on their careers.

Employers too agree that volunteering can enhance the career prospects of their staff. There is strong research evidence from the USA which suggests that carefully selected volunteering opportunities can accelerate employees' routes to managerial roles in organisations as volunteering can be both a training ground and a proving ground for employees wishing to develop their careers (Pidgeon, 1998).

Much of the research shows that, as well as enhancing career prospects, the experience of volunteering often positively changes participants' perspectives about their job and the company they work for. Although employees' general attitudes about volunteering are not the focus of this research, it is worth mentioning these briefly, as they can translate into business benefits through improved morale, motivation and retention.

For example, research undertaken by MORI in 2003 found that 60% of employees involved in employee volunteering felt more positive about their employer, and 45% stated that their motivation and likelihood of staying are increased.

These findings are replicated by research undertaken in the USA which shows that when employees feel good about volunteering, they feel good about the company they work for. In one survey (Points of Light / LBG Associates, 2000) 94% of companies surveyed believed employee volunteering provides a way to raise employee morale.

In addition, a study undertaken by the Council on Foundations and Walker Information in 1996 found that employees involved in employer-sponsored community events are 30% more likely to want to continue working for that company and help it be a success.

More broadly, there is research evidence that suggests successful volunteering programmes can help in recruitment and retention:

- Nearly three out of four executives and CR managers interviewed in one study believed that a corporate volunteer programme significantly impacts a company's ability to recruit and retain talented employees and enhance the company's image as an "employer of choice" (LBG Associates, 2004).
- An employee benchmark survey found that 70% of employees with a favourable perception of their company's community commitments planned to stay at that company for the next two years, compared with 50% of those with a less favourable perception (Walker Information, 2003).

The following sections consider the findings from the current research.

## 3.3 Impact on Career Development

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Respondents were asked whether the skills and experiences gained through the volunteering made them better able to apply for more senior positions. As the data in Table 4 shows, only a quarter (24%) agreed that volunteering is helpful for career development.

However, it is worth noting that among the group of respondents who have their volunteering experience assessed as part of their appraisal

<sup>7</sup> Home Office survey of 10,015 people in 2001.

**Table 4**  
Volunteering and career development

The skills and experience gained from the volunteering activity	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Response Count
Make me better able to apply for more senior positions	5.5%	42.4%	21.1%	3.0%	27.9%	526

process, the proportion who agree that they are better able to apply for more senior positions rises to 42%. This reinforces the point made in Chapter 2 of the additional value of linking volunteering activity to the formal processes of assessment and career management within companies.

### 3.4 The Personal Impact of the Volunteering Experience

In addition to the development of skills and competencies, volunteering also has the potential to improve the personal development of the individual. For the vast majority of respondents to this survey, it is clear that the overall experience was positive, as reflected in Table 5.

These positive responses present a powerful argument for businesses to support their employees in volunteering activities. As a result of their experience, the vast majority of respondents report:

- More pride in the business (74% of respondents agree or strongly agree)
- Increased motivation (73%)
- Higher job satisfaction (69%)
- Greater commitment to the company (66%).

In addition, not only do the volunteers suggest that their experience was positive, they are also overwhelmingly more likely to:

- Undertake more volunteering in the future
- Recommend volunteering to a colleague
- Talk positively about their company as a result of their volunteering.

It should be noted that these positive benefits are attributable across the board in the sense that they apply to all the different volunteering activities respondents are involved in.

**Table 5**  
The personal impact of volunteering

The volunteering activity improved / increased my...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Response Count
Self confidence	1.7%	10.3%	66.3%	12.9%	8.7%	526
Sense of well being / happiness	0.6%	4.2%	56.7%	34.6%	4.0%	526
Understanding of and empathy with others	0.8%	2.9%	59.3%	35.4%	1.7%	526
Awareness of wider social issues	1.0%	3.0%	48.3%	45.4%	2.3%	526
Job satisfaction	2.1%	12.9%	50.7%	18.0%	16.3%	527
Pride in the company	1.1%	9.4%	50.4%	23.5%	15.6%	524
Commitment to the company	2.1%	16.0%	48.1%	17.9%	16.0%	526
Motivation	1.9%	13.2%	53.7%	19.7%	11.5%	523



Finally, it is worth recording that for 35% of respondents, this was their first experience of volunteering. For this group, the overall experience was also positive and there were no significant differences between the responses of people who were new to volunteering and those who had volunteered before.

These results indicate that our sample of volunteers were generally positive about volunteering. We have no way to tell whether those who did not respond to our survey were less positive. Nonetheless, the research demonstrates clear potential benefits from volunteering and the pattern of selective skills development shown in chapter 2 suggests a good degree of discernment and realism from the respondents.

### 3.5 Additional Benefits of Volunteering

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In this final section, we consider some of the additional benefits of the volunteering experience by analysing the qualitative responses to the open ended question – have you benefited in any other way from the volunteering activity?

It is possible to identify three broad areas in which volunteers feel they have benefited. These are listed in descending order reflecting the frequency with which they were mentioned. Each of these is considered in turn:

- Increased motivation
- Improved networking
- Intrinsic rewards

#### 3.5.1 Increased motivation

---

As we saw in section 2.2, much of the existing research on the benefits of volunteering highlights the increased morale and motivation reported by those involved. While this was not a focus of the study, many respondents used the open ended question to speak about how their engagement in volunteering increases their loyalty towards and appreciation of the company they work for. The following quotes are typical of many others.

*“Only a few of the top companies do this sort of thing. With my skills I could work for any company, but I would choose one that ran this sort of programme. It sets [THE COMPANY] apart in the communities as a company that is doing their bit for society.”*

*“Personal fulfilment and satisfaction with my job and the company.”*

*“It’s given me greater pride in my employer.”*

#### 3.5.2 Improved networking

---

As we saw in Chapter 2, volunteering assignments often involve mixing with new groups of people, inside and outside the employee’s company. This aspect was highlighted by many as one of the benefits of involvement.

*“Networking and meeting like-minded colleagues in the bank that I may not have met otherwise.”*

*“Volunteering increased internal networking opportunities for me.”*

*“I saw skilled professionals from other parts of the business I would otherwise not have met or had the chance to talk to.”*

*“I had the opportunity to network and build relationships with many other people outside of my normal work environment – which in turn has led to other opportunities and events which I have been invited to and enjoyed greatly.”*

#### 3.5.3 Intrinsic value

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One of the big benefits of volunteering highlighted by respondents was the opportunity it gives to do something worthwhile that is of real benefit to other people. This was mentioned time and again by respondents as the following quotes illustrate.

*“It gave me a sense of well being, contributing actively towards a social cause.”*

*“I value the personal happiness in giving back to society.”*

*“There is a personal sense of achievement and good feeling I have made a difference.”*

In addition, it is important to recognise that it is not just the individual who benefits from the intrinsic value of helping others. Several respondents reported that this “feel good factor” transfers positively into the workplace.

*“No matter how bad a day you are having, once you have visited the school you come back much happier and can have a more productive afternoon’s work.”*

### 3.6 Conclusions

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In this chapter we have considered some of the wider benefits reported by volunteers. The positive pattern of results sheds light on other aspects of volunteering programmes that may benefit employer and employee, supported by previous research.

Previous research highlights the benefits to the individual of involvement in volunteering in terms of career development. While some respondents to this survey reported this as a benefit, this was not the case for the majority. In contrast, the majority of respondents reported that their experience of volunteering made them feel more positive across a range of measures including:

- Self confidence
- A sense of well being / happiness
- Understanding of and empathy with others
- Awareness of wider social issues
- Job satisfaction
- Pride in and commitment to the company
- Motivation.

In addition, volunteers stated that they gain greatly from the opportunity to do something meaningful that helps others; and that through this experience they feel better about themselves and about the organisation they work for.

While the main focus of this research is on the skills developed through volunteering, it is very important that these wider gains are not forgotten or discounted. There is a large body of research<sup>8</sup> in the HR field that shows there is a strong correlation between employee satisfaction and work behaviours such as absenteeism, turnover and job performance. This current study does not attempt to explore in any depth the nature of these relationships. However, the fact that a large proportion of volunteers report improved morale as a result of their activities is likely to have a positive impact on their work role.

These findings highlight that a well managed volunteering programme can bring multiple benefits to the business and to the individual employee. In Chapter 2 we saw the volunteering experience is valuable in developing a series of business relevant skills and competencies. In this Chapter we have seen that volunteering additionally brings tangible gains in terms of increased job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the company. Whilst it would be extremely difficult to quantify the value of these benefits for an employer, they should be kept in mind when considering the costs and benefits of running a volunteering programme.

It would be an extremely complex task to assign a financial value to these “softer” benefits associated with the volunteering experience that have been discussed in this chapter. However, it is vital that these positive returns are taken into account when we consider the costs and benefits of organising a volunteering programme.

We return to this issue in Chapter 5 when we consider in more depth the relative costs of running a volunteering programme with other more traditional approaches to training and development.

<sup>8</sup> Judge, T. A., Thoresen, C. J., Bono, J. E., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The job satisfaction-job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(3).



## 4. Corroborating the Skills Gain

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## 4.1 Introduction

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In Chapter 2 we saw that volunteering assignments can be a valuable tool to develop the skills of volunteers. Among our sample of 546 respondents, a significant proportion reported that they had developed skills across a range of competencies relevant to their work role.

Although these results provide a strong body of evidence, they have been gathered through a retrospective self-reporting approach. In this chapter we seek to corroborate the findings in two distinct ways:

1. Questioning the line managers of this same group of volunteers to ascertain an external view of the skills developed.
2. Looking at a smaller sample of respondents who assessed their skills before the volunteering assignment and then again after their experience.

## 4.2 Line Managers' Overall Impressions

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Much existing research in this field relies on the self-reported observations of the volunteers themselves, but it strengthens the research to compare this with an external perspective on these observations, where possible – here via the volunteers' line managers.

The questionnaire surveys were only completed by a small number of line managers, but the findings are nonetheless relevant.

Collectively, the line managers participating in this part of the research were responsible for 169 direct reports, of whom 25 people had been actively involved in volunteering activities during the past twelve months. Line Managers were asked both to assess the specific skills developed and to answer some more general questions about the value of volunteering.

One of the key questions asked of these line managers was simply: 'Do you feel the experience gained by volunteers helps them to develop skills and competencies that are useful to your business?' A large majority responded positively: 86% of line managers feel that volunteers do gain useful skills from their volunteering experience.

This is a very positive finding. Here are a group of line managers who have no direct involvement in the volunteering programme attesting to the value of these activities in terms of developing business relevant skills.

Building on this, the survey looked in greater detail at the line managers' opinions about the value of volunteering. We asked, of those that felt volunteers do gain useful skills, what aspect of the experience is important in the development of these competencies. The answers strongly reflect the views of the volunteers themselves that were reported in Chapter 2, as the following examples illustrate.

*"Planning events with external bodies and negotiating for resources. These skills help towards successfully managing similar tasks at work."*

*"Being aware of the context in which our business operates is important."*

*"Communication skills, teamwork and wider awareness of the business environment."*

*"Volunteering has developed their ability to deal with other people, and in potentially difficult situations."*

Similar to those identified by the volunteers themselves, one of the themes to emerge is the value of developing and applying skills and competencies in new situations outside the workplace. This not only presents an additional challenge for the volunteer, but allows them to learn more about the community in which the business operates.

We also asked line managers if there were any aspects of volunteering that are not helpful for the business. The only responses we received to this question concerned the overall effectiveness of volunteering as a means of developing skills, already seen to be a minority view. The following response illustrates this point well.

*"I believe it might be possible for volunteers to develop new skills, but I have yet to see the evidence from the people who report into me."*

No line managers reported serious concerns about the value of volunteering to the business. This is not simply due to a response bias, with managers only responding favourably – as can be seen in the following sections looking at their perspectives on the specific skills developed, they were very discerning in judging the effectiveness and value of volunteering.

## 4.2.1 Developing specific skills and competencies

As can be seen from Table 6, a significant proportion of managers reported that, for certain skills and competencies, they saw no difference in the development of their line reports who had been volunteering. At first sight, this may appear to be disappointing – especially for those respondents who had themselves reported a positive skills gain from their volunteering experience. However, a closer examination of the results reveals an important pattern of evidence.

Line managers recognise that their direct reports are developing their skills in five key areas as a direct result of the volunteering experience. These areas are:

- Adaptability (57% of line managers asserted that their direct reports had undergone some or significant skills development in this area)
- Team working (52%)
- Willingness to continually improve (47%)
- Ability to build relationships and networks (37%)
- Communication skills (31%).

It should be noted that there is a strong overlap between these five skill areas and those identified as areas of development by the volunteers themselves in Chapter 2. In addition, it is possible to examine the responses in more depth at the level of the individual company. This shows that within the same company, both line managers and volunteers are reporting that they have observed skills gains in the same areas – particularly adaptability, team working and communication skills.

For other areas such as leadership, influencing and negotiating, problem solving, and planning and organisation skills, the picture is similar. Line managers report that between one in five and one in three of their staff are developing their skills in these areas through their volunteering experience.

It is also worth noting that the three areas where line managers noticed the least development or were unlikely to be relevant were the same identified in Chapter 2 by volunteers as the least likely to be developed through volunteering: technical / professional skills, business awareness, and financial skills. It should also be noted that there may be improvements in skills that would not be externally observable in a volunteer's work role, if these are not regularly called upon or displayed in their job.

**Table 6**  
Line managers' assessment of the skills gain in their reports

	No difference	A little development	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant/ Don't know
Adaptability	37%	5%	47%	10%	
Team working	37%	10%	21%	31%	
Communication	47%	21%	26%	5%	
Influencing / negotiation skills	37%	37%	21%		5%
Problem solving skills	42%	37%	21%		
Leadership skills	42%	16%	21%		21%
Planning & organisational skills	47%	21%	31%		
Decision making	58%	26%	5%	5%	5%
Helping others improve	53%	10%	10%	16%	
Financial skills	63%				37%
Ability to build relationships	42%	10%	21%	16%	10%
Continual improvement	47%	5%	31%	16%	
Business awareness	58%	16%	21%		5%
Technical / professional skills	63%	5%	16%	10%	5%

## Volunteering – The Business Case

The pattern of findings from line managers provides very important evidence. Although the sample size is small, this offers external corroboration of the self-reported results and adds weight to the business case for volunteering. The results support the finding that, for a significant number of employees, volunteering offers real opportunities to learn and develop specific skills and competencies that are important to their work role.

### 4.3 Assessing Skills Before and After Volunteering

Another way to get a more complete picture of the skills gained through volunteering is to ask employees to rate their skills before they begin the volunteering activity as a baseline measure and then to repeat the exercise after some time spent volunteering, here a few months. Whilst this approach provides perhaps a stronger set of evidence, it is also considerably more time consuming for the companies involved, and as a result a much smaller cohort of volunteers participated in this way – 31 volunteers in four companies<sup>9</sup>.

As can be seen from Figure 1, these volunteers were predominantly involved in reading, number or language partners schemes, or other types of student mentoring.

Looking at some of the other characteristics of this group of employees who assessed their skills before and after their involvement in the volunteering activity, the following observations can be made.

This cohort of volunteers is representative of the sample as a whole in terms of their age, gender and seniority within the organisation. However, it is notable that proportionately more of these volunteers had been with their organisation for less than three years. Perhaps related to this, is the fact that many of these people were volunteering for the first time.

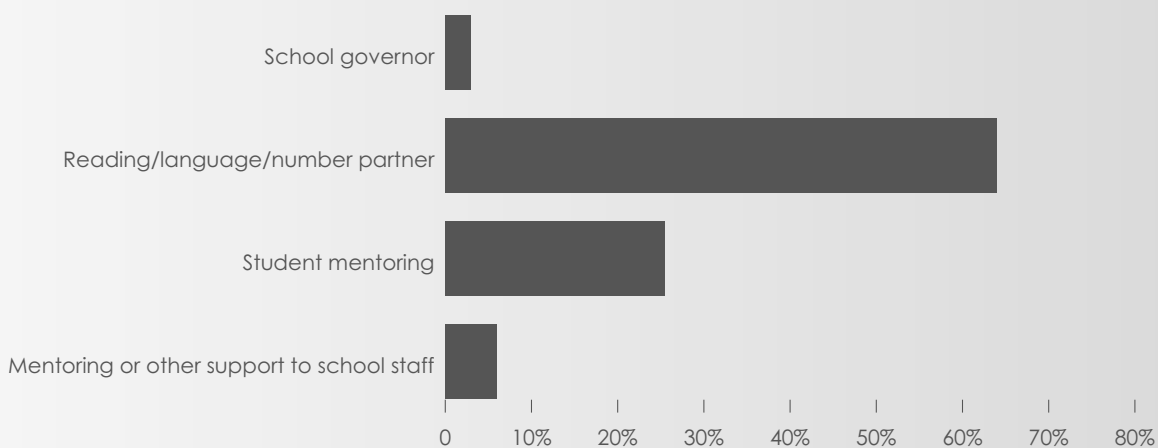
The employees were quite confident about their skills and competencies prior to undertaking the volunteering assignment. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 = minimal ability and 10 = a full understanding and ability) the majority of respondents thought their skill level was 7 or 8 for all of the areas under consideration.

Even though respondents reported a relatively high level of competence in these different areas before they began the volunteering assignments, they were still able to recognise some real improvements in their skills and competencies as a result of their experiences.

Some three months after their original assessment, having undertaken the volunteering activities for an academic term, the employees reported skills gain in the following areas.

<sup>9</sup> Bank of America Merrill Lynch, CMS Cameron McKenna, Deutsche Bank and Nomura.

**Figure 1**  
Volunteering activities



- Adaptability – prior to undertaking the volunteering assignment, 55.8% of respondents rated themselves as scoring 8 out of 10 or above in this area. After the volunteering, this rose to 82.1%.
- Influencing and negotiation skills – in this area, while 72.1% of respondents scored themselves 7 out of 10 or more before volunteering, 82.1% scored 7 out of 10 or more after volunteering.
- Problem solving skills – the volunteering process saw the skills assessment rise from 63.9% of employees scoring 8 or more, to 82.2% scoring 8 or more.
- Leadership skills – in this area, the assessment rose from 62.3% scoring 7 or more, to 71.5% scoring 7 or more out of 10.
- Helping others to improve – in the first assessment, 67.2% of respondents rated their skills as 7 out of 10 or more. After three months of volunteering, 71.4% of respondents rated their skills as 7 out of 10 or more.
- Building relationships and networks – in this area, the assessment rose from 52.5% scoring 8 or more, to 71.4% scoring 8 or more.

Hence, it can be seen that the skills gain took place across two dimensions. First, for these six areas, more employees rated themselves at the higher end of the spectrum as a result of the volunteering experience. Second, in two specific areas (influencing and negotiation skills, and helping others to improve) not only were more people rating their skills highly, but the mode score moved up from 7 to 8.

It is particularly noteworthy that the skills gained in three specific areas correspond with the skills gain reported by the larger sample of volunteers who undertook the retrospective survey. These three areas are:

1. The ability to help others improve (i.e. coaching skills)
2. Influencing / negotiating skills
3. Adaptability

This finding provides corroborating evidence that the more robust process of a “before” and “after” assessment confirms the picture of real skills gain among the larger population of volunteers surveyed retrospectively.

### 4.3.1 Other aspects of the volunteering experience

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The survey also questioned these volunteers on which aspects of the volunteering experience they found most valuable in building or developing these skills and competencies. Again, the results from this group reflect the views of the wider sample, as the following quotes illustrate.

*“Dealing with people who had such vastly differing backgrounds to myself and were of a different age meant I had to very quickly learn to put myself in their shoes and understand where they were coming from.”*

*“Definitely working with others and helping them to learn about new things. This has helped me with assisting and guiding team members in work.”*

*“It has made me more confident in adapting my style to different audiences, I think I am more conscious now of the forum I am addressing when I am presenting.”*

*“Being the leader of our sessions and being fully responsible for planning events.”*

Similar themes emerge to those reported by the larger sample as being important factors in reinforcing the learning process associated with the volunteering experience. These are: being exposed to a new environment; having the opportunity to interact with a wider group of people; and being required to take on a leadership role.

Finally, this cohort of volunteers was asked in what other ways they had benefited from their experiences. Again, the themes to emerge were very similar to those reported by the larger sample, as the following quotes illustrate.

*“It is good to be able to help out in this way, it provides fresh perspective and a way to change your outlook on life.”*

*“Gives a sense that you are helping the wider community and giving something back.”*

*“It has made me more aware that as well as being focused on developing key technical/financial skills needed for my job that I also need to work on my soft skills too.”*

*“Increased confidence, extended my network within my company.”*



*“Volunteering is a great way to contribute something back to the community. It always makes you feel that much more satisfied that you are being given the opportunity to help someone a little bit towards a better outlook in life!”*

### 4.4 Conclusions

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In this chapter we have looked at volunteers' skills development in two additional ways, using a survey of line managers and a before and after survey with volunteers. The results support the findings from the retrospective survey, discussed in Chapter 2.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of line managers feel that volunteers do gain useful skills from their volunteering experience. They observe measurable gains in the same business relevant skills as reported by the volunteers themselves.

In addition, the experience of a sample of respondents who assessed their skills before the volunteering assignment and then again after their experience, further confirms significant skills gain in business critical areas.

## 5. Understanding the Financial Costs of Development Gains

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## 5.1 Introduction

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The previous chapters have provided evidence of skills gains through volunteering in a range of areas relevant to business, which supports the business case for employers to run volunteering programmes. This business case can be further strengthened by considering the corporate benefits of these activities and the costs that they incur.

In this chapter we therefore consider how companies benefit from the increased skills and competencies that employees develop through volunteering activities. We address this by investigating two central questions:

- Are the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments of relevance and value to the companies concerned?
- How do the costs of developing these skills and competencies through volunteering compare with more traditional approaches to training and development?

To put these questions in context, we first consider what can be learned from previous research into these issues.

## 5.2 Existing Literature

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As reviewed in previous chapters, both our own and previous research provides evidence from companies and individual employees as to the potential benefits of volunteering. The key question now reviewed is to what extent the skills development gain by an employee volunteer contributes to the commercial success of the organisation. There is relatively little research evidence that moves beyond demonstrating the skills gained through volunteering to address this issue of the value to the business of the skills gain.

One study which does offer some evidence of the link between volunteering, skills development and the potential business benefit was undertaken by MSS Market Research (1992), on behalf of the UK Award for Employee Volunteering. This research questioned 101 senior directors and managers in major companies and found that 65% of respondents believed that employee volunteering programmes yield business benefits because they offer training opportunities for employees.

Another relevant study (Tuffrey, 1995) sought to develop a competency matrix that could capture the skills development achieved through volunteering assignments. The competency matrix was completed by a sample of 52 employee volunteers drawn from seven UK companies. The results suggest that volunteering activities can both develop staff and impact positively on business performance. Specifically the research found that:

- Three quarters of the sample (78%) said their own performance back at work had been enhanced.
- Just over half (56%) also reported that the overall performance of their business unit was improved as a result of the skills gained.
- Where corroboration of these findings by line management was possible, they generally agreed that performance was enhanced through the skills developed by volunteers.

While this is an interesting finding, the report does recognise that the sample size is too small to offer a definitive conclusion of the business benefits from this volunteering activity.

The research makes reference to internal studies undertaken by two companies – Marks & Spencer and the Nationwide Building Society. These studies found that volunteering development assignments (typically involving staff being released for 100 hours during working time over three months to undertake a specific project in a community group) both improved skills and allowed volunteers to perform better back in the workplace. Most importantly, the volunteers in these studies suggested that they were able to make a positive contribution back at work as a result of the skills they had developed.

Research from the USA also offers evidence that American employers believe employee volunteering yields business benefits. In 1992, the Conference Board surveyed 2,500 executives in 1,800 US companies (with 454 responding) about their volunteer programmes, and then followed this up with detailed reports on 30 companies (Conference Board, 1993).

The findings suggest that volunteer programmes can contribute to competitive advantage through cost savings in production, human resources and community relations. The vast majority of respondents (86%) either "strongly agreed" or "somewhat agreed" with the statement that, "volunteering provides training for employees". In addition, three quarters of respondents (74%) said

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that volunteering seems to lead to increased productivity of employees.

These studies highlight the potential value of using volunteering as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, more traditional approaches to training and development. Another study looking specifically at the relative merits of volunteering versus other forms of training, questioned HR managers on its perceived value in skills development (IVR Research Bulletin, 2005).

The research found that only two percent of HR managers felt that incorporating volunteering activities that draw upon business skills and expertise in the company's training and development programme would cost more than other development opportunities currently on offer. The largest proportion of respondents (28%) felt this would cost the same as traditional development activities while 16% felt it would cost less.

It is worth noting, however, that the majority of HR managers participating in this research (54%) felt they were unable to provide any insight into the cost effectiveness of using volunteering as a method of skills development compared to other methods of learning, probably because the costs of volunteering were unknown.

The findings reported in the following sections address precisely this question about the relative cost effectiveness of different skills development approaches – how does the cost of developing skills through volunteering compare to the cost of developing the same set of skills through traditional training programmes?

### 5.3 Our Approach to the Research Question

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Before analysing the data gathered from participating companies, it is important to make a few observations about the methodological approach to calculating and comparing the costs of skills gained through volunteering and the costs of more traditional forms of training and development.

Whilst the previous chapters have demonstrated perceived skills gains in volunteers, it is important to recognise that any observed improvement does not necessarily constitute a benefit to the company per se. Therefore it is necessary to first establish whether the skills developed contribute to the success of the business.

To address this issue, we asked HR professionals in the companies involved in the research three questions:

- Are the skills gained through volunteering relevant to your business?
- Do these skills feature in your core competency framework?
- Do you offer training and development opportunities for people in these skills and competencies?

Clearly, any potential business benefits are dependent on companies responding positively to these questions.

The second question addressed here is how the costs involved in developing skills through volunteering compare with the costs involved in enhancing these same skills through more traditional training and development routes.

The research was designed to calculate the full cost of the volunteering route to staff development accurately, and so that it could stand comparison with an assessment of the costs of other routes of staff development. Hence companies were asked to provide data on the costs of running a training and development department and the cost of running an employee volunteering programme. It should be noted that this includes the full cost of managing and running volunteering programmes (as it is not possible to separate out only those parts relevant to skills development, for example).

The research asked companies to provide detailed and commercially sensitive information. For this reason, the results in this Chapter are reported at an aggregate level. Where individual returns are referred to, the companies in question are not identified. In total, we received information from seven of the companies involved in the research.

The following sections look in more detail at the responses to the research questions laid out here.

### 5.4 Building Skills through Training and Development

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In this section, we look at the data we received from HR managers on how they develop skills and competencies through traditional training and development routes.

## 5.4.1 Relevance of the skills developed

We received the data returns from four HR departments. These provided the following information:

- HR managers reported that all of the skills and competencies identified in our survey are of relevance to their businesses, which was to be hoped, given the involvement of HR professionals in the design and testing of the competency matrix.
- Three of the four companies also reported that all of these competencies feature in their own frameworks. The fourth company, a multinational organisation, reported that it does not have “a distinct competency framework for all [of the company]” but the different frameworks they use “will cover many if not all of these areas”.
- To reinforce the importance of these competencies to the business, training was provided in nearly all of the skill areas by most of the companies. The only exceptions were one company which did not provide training in “adaptability”; and another which did not provide training in “adaptability”, “helping others to improve” and “continuous improvement”.

It is interesting that two of the four companies do not provide training in adaptability, defined here as being effective in different surroundings and with different tasks, responsibilities and people. It is legitimate to question the extent to which it is possible to develop this skill through a traditional training programme. It might well be that

undertaking a volunteering assignment offers a valuable development opportunity in this respect.

In summary, the responses here support the case that the skills employees develop through their volunteering experience are of real value to the business in driving forward aspects of individual performance that are of relevance to their mainstream role within the company.

## 5.4.2 Number of people trained

Three of the four companies were able to provide data on how many UK-based employees received training in these relevant areas. In one company, 85% of the staff (23,226 people) “undertook some form of classroom based or online learning during the past twelve months” in the skills areas relevant to this research.

Another firm calculated that 1,880 employees were trained in relevant skills areas, representing 23% of the total UK workforce. The third company had 99 employees undertaking training and development in the skills areas identified, representing 6% of their UK employees.

From the data available, the following four skills areas are the most frequently developed in terms of the proportion of employees attending training programmes:

- Building business awareness – understand the context in which an organisation operates, the mission/vision and external constraints (undertaken by 42% of all employees in participating companies).

<sup>10</sup> This is an indicative list of data that companies were asked to provide. However, different companies provided different sub-sets of this information.

**Table 7**  
Comparing the costs of skills development<sup>10</sup>

Costs of supporting volunteering	Costs of training and development
Management time in running volunteering programmes	The direct costs of delivering the specific training event
Costs of any brokerage service	Incidental costs like travel and subsistence
Other costs (e.g. CRB checks)	Costs of evaluation
Expenses paid for volunteers to travel to and from schools/colleges, etc.	Lost time due to absence from work
Costs of training undertaken to prepare the volunteers	
Lost time due to absence from work	

- Influencing / negotiation skills – influence and persuade others, resolve conflicts and negotiate agreed solutions (22%).
- Planning and organisational skills – set priorities, define targets, plan work so results are achieved on time and within budget (16%).
- Communication skills – communicate clearly and concisely with a wide range of people and listen actively (7%).

### 5.4.3 Nature of the training provision

As might be expected, training was provided through a combination of:

- formal in-house training programmes
- external courses and programmes
- other training provision (including mentoring, online and on-the-job training).

The relatively small sample size of companies providing data on this issue means that comparisons cannot be made about the cost effectiveness of these different approaches to training and development, and indeed nor was this the point of the research. Rather the aim is to compare the costs of "traditional" forms of training and development with the volunteering approach.

### 5.4.4 Costs of training

It is important to note that we received information on the costs of providing training in five of the seven areas that were reported as offering the greatest gains in skills development. These were: communications, influencing skills, building relationships, continuous improvement, and leadership. The two areas where there is evidence of significant skills gain but we have no data on training costs are the "ability to help others" and "adaptability".

Within the companies responding, the yearly costs of training an employee are shown in Table 8.

These figures relating to the average costs of providing training courses in specific areas comprise the costs of both in-house and external training provision. It should be noted that they are conservative estimates of the overall costs involved as they do not appear to include the staff and management time of people in the HR departments who are responsible for organising the training provision.

As an alternative way of considering the costs, we asked participating companies to provide data on the overall costs of training provision during the past twelve months to develop the skills relevant to this research. The responses were as follows:

- One company spent almost £140,000 to provide training in these skill areas, representing an average spend of approximately £1,500 per employee.

**Table 8**  
Reported costs of providing training and development

Competence	Average (mean) cost	Range	
		Highest cost	Lowest cost
Communications	£485	£620	£350
Influencing	£375	£470	£305
Planning	£510	£670	£350
Building relationships	£325	£350	£300
Problem solving	£180	n/a	n/a
Continuous improvement	£300	n/a	n/a
Leadership	£2,550	£3,500	£1,100

- The second company spent almost £400,000 to provide training, representing an average spend of approximately £400 per employee.
- The third company that provided data stated that its total learning spend for the year was £9.2 million, again representing an average spend per employee of just over £400.

As these are overall figures, the extent to which they capture HR and management time is unclear.

### 5.4.5 Training cost data from other sources

Given the small sample of companies responding to this part of the research, it is important to consider broader sources of information about the amount companies typically spend on training and development.

The most comprehensive report on this issue is published by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills<sup>11</sup>. This draws together many existing datasets from reliable sources across Europe including the most recent data on training and development spend which was produced by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) in 2004. As can be seen in Table 9, this data shows the average spend on management development across seven European countries, including the UK.

The average training spend per manager in the UK in 2004 was €1,625, or £1,470 at the time of writing. This is clearly significantly above the figures quoted by two of the companies providing data for this study, but in line with the third. It should also be noted that the CMI data refers to training and development for managers, where this study

considers training spend across the company as a whole.

It is, however, reasonable to consider that the average total training spend per person per annum in the UK may be considerably higher than the £400 figure reported in our study. This is an important consideration to bear in mind when comparing this data with the information on the costs of providing volunteering opportunities for staff.

### 5.4.6 Summary of the costs of training and development

The following findings and conclusions can be drawn from the research:

1. It is important to recognise that although the research survey instrument was the same for all respondents, the data supplied by each company differed slightly. However, despite these differences, there is a degree of consistency in the results of the analysis suggesting the data provided by the companies provides a relatively robust picture of the current situation.
2. There is clear evidence that the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments are of direct relevance to these businesses. Many of these skills feature in the mainstream competency frameworks used by companies to monitor and guide staff development.

<sup>11</sup> "UK Commission For Employment And Skills – Ambition 2020" (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Mabey, C and Ramirez, M., "Developing Managers: A European Perspective" (2004)

**Table 9**  
UK average costs of training and development

Country	Training spend in Euros per manager <sup>12</sup> (average per year)
Germany	€4,438
Denmark	€3,387
Norway	€2,734
France	€2,674
Spain	€1,803
<b>UK</b>	<b>€1,625</b>
Romania	€424

3.

In addition, all of the responding companies are investing significantly in training and development programmes to build these competencies in their staff – through a combination of in-house, external and on-the-job training.

4.

The costs of providing this training vary according to the skills area – ranging from a typical cost of £180 for a programme to develop problem solving skills; to an average of £2,550 for a leadership development programme.

5.

Among companies responding to this survey, the average (mean) training spend to develop employees in the relevant competencies is £400 per person per annum, although one of the smaller organisations in our study (with approximately 1,700 employees) is spending considerably more per capita. In addition, UK data from wider sources suggest the training spend might be much higher than this figure of £400 per person per annum.

### 5.5 Building Skills Through Volunteering

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In this next section we examine the costs of developing this same range of skills and competencies through the volunteering route, using data from six of the companies in our study.

#### 5.5.1 The extent of volunteering

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Among the six companies completing this part of the survey, just over 4,200 employees are actively engaged in volunteering programmes across the country. Of these, 737 are involved in education based volunteering in London, with the number per company ranging from 51 to 255, a median figure of 102, and an average (mean) of 123.

#### 5.5.2 Management time devoted to volunteering programmes

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The number of people directly involved in managing volunteering programmes in these six companies varied across organisations – from one person to four people. Interestingly, there is no direct correlation between the size of the volunteering programme (in terms of the number of participants) and the number of people involved in managing these activities. For

example, the largest programme (involving almost 1,100 volunteers across the UK) is managed by just one person.

However, this crude measure of the number of people involved in managing the volunteering programme provides little indication of the actual costs. To assess this figure, we first asked respondents to calculate the full-time equivalent (FTE) measure of staff running education-related volunteering programmes. This more meaningful measure revealed the following data:

- The average (mean) management time spent organising employer supported volunteering initiatives in education is a FTE of 0.72 (this equates to almost three quarters of one person's full-time role).
- The lowest figure for management time was an FTE of 0.2 and the highest was an FTE of two people.

#### 5.5.3 Management costs in running volunteering programmes

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The next step is to calculate the costs to the business of employing the people who undertake this role.

We asked the companies to provide data on the total costs of the staff who devoted time to managing and administering the education related volunteering programmes over the last twelve months. This figure was derived from salaries plus additional employment costs (e.g. NI contributions, pension contributions, etc.).

The responses to this question show that the costs (salaries plus on-costs) of those involved in managing volunteering programmes range from £18,000 to £80,000 with a median value of £45,000 and a mean of £50,000. These costs, provided by participant companies, included a couple of outlying figures, which distort the mean calculation. For this reason, and given the small sample size of respondents, the median average of £45,000 has been used in further calculations to ensure a more representative average figure of the sample as a whole.

It is possible to verify how representative these figures are by contrasting them with data from a wider survey about pay scales in the CSR profession in general. The latest such survey<sup>13</sup> produced by Acona, Acre Resources and Ethical Performance shows that the median salary in the

<sup>13</sup> "The CSR Salary Survey 2008/2009"



profession is in the region of £45,000 to £50,000. It would seem then that the salaries paid to people managing employee volunteering programmes in the companies involved in this research are broadly in line with those of people in the wider CSR profession.

The figures here refer to the total annual costs, however, and hence need to be adjusted for the amount of time people devote to the task of managing volunteering programmes. Multiplying the median management costs (£45,000) by the average time spent organising employer supported volunteering initiatives in education (0.72 FTE) gives the actual costs among the firms in our sample of £32,400 per annum.

By way of comparison, it is worth noting that the typical salary costs of an HR practitioner at a “manager” grade is between £36,000 and £56,000 according to a recent benchmarking report from a specialist HR recruitment company<sup>14</sup>. This shows that HR salaries range from £22-27,000 at the Assistant/Admin Officer grade to £77,000+ at the Director level.

### 5.5.4 Additional costs in running volunteering programmes

As well as calculating the direct management costs of running volunteering programmes, it is important to consider all other costs involved in supporting volunteers. Table 10 sets out these potential costs; the figures shown represent the average costs among all respondent companies.

It is important to note that no single company reported incurring costs for all of these elements – indeed many companies have few additional

costs beyond the management costs described above. As such, these figures could be considered to be an over-estimate of the average costs involved.

In summary, the data provided by those companies participating in this research suggest that the typical costs for supporting an employee volunteering programme is £14,475 per annum. This is in addition to the direct management cost of the people involved in running the programme, which was calculated in section 5.5.3 as £32,400.

### 5.5.5 Management costs per volunteer

The final stage in the process is to look at the overall costs involved in supporting volunteers on a per capita basis – in other words, how much do companies spend to support each volunteer in carrying out their activities?

This figure can be derived by the simple calculation:

- Management costs + additional costs / average number of volunteers = per capita spend

The actual figures are:

- £32,400 + £14,475 / 123 employees = £381.10

Hence, for the companies participating in this research, the average cost to support each volunteer is £381.

We can also look in more detail than simply the average costs across the sample as a whole. It is possible to make the same calculation for each of the six companies providing data for this element of the research. Table 11 shows this information at the individual company level.

<sup>14</sup> “Michael Page Human Resources Salary Survey 2010.”  
<sup>15</sup> Only one company supplied data on this element. This stated that the total costs for providing communications opportunities across the whole EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa) were approximately £20,000. We have not included this in our calculations of average annual spend as it is not possible to attribute this cost in a meaningful way to gaining support for volunteering activities in education based initiatives in London.

**Table 10**  
Additional costs of supporting volunteers

Items of expenditure	Average annual spend
Costs of any brokerage service fees related to education based volunteering (e.g. fees paid to Business Action on Education or other brokers)	£3,000
Direct costs involved in supporting the volunteers in education programmes (e.g. CRB checks)	£2,725
Expenses paid for volunteers to travel to and from schools/colleges, etc.	£8,400
Costs of any training undertaken to prepare the volunteers before they began their assignments in education initiatives	£350
Costs of delivering internal communications campaigns to encourage employees to take up volunteering activities	see footnote <sup>15</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£14,475</b>

**Table 11**  
Per capita spend on supporting volunteers in education

Business	No. of volunteers in the UK (approx)	No. of volunteers in education (approx)	Per capita spend on volunteers in education
Bank	300	50	£484
Law firm	800	255	£338
Bank	970	100	£335 <sup>16</sup>
Bank	700	100	£321
Law firm	500	75	£220
Bank	1 100	150	£147

This data is derived through the same methodology described here. Figures are collated for the management costs and additional costs that are attributable to supporting employees engaged in education-based volunteering activities. The sum of this data is then divided by the relevant number of volunteers in each company.

### 5.5.6 Summary of the costs of supporting volunteers

The following conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the data on the costs of supporting employee volunteering activities:

1. The direct management cost of staff who organise and administer the employee volunteering programmes is a substantial element of the cost to the business. On average, this accounts for two-thirds of the total costs.
2. There are, however, important additional costs involved in running an effective volunteering programme, especially one that involves interaction with children and young people in education. Brokerage fees, travel expenses and direct costs such as Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks all need to be accounted for. Together they represent about one third of the total costs.
3. Within the sample of companies providing data for this research, there is a relatively large variation in the overall costs of administering a volunteering programme. The most "costly" programme in per capita terms uses over three times the resources

(time and expenses) of the most cost-efficient programme.

4. Despite this variation, among respondent businesses the average annual cost to support each volunteer involved in an education based activity in London is £381 per person per annum.

### 5.6 Comparing the Cost of Developing Skills Through Training and Volunteering

In this section, we move on to make a direct comparison between the cost of developing a set of skills and competencies through the traditional training and development route, with the costs involved in developing these same range of skills and competencies through volunteering.

An analysis of the data provided by the participating companies shows that the cost to the business of both processes of skills development is broadly the same:

- In section 5.4 of this chapter we saw that the lowest estimate of the average training spend, among the small sample of companies in this research, to develop employees in the relevant competencies is £400 per person per annum.
- In section 5.5 we found that the average annual cost to support each volunteer who is developing the same skills and competencies is £381 per person per annum.

Hence it appears that both routes to skills development use a similar level of resources. Indeed, a strong argument can be made that the volunteering route to developing skills is

<sup>16</sup> The data for this company includes the communications costs of £20,000 excluded from the aggregate calculation.

considerably less resource-intensive as the data from a broader UK survey on training costs suggest the typical training spend per employee could be considerably higher, and also because the volunteering figures used in this research have been very conservative and include the full cost of an employee's involvement in volunteering and management. In addition, as noted previously, the data on costs for training and development do not necessarily include the staff and management time of people in the HR departments who are responsible for organising this training provision.

Hence, it is clear that for those companies seeking to develop core competencies the cost of doing so through volunteering assignments is potentially far less expensive or resource intensive than other approaches to training and development.

This is clearly a very significant finding:

- In Chapter 2 we showed how employees are confident that they develop skills and competencies through their volunteering assignments; and that this skills development is useful and applicable to their work in the business.
- In Chapter 3 we showed that there are a range of significant additional benefits across a range of factors including increased job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the company.
- In Chapter 4 we showed how the evidence of relevant and valuable skills gain is corroborated by the line managers of these volunteers.
- We have now shown that this business-relevant skills gain can be attained through volunteering programmes at a lower cost to the company than more traditional approaches to training and development.

This finding is the strongest articulation of the business case for supporting employee volunteering programmes that we have seen in research published on this subject to date.

### 5.7 Observations on the Findings

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Given the significance of this finding, it seems appropriate to raise a few challenges to test the reliability and robustness of the results presented above. Specifically we consider two important issues:

1. Have we accounted for all the costs involved in the different approaches to skills development?
2. Are we comparing like with like in considering the competencies acquired through the different routes to skills development?

#### 5.7.1 Accounting for all costs

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As far as possible, the research survey asked respondent companies to collect information on the total costs involved in running volunteering programmes and organising training and development programmes.

Most companies were able to provide a full breakdown of the costs – both direct management time and indirect expenses – associated with running their volunteering programmes. We are therefore confident that the average costs for supporting volunteers outlined in section 5.5 of this chapter are accurate.

In considering the costs of training and development, all companies were able to provide data on the direct costs of training programmes – whether these were provided in-house or externally. It could be argued, however, that the fixed costs associated with the overall provision of training and development (i.e. that proportion of the management costs of the HR department that organises staff development) were not explicitly identified or accounted for.

It is possible that such costs are charged to a central staff development budget and do not appear in the figures supplied by respondents to this survey. If this is the case, this reinforces the argument that developing skills through volunteering programmes is less costly to the business than other forms of training and development.

In addition to these "overhead" costs, there is one further element that could be included in the

**Table 12**  
Approximate value of time “lost” to volunteering

Total hours spent volunteering in work time per annum	Cost per hour	Total annual cost
2,345	£42.00	£98,490
1,409	£21.43	£30,194
877	£24.50	£21,486
591	£24.85	£14,711

calculations. This relates to the time lost due to absence from work – whether this is to attend a training programme or participate in a volunteering assignment.

The survey instrument used for this research did ask companies to account for the number of hours employees spent on company supported educational volunteering activities during work time. In addition, it also asked companies to indicate the average hourly costs of employees (salaries and on-costs). Complete data on these two elements were provided by four companies, as shown in Table 12. In total, these four companies have 484 employees actively engaged in education related volunteering activities.

This shows a wide variance in the “lost” time spent volunteering. These data can be interpreted in a number of ways:

- The average (mean) number of hours employees spend volunteering is no more than 11 hours per year – approximately one and a half days.
- Using an average salary figure of £28.20 per hour (the mean of the salary data provided by respondent companies, as shown in Table 12), the per capita value of time spent away from work during volunteering assignments is £310.
- Among this small sample, the average total costs for employee time spent volunteering in education programmes is £41,220 per annum.

While these figures are interesting, it was not possible to ascertain how much time (or the value of that time) employees spent participating in other training and development activities and this remains an area for further investigation.

### 5.7.2 Comparing like with like

Turning to the second issue for consideration, it is legitimate to ask the question whether the skills and competencies developed through volunteering are the same as those acquired on traditional training programmes?

The analysis throughout this chapter has highlighted specifically which skills and competencies are under consideration. To a very large extent, the respondent companies were clear that they are concerned about the development of precisely the same set of competencies.

However, when we consider the costs of skills development, it is clear that certain competencies are more difficult, time consuming and costly to develop. For example, we saw in Table 8 the wide difference between the cost of a typical leadership programme and the cost of a typical programme on problem solving.

Such differences come as no surprise and simply reflect the different factors that contribute towards the costs of training and development programmes. These include:

- The nature of the subject matter being taught and whether the aim is to impart knowledge (e.g. problem solving techniques) or develop broader competencies (approaches to leadership)
- The length of the programme
- The skills and experience required of the trainer or facilitator.

While this research has captured the different costs of training programmes which develop skills and competencies in specific areas, it has not been possible to ascertain the costs of organising and

administering different types of volunteering activities. That is, it has not been possible to differentiate the costs of organising a school governorship, for example, with those of running a reading programme. (It should not be forgotten that in Chapter 2 we saw that different volunteering activities are better at developing different skills and competencies).

However, the fact that we are only able to present data at the aggregate level, by showing the average costs for managing all types of volunteering activities, does not invalidate in any way the conclusions of this research. This simply flags up another area for further investigation if we are to present a more complete picture of the overall cost effectiveness of the various alternative methods to developing skills and competencies.

### 5.8 Conducting a Full Cost / Benefit Analysis

In this penultimate section, we consider how future research can build on the findings from this study. The analysis undertaken in this study is obviously based on a cost comparison alone. One clear direction for further investigation is to move beyond the comparative costs of different approaches to skills development to conduct a complete analysis of the costs and benefits involved.

In other words, do the benefits of the skills gained outweigh the cost of their development? By looking more closely at this issue, one can create a more complete picture of the relative cost effectiveness of acquiring skills through volunteering assignments and training programmes.

Obtaining an understanding of the benefits of skills development is relatively straight forward in principle, but can potentially be extremely difficult in practice. In theory, the approach to calculating the benefits derived from any training and development intervention would typically involve the following four steps:

1. Measure an individual's ability to perform a task or carry out their work role prior to undertaking training
2. Individual participates in the training intervention
3. Reassess the person's ability to perform the task or carry out their work role

4. Isolate the improvement in the individual's performance attributable to the skills and competencies gained through the training.

Assuming steps one to four can be achieved, it would then be necessary to assign a financial value to the performance improvement observed. The precise nature of the financial benefits will vary according to someone's role within the organisation, but examples might include:

- increased productivity
- higher sales
- better quality output and/or lower error rates
- improved customer satisfaction rates.

Where the training outcome is not so clear, for example an improved general management skill such as leadership, an alternative approach is needed based on estimating the value added by the training intervention. The research evidence suggests that understanding the tangible benefits of training and development requires assumptions to be made and can be largely a question of judgement.

Not surprisingly, this whole area of assessing the return on investment from training and development has exercised academics for many years (Charlton, 2005<sup>14</sup>). While it is relatively uncomplicated to determine the costs of developing skills, the benefits are often diffuse, are only realised over time and cannot always be costed. Because of this, many would argue that conventional approaches to training and development are often inadequately assessed. It is simply widely accepted that training is a "good thing".

It is clear that the difficulties in assessing the business gains of skills development apply equally to volunteering assignments as to traditional approaches to training. As such, while it would be valuable to assess both the costs and the benefits of developing skills through volunteering, one must be careful to avoid setting higher standards for assessing this area of activity than applies to traditional training and development.

<sup>14</sup> Charlton, K. (2005) Seeking The Holy Grail of Return on Investment, *Communique*, p. 2, Summer

### 5.9 Conclusions

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Much of the research to date has offered evidence that employees are able to develop and acquire skills through volunteering assignments. This evidence has been confirmed by the current study.

In addition, in this Chapter we have moved a step further in the analysis by addressing two specific questions:

- Are the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments of relevance and value to the companies concerned?
- Are the costs of developing these skills and competencies through volunteering significantly different from more traditional approaches to training and development?

In addressing these questions we have shown:

- There is very clear evidence that the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments are of direct relevance to the companies involved. Many of these skills feature in the mainstream competency frameworks used by companies to monitor and guide staff development; and all of the companies are investing significantly in training and development programmes to build these competencies in their staff.
- There are variations in the costs of developing specific skills and competencies in certain areas (e.g. leadership skills are more costly to develop). Despite these understandable differences, the companies involved in this research are typically investing at least £400 per person per annum in direct costs to develop relevant skills and competencies in their staff. However, data from a broader UK survey on training costs suggest the typical training spend per employee could be considerably higher.
- In comparison, we found that the average annual cost to support each volunteer who is developing the same skills and competencies is £381 per person per annum.
- Hence, for those companies seeking to develop core competencies – such as influencing and negotiation skills; planning and organisational skills; and communication skills – the cost of doing so through volunteering assignments is less expensive than traditional approaches to training and development even using the most conservative estimates.

In conclusion, a strong argument can be made in support of employee volunteering.

- It delivers real social benefits to partner organisations which gain from the advice, guidance, knowledge and experience of the volunteers.
- Employees themselves report improved morale and increased job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the company as a direct result of the opportunities afforded by their volunteering experience.
- Most importantly, this research has demonstrated that volunteering is a highly cost effective route to skills development that compares very favourably with more traditional approaches to training and development.



## 6. Case studies

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## 6.1

### Introduction

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In this Chapter we turn to a series of case studies from eight companies that participated in the research. In addition, we include a case study on Accenture, which has an interesting example of skills based volunteering in its Accenture Business Class Programme.

Thus far, the research study has largely concentrated on a quantitative analysis of the surveys that showed the skills gained through volunteering and the value of this skills gain to the employees and the company they work for.

These case studies move beyond this data driven approach to consider a more qualitative analysis of the direct experience of a selection of companies running successful volunteering activities. Specifically, we sought to understand in broader terms what lessons can be learned in designing and delivering an effective volunteering programme which promotes real skills development.

To obtain this information, we spoke to the CSR professional responsible for the volunteering programme, and a senior HR colleague responsible for training and development within the organisation. These interviews were informed by a structured discussion guide.

In broad terms, all the interviews followed a similar format and covered the following issues:

**The business case** – The perceived business benefits of supporting employees' volunteering in education.

**The link between volunteering and skills development** – The extent to which volunteering assignments contribute to staff development.

**Collaboration between CSR and HR functions** – How the two areas of the business work together to ensure volunteering can support skills development.

**Measurement and evaluation** – How the skills developed through volunteering are assessed and measured.

**Challenges and lessons** – How others can learn from the case study companies.

## Case Study One Deutsche Bank

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### Current activities

Within the company's UK operations, about 15% of Deutsche Bank employees are involved in volunteering across 30 different programmes including team challenge events. The company policy is to grant each permanent employee two days paid leave each year to volunteer on the Bank's programmes (at their manager's discretion).

Focusing primarily on education-based volunteering programmes, Deutsche Bank works with a number of partners to organise almost 20 different volunteering schemes including:

- Number partners, language partners and reading partners in secondary schools
- Mentors in secondary schools (involving face to face and e-mentoring)
- Senior management mentors
- Homework clubs
- A Saturday Supplementary School
- Learn2Earn and Personal Economics workshops
- Two school board placements.

The partners helping to organise these activities include CSV, Project Shoreditch, the University of Greenwich, Young Enterprise, the British Museum, Youth Sport Trust, Brokerage Citylink, Spitalfields Together and ELBA Legacy 2020.

### Programme design

In designing each volunteering programme, the first priority is to identify a real community need in the area where Deutsche Bank wants to take action – including pinpointing gaps which have not been filled by other initiatives. For example, the company found that in London there is a significant amount of mentoring activity already taking place in primary schools, but relatively little in local secondary schools. It therefore chose to focus its efforts on the latter where there is insufficient resource.

When designing volunteering opportunities, Deutsche Bank also seeks to establish what type of activity is of interest to employees, as well as ascertaining what is possible in terms of time and resource available. Where there is limited time and resource, an important recent development has been the introduction of e-mentoring. This is less time intensive for employees and enables the Bank to assist children at schools which are often overlooked because they are located further away from businesses.

Deutsche Bank is clear that community needs come before business needs in the design of volunteering programmes but there are examples of programmes that are driven initially by business requirements. One such example is the work carried out by the MBA intake. A two week gap was identified in the MBA training programme, which the Corporate Citizenship team was asked to fill with appropriate volunteering activity. The team developed a volunteers' consultancy service for community partners, where the MBA students provided support on areas for which community partners needed help. The MBA volunteers carried out a variety of work for the partners including feasibility studies, marketing programmes and reviewing HR strategies. Through this volunteering, the students were able to develop skills and competencies, whilst the community partners benefited from free consultancy services.

## Case Study One Deutsche Bank

### Working with HR colleagues

Staff at Deutsche Bank working on volunteering programme development tend to work directly with business units rather than going through HR. However, the Corporate Citizenship team is conscious of the broader development needs of employees and aims to find the right opportunity for current and potential volunteers.

This means the company adopts a very personal approach to matching the employee with volunteering opportunities, and Corporate Citizenship staff within Deutsche Bank sit down on a one-to-one basis with employees and establish:

- The objectives of the employee
- What the employee has to offer
- Particular skills that the employee wishes to develop
- Areas of interest to the employee.

The results of this process are presented by the Corporate Citizenship team to HR colleagues formally at least twice per year.

In addition, members of staff at the middle and senior management level are mapped in terms of their performance and development requirements in a talent review process. Key individuals have talent development programmes established which seek to identify and fill gaps in their skills and knowledge. Volunteering experience comes into this process, and the Corporate Citizenship team at the Bank will work to develop programmes which can fill those identified gaps.

In a similar way, line managers are able to approach the Corporate Citizenship staff at Deutsche Bank, and ask for team building volunteering events which aim to improve the way their team works together.

### Business benefits

Deutsche Bank's well established approach to volunteering emphasises the benefit of skills-related volunteering to both employees and the community partners involved. The Bank has found that volunteering can improve morale and retention and that it provides a great opportunity for staff to develop key skills.

In addition to skills and competencies development, the Bank believes that its CSR strategy as a whole is a key differentiator within the financial sector, and that volunteering is an integral part of this commitment to responsible business.

Volunteering has been found to be particularly relevant to recruitment – the Bank finds it is increasingly asked what volunteering opportunities it can offer recent graduates – and believes that a varied and carefully designed community involvement programme ensures Deutsche Bank continues to recruit the best talent.

### Measurement

In order to measure business benefits, there is a degree of evaluation for all volunteer programmes. The level to which volunteers are asked to evaluate their volunteering activity varies between programmes, but usually involves a survey. Frequently asked questions include:

- "What skills have you developed as part of your volunteering experience?"
- "Has your perception / opinion of the bank changed since volunteering?"

Some programmes are followed up by face-to-face interviews, carried out by Deutsche Bank's main volunteering partner, CSV (a UK based volunteering and training charity) which provides the bank with a summary report of the interviews carried out.

Deutsche Bank plans to integrate volunteering more formally into employees' appraisals and personal development plans and to build awareness amongst employees of how they can do this.

### Challenges and lessons learned

Success in volunteering programmes at Deutsche Bank is closely linked to five important factors. These are as follows:

1.

The quality of partners and intermediaries is vital. Currently, the Bank's main intermediary is CSV, along with the East London Business Alliance and Young Enterprise. Deutsche Bank believes that every effort should be made to communicate and interact successfully with these partners.

The company has had both positive and negative experiences with its community partners, including the schools themselves, and has found that these relationships have a direct impact on the quality and success of the volunteering itself. In particular, Deutsche Bank has found that a good, engaged head teacher will have a significant impact on the success of a partnership.

2.

It is important that community partners really need the assistance that volunteers are offering. In this sense, it is imperative that the partnership ascertains exactly what is needed in the community, as well as identifying what the company can offer to that community. Companies which are serious about volunteering, and recognise the contribution it can make internally and externally, need to recognise that this comes with resource implications, and they need to be prepared to commit that resource.

3.

Obtaining internal buy-in is another important criterion for success. At Deutsche Bank there is good support from senior levels; the Director of Corporate Citizenship in the UK reports to the Executive Committee once every two months on CSR activity, which includes volunteering. In addition, members of senior management are involved in volunteering themselves.

4.

Engaging employees early in their careers can also be linked to future success. The Corporate Citizenship team within Deutsche Bank encourages participation of new employees by holding a presentation to new recruits every fortnight, and emailing new employees upon their arrival at the Bank. In addition, there are monthly volunteering newsletters, emailed to the whole company, and volunteering lunch drop-in sessions.

5.

Finally, in terms of the programmes sustainability over the long term, it is vital that employees receive feedback on their activities and know that their contribution has made a real difference. There needs to be a positive internal culture, where people feel they can utilise their two day allowance without negative reactions from peers or line managers about time taken off to volunteer. It is important to communicate across the whole company the positive contribution volunteering makes to community partners and the business.

## Case Study Two Accenture

### Current Activities

Accenture has a large volunteering programme and allows three days paid leave per year for employees wishing to take part. Generally, the company chooses to focus its support on skills based volunteering; trying to make the best use of the knowledge, experience and expertise of its people. As such, Accenture's overarching theme for its corporate citizenship programmes is 'Skills to Succeed', which refers both to skills development internally (amongst employees) and externally (within the community).

Last year, 2000 people volunteered at Accenture – which was 21% of its UK workforce. The company works with a range of community partners, including the Prince's Trust and Young Enterprise, and has identified five drivers for its volunteering programmes. These are:

1. Inspiring and engaging young people.
2. Enhancing the Accenture brand and reputation.
3. Driving strategic skills development in local communities and among employees. The main skill areas volunteering programmes at Accenture aim to improve are presentation, coaching and leadership.
4. Showcasing the ability of Accenture as a business.
5. Ensuring Accenture is considered an employer of choice amongst top graduates.

One specific "flagship" initiative that has been developed is the Accenture Business Class Programme (ABC). This was launched in June 2009 and aims to share skills through professional business volunteers. The programme offers free capacity building sessions to community organisations to help build their skills and improve their organisational effectiveness and efficiency. All of the materials and workshops are developed by Accenture volunteers and tailored to respond directly to what the community partners need.

In addition, the ABC Programme seeks to address specific areas of need within the company. Currently, the plan is to focus on the company's main areas of expertise, namely employability, IT skills and business skills. For example, in 2010 Accenture is launching a leadership development academy specifically for women. The academy will focus on skills which women are traditionally perceived to

struggle with, such as presentation. In order to complete the course and graduate from the academy, participants will have to deliver a presentation for the ABC Programme, thereby benefiting the community too.

### Working with HR colleagues

Interestingly, the team organising volunteering across Accenture sits within the HR function, rather than community investment or corporate responsibility. This reflects the fact that Accenture believes volunteering and employee development are closely linked.

Accenture is increasingly treating volunteering as a form of training, sometimes supplementing formal training programmes with volunteering activities. Furthermore, when undertaking training for a volunteering experience, employees can charge the time to their 'training' job code.

A key champion of the ABC Programme is the Head of HR, who is seeking to fill skill gaps internally, through the programme. A recent example of this link involved a group of trainees, who were posed a real business challenge as part of their development by one of Accenture's ABC community partners.

At more senior levels, the ABC programme has enabled employees recently moving to leadership positions to sit on the boards of community partners, giving them the opportunity to improve their skills and widen their experience.

Whilst including volunteering as part of employees' appraisal process is not mandatory, there is a specific box on the appraisal form for volunteering experience to be outlined.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of this link between employee development and volunteering is that the promotional material on volunteering produced for employees includes details of the key skills which will be improved by particular volunteering opportunities.

In this way, Accenture outlines core areas which all employees are rated on as part of their personal development, and then maps these skills against specific types of volunteering (for instance pro bono work or mentoring with Young Enterprise). This enables employees to choose volunteering

experience which will be most useful to them – and fill skills gaps by picking the appropriate opportunity.

Specific skills which can be improved by volunteering, outlined by Accenture, include delivering value in a non-traditional client environment, project management, innovation and event planning, among many others.

### Measurement and business benefits

After volunteering, all employees are surveyed about their experience and asked a range of questions, including some around skills development and engagement, such as:

- Did the volunteering increase job satisfaction?
- Did it improve job related skills?
- Does it encourage you to recommend Accenture as an employer to family and friends?

These surveys have enabled Accenture to put together some compelling evidence of the business benefits associated with its volunteering activities. Statistics gathered include:

- 92% of volunteers say they develop core business capabilities through Accenture's time and skills volunteering programmes.
- 87% of volunteers say that volunteering through the company programme increases their pride in Accenture
- 84% of volunteers say that participation in volunteering programmes increases their job satisfaction.

### Challenges and lessons learned

Accenture has a long tradition of supporting volunteers by providing time off during working hours for employees. The current level of engagement with volunteering awareness clearly benefits from this. Some of the key lessons to emerge from Accenture's experience are as follows.

1. The company places a strong emphasis on measurement. For example, the ABC Programme is subject to monitoring in terms of inputs, outputs and impacts of the activities. The whole programme was designed with measurement included from the start. Generally, Accenture believes that volunteering

should be a shared experience for employees, something which they can all draw a common benefit from.

2. To ensure long-term sustainability of volunteering programmes, Accenture prefers to build long-term associations with a few key strategic community partners. Accenture then engages with these chosen organisations in a multifaceted way – for instance interaction between the two groups in one year could include fundraising, mentoring, reading partners and cash giving. Most of the community partnerships Accenture has established have been in place for between five and ten years.

3. Accenture finds that the more strategic the volunteering activity, the more resource it requires. As the company chooses to take a very strategic and integrated approach to its volunteering, there are therefore significant resource implications. A related challenge is the changing nature and availability of resource requirements. In 2008/2009, when the economy was slowing down, there was plenty of time for people to devote to volunteering. However, since business has picked up, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit for volunteering programmes.

4. Accenture has a good level of buy-in from senior figures within the organisation. The Managing Director is very vocal in his support for volunteering, and the corporate approach is to lead by example. Some company executives are developing master classes in their particular areas of expertise, as part of the ABC Programme for community partners. The citizenship team believes that clarity in how volunteering is relevant to the business is of the utmost importance, and once this has been established, there will be good buy-in from senior stakeholders.

5. Finally, good communications are vital. To promote internal knowledge of volunteering opportunities and encourage buy-in, the citizenship team markets volunteering through community events and newsletters, which are sent out by the heads of departments. The team also ensures that all new employees are informed of volunteering programmes at induction.

## Case Study Three

### BNY Mellon

#### Current activities

BNY Mellon's Community Partnership Programme offers employees two days paid volunteering time each year. Across the company, participation levels in volunteering are very good. For example, in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region, 12% of the workforce volunteered last year, which was up from 4.5% the year before.

Traditionally, the focus of BNY Mellon's volunteering activities has been contributing to the local community and ensuring the programmes resonated with causes and activities that employees are enthusiastic about. The most popular choices have been in education-related volunteering such as reading partner schemes and CV workshops.

In the past, skills development was not necessarily a core focus when developing the volunteering programmes. However, it became clear that certain opportunities, such as being a team leader for events, offer great development opportunities for employees in leading and coordinating projects. The company now actively seeks ways to further engage people and use volunteering as an additional platform to broaden and deepen employees' leadership skills.

An excellent example of innovation in this area is work carried out by BNY Mellon volunteers as part of an external e-mentoring programme involving young people who are currently not in employment, education or training (NEET). This initiative enables employee volunteers with heavy workloads to keep up their commitments to their mentees by engaging with them online.

Another initiative involving NEET individuals is the opportunity to visit the company's offices and learn about different roles within the organisation. The aim is to build their knowledge about the world of work and raise aspirations.

#### Working with HR colleagues

Community partnership and volunteering opportunities are now incorporated in BNY Mellon's talent development framework, as an additional means for employees to develop their 'transferable skills' or leadership competencies. The partnership between HR and the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee is key to this.

Currently, community teams map out what opportunities their charity partners offer and then work with business and HR managers to identify how these activities may be valuable for groups or individual employees in skills, competency or knowledge development, as part of their ongoing development programme.

From an HR perspective, BNY Mellon believes there are many benefits from volunteering that are aligned with, and can complement, existing learning and development activities, including traditional course-based approaches.

A volunteering exercise not only exposes an individual to new challenges but does so in a very different environment from their normal business activities. As such, HR at BNY Mellon recognise that volunteering can be a valuable and powerful learning experience that has positive personal and professional development outcomes – a win-win for the individual and for the company.

Employee volunteering is not a mandatory part of employee appraisals at BNY Mellon, although there is opportunity for employees to include volunteering in their annual personal development plans.

#### Measurement and business benefits

Currently, the volunteering programme is measured using largely quantitative means. The hours of volunteer time donated by employees and the value of this time in wages is calculated monthly.

However, BNY Mellon recognises that the true value of volunteering is often more subjective. Given this, before employees undertake volunteering activities, they are encouraged to think about the skills which they might be able to improve or develop during the course of the volunteer programme.

In addition, employees receive a feedback form after completing volunteering assignments, and there are a number of questions in the annual employee engagement survey relevant to volunteering. Both these methods seek to establish how the volunteers have benefited from their experience.

The company finds that volunteering has a huge impact on the way employees feel about the company, raising engagement levels and improving employee morale. It is also thought to have a positive impact on staff retention.

For the past three years, the annual, global BNY Mellon employee engagement survey has seen an increase of 17% in employees' positive perceptions of the value of volunteering activity in the European region, and a 13% lift in positive perceptions of the company's general work in the communities in which it operates in Europe – both statistically significant increases.

In terms of the business benefits derived from volunteering, skills development is evidently a key benefit. There are also internal networking benefits, as employees can meet others from within the company who they might not have met in the office.

Employee engagement levels also benefit from volunteering activities. There is a significant increase in engagement levels among employees who volunteer, with 89.6% of those involved in education-related volunteering activities in London reporting that the activity improved their communication skills. Over 80% of those surveyed also felt that their pride in the company had increased and their motivation had improved.

Having an effective volunteering programme helps to increase the company's visibility and can also generate positive PR.

The Community Affairs programme is an integral element of BNY Mellon's business strategy.



### Challenges and lessons learned

1.

A key requirement when implementing a successful volunteering programme is a strong, multi-faceted internal communication strategy. Awareness of the available opportunities and how these can be accessed is vital, especially for activities requiring a longer-term commitment, such as reading partners for school children.

As the Community Affairs team is part of Corporate Affairs (which includes Internal Communications), the two departments have been able to work in close partnership on communicating volunteering information to internal staff. Last year, the two departments worked together on a film which was shown on the screens in the main reception area and sent to all the company's offices. Other promotional activity included poster campaigns, desk drops and details of volunteering activities appearing in a weekly e-newsletter for staff. There is also volunteering information available on the company's intranet.

2.

A second, related requirement is the need to reach out to middle management to ensure they have the information and tools they need in order to promote volunteering opportunities within their teams and communicate the business and personal development benefits. This is addressed in some part by a strategic internal communication campaign. The company also heavily publicises senior management engagement in volunteering activities which helps to encourage participation.

3.

This engagement of senior management has been appreciated as one of the strengths of BNY Mellon's volunteering programme. The International Community Affairs Manager holds a monthly meeting with the regional Chairman which includes details on volunteering activity. The heads of various company businesses and shared service groups also participate in volunteering each year and many participate in the BNY Mellon CSR Steering Committee meetings for the EMEA region which occur every six weeks.

4.

Finally, in order to ensure the continuing success of its volunteering activities, BNY Mellon provides robust training for employees who participate in volunteering activity. This training is often delivered by community partners such as the local education business partnerships. For example, volunteers engaging with students for interview preparation will first have a face-to-face session with the project leader in the community group, in order to establish what the key priorities and learning objectives are for the student and the volunteer.

## Case Study Four Nomura

### Current activities

Volunteering within Nomura benefits from a very positive culture which places a strong emphasis on making a positive contribution to society and sees community involvement engrained into the mainstream business.

Looking particularly at education-based volunteering programmes, Nomura works with a number of partners to organise a range of volunteering programmes including:

- Reading partners, number partners, French partners, science partners and Japanese club in a secondary school
- Business mentoring for students in a secondary school
- Chess partners and reading partners in a primary school
- School governors in a primary school and a secondary school
- Team challenge days
- Tours of Nomura
- Specific workshops around developing communication and employability skills for secondary students

These opportunities were arranged in partnership with the schools involved, principally Southwark Park Primary School and Oaklands Secondary School.

Some volunteering activity has been designed by Nomura's Community Affairs team with skills development in mind. This includes the Japanese club which was recently created with Oaklands Secondary School. It is hoped that this club will enable volunteers to improve their facilitation and communication skills.

Annual events recognise volunteering achievement by Nomura employees, with prizes for those who have made a significant contribution to the local community.

### Working with HR colleagues

In general, there is close interaction between human resources (HR) and the volunteering department at Nomura. The company has just undergone a significant acquisition and will be

investing strengthening closer alignment with the HR team in the year ahead.

The Community Affairs team is in close contact with HR when developing graduate volunteering schemes. Key areas for skills development have been identified, such as leadership and communication, which are targeted in the project design.

For example, the graduate Charity Challenge involves team based fundraising for selected charities. In order to be awarded seed capital for the challenge, graduates have to make a presentation to an internal board. Part of the programme is aimed at team building amongst the graduates and encouraging them to build contacts within the wider firm. The initiative also aims to improve presentation skills and generally broaden the graduates' horizons.

In addition to this specific programme, senior individuals within the company have on occasion engaged in volunteering activities as part of their personal development, where specific needs have been identified. However, this type of training through volunteering is done on an individual, ad hoc basis.

Going forward, Nomura recognises that some involvement with the community for leadership programmes is extremely valuable, but at the moment the programme is focussed on building sustainable volunteer programmes across each business area and EMEA coverage.

### Measurement and business benefits

A significant driver for Nomura's volunteering activity in neighbouring schools is to establish a connection with the local community. The company wishes to make a positive impact and recognises the benefits to staff and its business. A recent example illustrated 240% Return on Investment in terms of business benefits from an evaluation based on volunteering alone. With headquarters in Japan, there is a cultural emphasis on enriching society, and the concept of companies being part of their local communities is an important one for Nomura. Another driver for the programme is 'community' as a core element of Nomura's vision and value statements.

Despite this strong emphasis on supporting

volunteering for its own sake, Nomura does seek to assess the effectiveness of its volunteering activities. The company tracks participation rates of employees, sends out surveys to volunteers after they have completed their programmes, and attempts to assess the impact their volunteering is having on the local community. There are plans to establish mechanisms whereby skills development is measured specifically and the team are exploring options with senior management.

There are recognised motivational and skills development benefits from volunteering at Nomura, with employees who are new to management within the company encouraged to take part in the student business mentoring programme.

In addition, the company aims to recognise volunteering through line management, encouraging employees to discuss their volunteering activity during appraisals as part of the corporate performance management framework. This should feed through into the promotion process, where volunteering experience is considered favourably. The company believes that engagement with the community shows that an employee is committed to Nomura and is not only concerned about themselves as an individual.

#### **Challenges and lessons learned**

According to Nomura's experience, the key elements which support the uptake of volunteering at the company are as follows.

1. All volunteers are provided with training which includes sessions on why Nomura is involved in particular activities and subject specific information. Volunteers are provided with guidance on the students' curriculum and methods of teaching, along with child protection issues. The training is usually carried out by Nomura's partner organisations, who share further material with the volunteers throughout the year.
2. Ongoing support is also important for a successful programme, often involving the volunteer coordinator checking up with their partner school once a week. In addition, there are formal meetings every academic term to ensure activities

are running smoothly and to raise areas for improvement. The coordinator's role is important to ensure programmes are monitored throughout.

3. Nomura begins recruiting for volunteers in August, when the school is closed for the summer, but this ensures volunteers have been identified and trained in time for the new academic year. Furthermore, the workload of volunteers often changes during the course of an academic year. In order to overcome this problem Nomura paired up volunteers, so they could attend on alternate weeks, and created a pool of back up volunteers, called reserve buddies, who are able to fill in if volunteers are unable to make sessions.
4. An element of competition is often introduced, for instance, communication workshops facilitated in a Dragon Den's format and sponsoring a book design competition as part of the reading scheme.
5. Nomura recognises that for a programme to be successful, a suitable community partner needs to be identified and selected. Part of the process is ensuring the volunteers are working with students with real needs, who will make the most of the opportunity.
6. Senior level buy-in at Nomura is very good. There are senior executives on the board of Oaklands Secondary School and Southwark Primary School – the company's two school partners. At the annual volunteering event, senior partners present prizes and promote volunteering.
7. Finally, the community team at Nomura communicates volunteering opportunities throughout the company using a variety of different channels, including leaflets, a company-wide newsletters, posters, emails and champion networks. The company also markets volunteering on digital screens which have been installed in several of the offices, and through success stories outlined on the intranet. In addition, Nomura encourages its charity partners to go to the canteen at lunch time and be available to answer employee questions.

## Case Study Five Investec

### Current activities

As part of its investment in the community, Investec supports five charitable organisations which are all related to education, the environment or entrepreneurship. These are Arrival Education, the Bromley by Bow Centre, Community Links, Morpeth School and Starfish (AIDS education in Africa). For the purposes of this research, the two most relevant partnerships are those with Arrival Education and Morpeth School.

- Arrival Education is a social enterprise which engages 42 Investec employees in coaching and helping to deliver "Success Skills" workshops which are carried out in the workplace.
- Morpeth School, located in Tower Hamlets, has since February 2009 worked with thirteen volunteers from the company who spend 1.5 hours per fortnight mentoring students on literacy skills.

It is worth noting that Investec has only relatively recently (in the last two years) engaged in education related volunteering.

When the volunteering programmes were designed in 2008, there was no consideration made for the business benefits involved. The range of volunteering opportunities that were created focused totally on the benefits to the students. Investec was keen to get involved in volunteering in order to have a positive impact on the local community because it was deemed "the right thing to do".

More recently, the concept of business benefits has come to the fore. This does not mean the company plans to completely redesign the volunteering programmes on offer, but in future there will be a more focused approach, with fewer, more specific opportunities.

### Working with HR colleagues

At Investec, the Organisational Development department and Social Investment team are currently working together to develop a summer scheme for young people, which will involve volunteers spending two days off-site on the initiative. Initially this will be piloted as a small project, aiming to achieve wins on both sides. It will be developed into a more ambitious programme depending on the level of success.

### Measurement and business benefits

In order to measure the benefit of volunteering to individuals, Investec asks each volunteer to complete a feedback form. This form is due to be expanded in the near future to include more in-depth questions. The intention is to design one questionnaire for short-term projects and another for longer-term volunteering experience. The latter will ask specific questions about skills development.

Investec recognises the inherent challenge in designing this type of questionnaire as some employees might not have thought of skills development as a benefit before, so the survey will need to introduce the concept without asking leading questions.

When Investec began designing volunteering programmes, it did not set any targets. More recently, it has been outlining objectives relating to the number of people impacted by certain programmes and it plans to implement skill development targets too. Investec believes that volunteering enables employees to develop skills which the company would otherwise have to pay for through traditional training. In particular, it has found that volunteering improves the following skill areas:

- Presentation skills
- Engaging with people from different backgrounds
- Confidence building
- Communication – on a number of different levels
- Reading an audience
- Networking – volunteers help students to do this and thereby strengthen their own skills in the area
- Team work.

#### Challenges and lessons learned

Success in volunteering programmes at Investec is closely linked to five important issues. In brief these are as follows.

1. Good communication is fundamental. The partnership between Arrival Education and Investec ultimately works well because of good consultation between the two sides.
2. Flexibility and similar approaches are important. The partnership with Arrival Education is particularly successful because both sides were relatively new to volunteering, with small, flexible teams. This enabled Investec to plot opportunities, pilot several small scale experimental projects, and try out different ideas. Investec recommends that SMEs pick small charities to work with, as there tends to be better engagement and communication, and the benefits of projects tend to be realised more quickly.
3. Successful marketing is also an important area, including good communication with employees who will become enthusiastic champions by talking about their volunteering experiences with other colleagues. Internal promotion of volunteering principally takes the form of monthly newsletters which are sent to all employees who have expressed an interest in volunteering. This group currently makes up about 30% of the workforce. In addition, there is one volunteering email sent out per quarter to the whole company. Once a year there is a big, coordinated drive on volunteering involving leaflets drops, posters and presentations to business units.
4. The person responsible for volunteering reports into an executive director on the Board, which ensures a good link to a high-level support for programmes. Recently, two directors at Investec signed up to volunteer at a forthcoming project. To further raise awareness, the volunteering team also regularly submits reports outlining recent success stories to the Board.
5. Recently winning a Dragon Award helped raise the profile of Investec's volunteering programmes both internally and externally. The award brought recognition and increased buy-in from senior levels who began to understand the benefits of the programme.

### Case Study Six

#### Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP

##### Current activities

Freshfields education based volunteering programmes have, in many cases, been operating for the past ten years. A large proportion of these began as the result of a partner at the firm building a working relationship with a particular community organisation.

When designing or reviewing a programme, the initial emphasis is on ensuring that young people will benefit from Freshfields' investment in a particular community initiative. The two key aims for projects are to raise young people's levels of achievement and aspirations to seize opportunities for growth. A secondary focus is how Freshfields' volunteers can benefit from the programme, both personally and professionally.

Currently, the firm's key education-related partnerships are as follows.

- Redlands Primary School (Tower Hamlets). This involves reading and number partners with 60 employees each spending one hour volunteering every other week in term time, an annual careers day and an annual cultural trip for the whole school. In addition, there are three members of staff on the governing body of the school.
- Haggerston Secondary School (Hackney). Among other activities, this partnership involves a mentoring programme, an annual virtual Paris and Madrid day to assist those about to take their GCSE oral exam, the Citizenship Foundation Lawyers in Schools programme, hosting work experience visits and having two members of staff on the governing body.
- Cardinal Pole School, where Freshfields volunteers work with students on "Oxbridge" interview preparation.
- Career Academies UK, which involves volunteers running a number of workshops and hosting work experience events. A partner from the finance team also sits on the Career Academies UK advisory board.
- Sutton Trust's Pathways to Law initiative has seen Freshfields host a number of work experience students from state schools who will be the first in their family to attend university and whose parents are in non-professional occupations, all in the hope that they will consider a career in law as a result.

- Teach First, where Freshfields runs a summer work experience programme to assist those exceptional graduates who are currently teaching in challenging schools across the country. As a result of their time at the firm, these graduates help to raise awareness of the many opportunities the legal profession presents.

##### Working with HR colleagues

Traditionally, those involved in the design and implementation of Freshfields' volunteering programmes have had limited engagement with the Learning and Development team. It is interesting to note, however, that since becoming involved in this research study, there has been an improved relationship between the two departments.

While Freshfields does recognise that volunteers develop skills and competencies as a result of their activities, this has not been formally articulated until now. Going forwards, Freshfields wants to find out more about which skills can be developed and from what volunteering opportunities.

This will build on initial work the firm has undertaken which identified what particular skills are developed through specific volunteering activities. For instance, mentoring programmes have been found very beneficial to first-time line managers, helping them to develop active listening skills which improve empathy. In a similar way, Freshfields has found that acting as a reading partner has resulted in volunteers feeling a greater affiliation with the firm, which has increase job satisfaction.

As yet, there is no structured programme regarding the integration of volunteering experience into employee appraisals within the firm. Some volunteers do outline their activities in the appraisal processes, but the majority do not.

### Case Study Six

#### Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP

##### Measurement and business benefits

A survey is sent out to all employees when they have completed a volunteering programme in order to assess the success of the programme and establish suggestions for future opportunities. In broad terms, the questions included in the survey cover the following areas:

- Whether the volunteer has developed new or existing skills from participating in the initiative. This is assessed in terms of communication skills, leadership skills, teamwork and other skills.
- Whether the volunteer feels they have gained from taking part in terms of a sense of achievement; broadening their horizons, improving skills etc.
- The broader benefits of the volunteering initiative in terms of its positive impact on the community, motivating employees, benefiting the firm's reputation and so on.

Going forwards, the firm plans to ask employees more questions around skills developed during the course of their volunteering experience.

Beyond these issues, another important benefit of the volunteering programme is the opportunity it provides to build internal networks, by getting people from across the business together and encouraging them to interact. This is particularly beneficial in bringing together people from the fee-earning side of the business with those in business services.

In addition, volunteering is perceived to improve retention, through improved job satisfaction, and a greater feeling of affiliation with the firm.

Freshfields believes that the business also benefits from an improved ability to recruit good staff, as the firm is finding that high-calibre graduates want to work for a more socially responsible firm. CSR and volunteering are seen to be an integral part of attracting the best talent. While there is no formal measurement of this, there is significant anecdotal evidence to suggest that volunteering activities are a key attraction to new recruits.

A related aspect of this is the potential link between recruitment and the schools Freshfields has partnered with. The community programmes aim to raise aspirations of local students and it is hoped that in the future, students who have benefited from Freshfields volunteers might wish to apply to the firm when beginning their own careers. In recent years as a result of Freshfields' broader work experience programme, 15 people have taken up a permanent role within the firm.

Finally, measurement of the community benefits of volunteering programmes includes knowledge of the inputs and outputs for the programmes, such as how many hours have been contributed by the firm. However, the firm would like to measure the full impact of that investment in the future, for example how reading partners have not only improved literacy levels in a school but led to improved attendance at school.



### Challenges and lessons learned

1. Freshfields believes that stakeholder engagement is a key part of the success of a volunteering programme. Communication amongst the partners involved, including education brokers such as Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THEBP) and the Inspire Education Business Partnership in Hackney ensures that all parties understand the aims and purpose of the volunteering.

Freshfields ensures there are regular meetings with the schools involved in the volunteering programmes, and finds that partnerships are much more successful where there is someone at the school with a clearly defined role for exploiting relationships with the business sector, and who is proactive.

2. Sustainability over the longer term is enhanced by communicating regularly with volunteers and keeping them up to date with progress. Prior to getting employees involved, there are tailored internal communications plans for each of the programmes, which are sometimes targeted at specific groups. For instance, when recruiting for language partners, the firm will email all known modern language speakers. In order to encourage up-take, emails are often sent by the partner in charge of the relevant programme. Other means of promoting volunteering include 'lunch and learn sessions', often involving presentations by external brokers and current volunteers.

At the end of assignments, as already indicated, volunteers are surveyed about their experience. They also receive a summary of what was achieved and a 'thank you' email from the partner involved on that programme. In particular, Freshfields has found that providing information which shows how volunteers are making a difference is a great way to keep momentum up.

3. A key challenge experienced by the staff at Freshfields is around managing expectations. It is important that potential volunteers understand that the programme often involves a long-term commitment. The community investment team needs to make sure that schools are not let down, but at the same time, the firm ultimately exists to make a profit, and there will be limitations to what can be offered. In order to ensure that programmes run smoothly, it can be helpful to have a single point of contact at the school, and a good relationship with them.

4. Freshfields recommends establishing clear aims and objectives, to ensure that corporate and community partners have a clear understanding from the outset. The firm has found that it is important to establish what the corporate partner is able to offer, and over what period of time. Companies should outline what resources are available for the programme, and what the charity is entitled to regarding time and financial assistance. Companies should be creative about what they offer their community partners, for instance, management or legal advice for schools. Likewise, Freshfields has found that it is best to clarify what the firm expects in return for the volunteering, for instance, key numbers and quotes for publication in the annual Corporate Responsibility report.

5. Finally, Freshfields has always benefited from extremely good buy in from senior figures. All relationships have a partner involved, for example a partner from the corporate team is currently chair of governors at Haggerston Secondary School (a main community partner).



## Case Study Seven Société Générale

### Current activities

Within the company's UK operations, Société Générale is relatively new to corporate responsibility, having established its strategy in this area in 2006. The Corporate Responsibility agenda within the company was almost entirely driven by employees, with more than 50% of potential new recruits asking questions about Société Générale's community activity in interviews. As a result of this, the majority of Corporate Responsibility activity within the company is focused on employee engagement, including volunteering programmes.

Société Générale engages in a range of education related volunteering opportunities, including school partnerships involving help with maths, reading and French. In addition, the company arranges school governor positions and mentoring for students and senior staff at community organisations.

When initially designing volunteering programmes, the priority for Société Générale was to start small with an activity which would meet community needs whilst appealing to employees' interests and be easy for them to engage in. At the outset, there was no consideration of engaging in volunteering opportunities to improve skills and competencies amongst employees.

As the programme became established, employee personal development became a more important driver. As a result, Société Générale became involved in mentoring opportunities with the UK Career Academy, which were more demanding and provided greater benefits to employees.

In terms of priorities, Société Générale is equally concerned to ensure that volunteering benefits the local community and the business. In addition to the UK Career Academy, the company relies on the East London Business Alliance, BiTC and Education Business Partnerships in order to identify real community needs. The company then considers community opportunities in light of its business needs and what it is able to offer. In seeking to match employee interest and requirements with community needs, Société Générale aims to give equal weighting to each.

Going forwards, Société Générale plans to add to its involvement with primary schools, moving towards more challenging activities which will

result in greater business benefits in terms of skills and competency development. Its plans also include a closer partnership with one secondary school and an increased programme of mentoring opportunities.

### Working with HR colleagues

The corporate responsibility team at Société Générale engages with the HR department with regard to the development of training programmes. Typically, the head of CR will look at programmes which have been developed by HR and see if there is scope to add a CR element. Training which tends to lend itself to this kind of input includes leadership, presentation, confidence, listening and innovation development.

Discussions between the two departments have begun regarding individual development linked to realising managerial potential. HR identifies areas for development for individuals and volunteering can sometimes be used creatively to fill that need.

For example, the company sees volunteering as an opportunity to add a colourful and creative element to the development programmes of those employees earmarked as 'high flyers'. Société Générale believes that activities such as mentoring and enterprise development can inspire and add depth to an employee's experience in a way that traditional training cannot.

While there is a recognised synergy between the two departments, Société Générale has been working in this way for a relatively short amount of time, and has not yet developed a significant number of real success stories.

Regarding appraisals, there is no formal strategy for encouraging employees to utilise their volunteering experience to meet personal development objectives. When this does happen, it is on an ad hoc basis, and mainly amongst the HR department. This is due to wider awareness of the potential synergies in this department and strong top down encouragement, which is currently the subject of a 'Leaders to Lead' project to ensure all senior managers are active in CR activities.

#### Measurement and business benefits

Société Générale does not measure the outcomes or impacts of its volunteering programmes extensively, but where groups of staff are involved, reviews are conducted with the beneficiary, the supplier and the appointed leader of the volunteering team to monitor progress and learn lessons for the future. This is supplemented by interviews and email feedback for individual volunteers. First time volunteering opportunities tend to be more closely reviewed.

Currently, there are no set questions or formalised surveys sent out to volunteers upon completion of a programme, but in the future, Société Générale intends to follow up the Corporation of London/Corporate Citizenship surveys with its own questionnaire to volunteers, as well as evaluating their learning through line managers.

From the available evidence, Société Générale's approach to volunteering emphasises the benefit to staff engagement, morale and productivity. The company also believes that volunteering can improve certain skills such as leadership, presentation, listening and thinking 'outside the box'.

The company also believes that volunteering can provide a real benefit to employees who have reached a plateau in their career. In this context, volunteering can improve or maintain engagement in the company, and enrich employees' working lives in a way that other rewards such as salary and bonus might not.

Société Générale also values the reputational benefits of volunteering, finding that employees appreciate the opportunity to 'give back' to the community. Société Générale finds that volunteering often improves employees' pride in the company, and believes that offering volunteering opportunities will increase the company's position as an employer of choice.

An example of a Société Générale volunteering programme with business benefits is the partnership with ELBA's 'Represent London' initiative. Société Générale employees developed and ran seminars on CV and interviewing skills for young people, involving group activity and student training. Volunteers were given the opportunity to work with and develop a group of people very different to their colleagues or clients,

and this enabled them to improve their creativity, confidence and also their general presentation skills.

#### Challenges and lessons learned

1. The corporate responsibility team at Société Générale is small, and it is not always easy to allocate resources to the ongoing citizenship, environment and governance issues which fall under the team's remit. The UK team is also the leader for the Group worldwide in citizenship, so there are demands to share best practice with teams in other countries.

2. Addressing external communication is a real challenge. Previous thinking has been that this was not a good idea as staff could take a negative view of the Bank using their efforts as volunteers to boost the Société Générale reputation. The current view is that staff in general and volunteers in particular would take some pride in well crafted publicity of volunteers' efforts to help disadvantaged communities, so the CR team is looking into how best to achieve this.

There is currently no external communication of the company's UK CR activity other than via the limited information available on the Group website.

3. In practical terms, Société Générale's volunteering activities tend to be located near to its offices in Canary Warf and the City, i.e. in Tower Hamlets and Hackney. This is done in an effort to reduce travelling distance, and therefore the time employees are required to spend away from their desks.

4. The community team at Société Générale has found that encouraging participation at the businesses' smaller offices is particularly challenging. There tends to be more reluctance to allow employees time off in smaller units, where absence can impact more heavily on colleagues than it might in a larger office where there is more support. The company finds that more work is required in these type of environments to create a more positive culture regarding volunteering.

## Case Study Eight Financial Services Authority

### Current activities

Volunteering programmes organised by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) cover three areas: education, employability and regeneration. Employees are able to take up to 20 hours paid leave a year to volunteer, as well as an additional 7 hours for team challenge events. Approximately 20% of the organisation's 3,000 workforce are involved in volunteering.

Specific volunteering initiatives related to education include: financial literacy lessons; reading, maths and computing partners; help with CV writing; mentoring young people on work placement schemes; and supporting Young Enterprise programmes. The FSA has outlined two priorities for its volunteering programmes:

1. Engagement with the local community (external)
2. Development of skills and competencies among staff (internal).

In practice these two elements are given equal attention in programme development and both are key throughout the design process. Furthermore, every volunteering programme has to be aligned with the FSA's core business, which is why volunteering opportunities are often related to concepts such as financial literacy.

### Working with HR colleagues

Responsibility for volunteering programmes at the FSA used to be within the HR department, and the volunteering team previously reported to the manager for learning and development. This structure facilitated a close partnership and clear linkage between the two activities. There is a new emphasis on diversity with regards to volunteering, and the team now reports to the manager of employee relations, which has lessened the focus previously given to ensuring skills and competencies are developed through volunteering.

However, all volunteering activities continue to be monitored and tracked on an internal system alongside training courses; therefore employees are encouraged to think about volunteering as a learning and development opportunity.

Volunteers are encouraged to include

volunteering experience alongside other development activities in their appraisal forms. They are also encouraged to talk to their manager about what skills they have improved or acquired and what elements need further development. This is then mapped out on a personal learning and development plan. Generally, it has been found that longer term activities (for example mentoring over an academic year) tend to be better for skills development than short, ad hoc activities.

### Measurement and business benefits

The FSA seeks to establish the impact of its volunteering programmes on the local community and on employees. Because of the nature of the funding which the FSA receives, it is not allowed to engage in philanthropic activity. Therefore, within the organisation there is a real emphasis on the returns to the business of volunteering.

The measurement process is currently still under development, but generally involves gathering data on the inputs and outputs of each volunteering activity, which are then reported to the Operating Committee. This type of information is obtained through working with community partners and asking for employee feedback. This feedback is gathered through surveys which explicitly asks what skills volunteers were hoping or expecting to develop, and those skills which have been improved through volunteering.

The FSA recognises that the main business benefit of volunteering is skills and competencies development. Volunteering at the FSA is linked to the employee competency framework. The FSA also uses its volunteering activity to promote the organisation as a potential employer in the local community.

Internal awareness of the benefits of volunteering is good. Managers sometimes approach the volunteering department for suggestions to particular challenges they are facing. For instance, if a certain employee needs to improve their project management skills, or listening skills, their line manager might ask if there is anything appropriate.

#### Challenges and lessons learned

Overall, the FSA recommends that companies embarking on volunteering for the first time begin by establishing an agreed strategy. The organisation should then establish what needs there are in the local community, either through discussions with a broker, or through general research. Companies need to talk to employees and find out what they are interested in supporting, as well as establishing senior level buy-in. More specifically, success in volunteering programmes at the FSA is closely linked to the following important issues.

1. Effective community partners are an integral part of the success of volunteering programmes. The FSA works with Tower Hamlets EPA (education business partnership), which is a particularly positive source of support, with good account managers. Tower Hamlets also provide training for volunteers and help with problems encountered during the course of volunteering.
2. Good communication with partner schools is vital for the success of a volunteering project. Companies should develop strong, two-way relationships with their community partners – the FSA finds it is key to have a designated school coordinator for each programme.
3. Companies should be clear from the outset about what can be offered and what needs to be achieved by the programme. The FSA has found that it can be particularly useful to outline up front any important ground rules. For instance, before a mentoring session, the FSA has stipulated that the children need to have had lunch, and an appropriate classroom needs to have been booked.
4. The FSA found that focusing on a particular area or organisation can be especially effective, and recently moved from working with a large number of schools to concentrating efforts on a couple of key institutions.

5. When marketing the volunteering opportunities internally, it is often very useful to get staff who have already completed a volunteering programme to talk to potential new recruits. It is also important to celebrate success stories. The FSA volunteering department reports monthly to the Operating Committee and includes details of impacts in the presentation, for instance how many children have been helped by a particular activity.
6. The pressures of work can be a real challenge, especially where a regular commitment is required. For instance, mentors are often important because they provide stability in children's lives, and can act as role models. Missing an appointment with a mentee can have a detrimental effect on the relationship. In order to prevent children from missing out when volunteers are particularly busy, the FSA has arranged a buddying system, so that volunteers can alternate, and reduce their commitment to once a fortnight. There is also a pool of reserves in case both 'buddies' are unable to make it.
7. The FSA spreads awareness about its volunteering opportunities through word of mouth, notice boards and a dedicated intranet site, along with information posted on the 'usual' website. In addition, there is a Community Affairs Committee, which is made up of champions for volunteering. Committee members generate new ideas and aim to refresh existing programmes, as well as having a responsibility for raising general awareness of volunteering.

### 6.2

#### Lessons from the Case Studies

---

In this final section, we draw together some of the key messages from the case studies featured in Chapter 6 on how to design and deliver an effective volunteering programme. These lessons apply to the different stages of the process by which volunteering initiatives are planned and run.

**Selecting Partners** – When entering into a volunteering partnership several companies emphasise the importance of selecting the right partners and intermediaries. Deutsche Bank stresses that every effort should be made to communicate and interact successfully with these partners at the outset.

Freshfields recommends establishing a memorandum of understanding, with clear aims and objectives, to ensure that corporate and community partners have a clear agreement from the outset. Companies should outline what resources are available for the programme, what the partner should expect regarding time and financial assistance, and what the community partner requires from the initiative.

Furthermore, it is important that community partners really need the assistance that volunteers are offering. In this sense, it is imperative that the partnership ascertains exactly what is needed in the community, as well as identifying what the company can offer to the community.

In addition, to ensure the sustainability of volunteering programmes, Accenture recommends building long-term associations with a few key strategic community partners, rather than trying to set-up too many different initiatives.

**Pre-engagement training** – Many companies have found there is real benefit in ensuring volunteers are properly briefed and prepared. BNY Mellon, for example, provides training for employees which is often delivered by community partners such as the local education business partnerships. Volunteers working with students have a face-to-face session with the project leader in order to establish what the key priorities and learning objectives should be for both the student and the volunteer.

In much the same way, all volunteers at Nomura are provided with training which includes sessions on why the company is involved in particular activities. Volunteers are provided with guidance on the students' curriculum and methods of teaching, along with child protection issues. The

training is usually carried out by Nomura's partner organisations, who share further material with the volunteers throughout the year.

**Engage volunteers early in their careers** – Although respondents to the survey were drawn from all age groups, several case study companies suggest there is value in getting new recruits involved in the volunteering programme. According to Deutsche Bank, getting people involved early in their careers can be vital to future success. The community team encourages participation of new employees by holding a presentation to new recruits every fortnight, and emailing new employees upon their arrival at the bank. In addition, there are monthly volunteering newsletters, emailed to the whole company, and volunteering lunch drop-ins, where those interested can come and find out more.

**On-going communications** – The need to keep people involved and informed is an essential requirement for a successful volunteering programme. The case study companies recommend a variety of creative measures to maintain employee engagement.

At BNY Mellon, the volunteering team is part of Corporate Affairs and works closely with the communications team. Last year, they produced a film on volunteering which was shown on the screens at reception areas and sent to all the Bank's offices. Other promotional activity includes poster campaigns, desk drops, and details of volunteering which appears in the corporate e-newsletter and intranet.

At Nomura, interest in volunteering is enhanced by communicating regularly with employees and keeping them up to date with the outcomes of the programmes. There are also tailored communications plans for each of the programmes, often targeted at specific groups. For instance, when recruiting for language partners, the firm will email all known modern language speakers. In order to encourage up-take, emails are often sent by the senior partner in charge of the relevant programme. Other means of promoting volunteering include "lunch and learn sessions" involving presentations by external brokers.

**On-going support** – Most volunteering assignments in education require a regular commitment from the employee. For instance, mentors are often important because they provide stability in children's lives, and can act as role models.

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Missing an appointment with a mentee can have a detrimental effect on this relationship. This can present a real challenge for volunteers when they are confronted with tight deadlines and the pressures of work.

In order to address this issue and prevent children from missing out when volunteers are particularly busy, the FSA has arranged a “buddying” system, so that volunteers can alternate with others, and reduce their commitment from once a week to once a fortnight. To ensure the system never fails, there is also a pool of reserves in case both “buddies” are unable to make a particular mentoring session.

**Developing the business case** – All companies agreed that this is a vital element of a successful volunteering programme. One aspect of building the business case is a strong emphasis on measurement and evaluation.

Accenture’s flagship volunteering programme (Accenture Business Class Programme) is subject to monitoring in terms of inputs, outputs and the impacts of the activities. The whole programme was designed with measurement included from the start. At Accenture, the Citizenship Team believes that clarity in communicating how volunteering is relevant to the business is of the utmost importance, and once this has been established, there is good buy-in from senior stakeholders.

A related challenge is to reach middle management, who can be reluctant to support volunteering within their teams. At BNY Mellon, the volunteering team makes sure middle managers are informed about the business benefits of volunteering. This is done through a strategic internal communication campaign around volunteering and publicising senior engagement in and support for volunteering activities.

**End of assignment evaluation** – To ensure volunteering programmes are sustainable over the long term, it is vital that employees receive feedback on their activities and know that their contribution has made a real difference.

At Deutsche Bank they emphasise the need for a positive internal culture, where people feel they can utilise their two day volunteering allowance without negative reactions from peers or line managers about taking time off. To achieve this, it is important to evaluate the impacts of the programme and communicate across the company the positive contribution volunteering

makes to community partners and the business.

In a similar way, Freshfields has found that providing information which shows how volunteers are making a difference is a great way to maintain momentum and ensure good levels of employee engagement. Again this can only be done by ensuring that volunteers are surveyed about their experience at the end of assignments. They also receive a summary of what has been achieved collectively by the volunteers and a ‘thank you’ email from the senior partner involved on that programme.

**External recognition** – Finally, a valuable way of confirming the success of the volunteering programme is to gain external recognition. Recently winning a Dragon Award has helped to raise the profile of Investec’s volunteering programmes both internally and externally. The award brought recognition and increased buy-in from senior managers who understood better the benefits of the programme.



# 7. Conclusions

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## 7.1

### Introduction

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Here we draw together the main findings from this extensive study:

- How volunteering contributes to skills development.
- Lessons on the evaluation tools used to assess skills development.

## 7.2

### Lessons from the Research Findings

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The starting point is that the research has shown that employee volunteers engaged in education based initiatives do experience tangible skills development through their volunteering experience.

1. As we saw in Chapter 2, the majority of the 546 respondents to this survey reported that volunteering developed their skills and competencies across a broad range of business relevant areas. These competencies are strongly related to an individual's personal effectiveness in their work role and include:

- Communication skills, including the ability to communicate clearly and concisely with a wide range of people, and to listen actively.
- Ability to help others, set individual performance goals, coach and counsel, provide training and development and evaluate performance.
- Adaptability and ability to be effective in different surroundings and with different tasks, responsibilities and people.
- Influencing and negotiating skills including persuading others, resolving conflicts and negotiating agreed solutions.

Very importantly, the skills development observed among volunteers in this research is not simply a self-reported gain. The evidence was corroborated by the overwhelming majority of line managers who felt that volunteers acquired useful skills from the volunteering experience. The line managers observed measurable gains in the same business-relevant skills as those reported by the volunteers themselves.

There is also very clear evidence that the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments are of direct relevance to the companies involved. Most of these skills feature in

the mainstream competency frameworks used by companies to monitor and guide staff development; and all of the companies are investing significantly in training and development programmes to build these competencies in their staff.

2.

As well as understanding which skills and competencies can be developed through volunteering, it is important to consider how these skills are developed.

Both volunteers and their managers valued the experiential nature of the learning. Indeed it is this that sets it apart from more traditional approaches to training. Volunteering requires employees to step outside their normal working role and build relations with people who perhaps have a very different world view from their own. Respondents report that moving outside their "comfort zone" in this way is extremely useful in both developing their skills and transferring these skills back into the workplace.

3.

However, if companies are to harness the power of volunteering as a route to learning and development, they need to manage the process properly. This research underlines the importance of integrating volunteering activities into mainstream HR processes of appraisal and development. There are two distinct aspects to this process of integration.

First, prior to starting the volunteering, it is important that the employee is made aware of the potential opportunity for skills development. This will involve a proper briefing of the aims and objectives of what the company is expecting to achieve through the volunteering assignment – for the host organisation, the volunteer, and the businesses itself.

The findings suggest that companies which make serious efforts to use the volunteering activities to develop the skills and competencies of their employees reap real benefits from so doing. We saw that among the minority of those employees who seek to develop new skills through volunteering, almost two thirds believe they are performing better in their job as a result of their involvement.

The second aspect of integration involves a formal appraisal and evaluation process after completing the volunteering assignment. The findings show that among those whose volunteering activities are part of the appraisal process, the majority agree that

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the experience has helped them perform better in their job. Evidence of this can be seen in the case studies. In addition, proportionately more of these volunteers report that they have developed the skills and competencies considered by the research.

4.

It is also important to note that different volunteering activities are more effective in developing specific skills and competencies. Some of the key observations are as follows:

**Student mentoring** is particularly helpful in developing the volunteer's skills and abilities in coaching and helping others to improve by guiding and developing their performance.

Evidence from those who have participated in **running enterprise workshops** reveals significant skills development across a number of areas – particularly leadership, adaptability, teamworking and building relationships and networks.

The role of **school governor** is perhaps the most challenging volunteering activity considered in this research study and the one which delivers the most significant skills gain. Respondents particularly highlight their development in team working, influencing and negotiation skills. In addition, this type of volunteering activity is extremely useful for developing hard business skills including financial skills such as planning budgets; business awareness; and in developing technical and professional skills.

The most common volunteering activity, **reading, language and number partnering**, was particularly helpful in developing skills in the area of communication and influencing and also negotiating.

**Supporting an education-related charity** was particularly helpful in developing team working skills, building relationships and networks, and financial skills.

5.

Turning to a consideration of the costs involved, it is clear that employee volunteering programmes can be delivered for relatively modest costs. Overall, the research found that among respondent businesses the average annual cost to support each volunteer involved in an education based activity in London is £381 per person per annum. This figure is the full cost including the direct management costs and all additional costs involved in running an effective volunteering programme.

In contrast, the companies involved in this research are typically investing at least £400 per person per annum to develop relevant skills and competencies in their staff – although data from a broader UK survey on training costs suggest that the typical training spend per employee could be considerably higher.

Hence, for those companies seeking to develop core competencies – such as communication skills; influencing and negotiation skills; and planning and organisational skills – the cost of doing so through volunteering assignments is certainly no more expensive than traditional approaches to training and development, and might be considerably less.

6.

However, the argument in support of employee volunteering does not simply rest on a direct cost comparison with other forms of training and development. It is important to consider the wider benefits of volunteering as part of a company's community investment activities.

- o This research has shown that, apart from developing new skills, the individual employee benefits from improved morale and increased job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the company as a direct result of the opportunities afforded by their volunteering experience. In addition, volunteers assert that they gain greatly from the opportunity to do something meaningful that helps others; and that through this experience they feel better about themselves and about the organisation they work for.
- o In addition, we know from previous research that there are many benefits accruing to the business itself from a well managed community investment programme. As well as the positive impact on staff reported above, benefits include building and maintaining the company's "licence to operate" and the advantages that accrue from improved brand reputation.
- o Most importantly, working to provide structured support for community partners delivers real social benefits to the partner organisation which gains from the advice, guidance, knowledge and experience of the volunteers.

This research did not attempt to assign a financial value to any of these additional benefits associated with the volunteering experience. However, it is vital that these positive returns are taken into account when we consider the costs and benefits of organising a volunteering programme.

7.

Overall we believe the findings described above are the strongest articulation of the business case for supporting employee volunteering programmes that we have seen in research published on this subject to date.

### 7.3

#### Lessons from the Research Process

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As we reported in Chapter 1, very few of the 16 companies participating in this research have attempted to assess in any formal way the skills and competencies gained through volunteering, although some companies are using informal processes of self-assessment feedback among volunteers. As such, the research process itself was taking these companies into uncharted territory.

However, the research was designed to build on existing practice among these companies to ensure that the results – and more importantly the research tools – are widely applicable to companies in any sector or any location that are seeking to assess the impact of their volunteering activities.

As such, the starting point for assessing the competencies developed through volunteering assignments was a careful consideration of the mainstream skills and competencies companies look to develop more broadly among employees. The aim was to ensure that the evaluation tool would measure development in skills and competencies that are directly relevant to the business.

In addition, it became clear that when considering the development gains from volunteering, it is important to include some of the broader impacts on the individual in terms of increased self-confidence, pride in the company and motivation.

Equally, it is not enough to simply assess the skills and competencies developed through the volunteering experience; it is also important to understand what happens to the individual before and after the event. As such the evaluation tool was designed to consider the motives behind an individual's decision to become involved in volunteering, and whether their experiences gained through volunteering were assessed in appraisal processes.

Finally, the team was concerned that the evaluation tool must address two major challenges usually associated with assessment techniques – resources and knowledge. Building on Corporate Citizenship's previous work, and by responding to the advice and guidance of those involved in the consultative process, the research team developed an evaluation framework that is both simple to use and highly effective in delivering robust measurement of the skills and competencies developed through volunteering assignments. This was developed for use in education programmes but it could be applied more broadly.

Overall, it was felt that the research was “breaking new ground” for all of the organisations involved in the study. The competency framework and evaluation tool was an innovative development, allowing companies to assess the impact of their volunteering activities in a way that none of them had done before.

### 7.4

#### Concluding Remarks

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The research team hopes that other companies can learn from the evidence gathered with the help of all the businesses which took the time, trouble and effort to assess the impact of their volunteering programmes by getting involved in this study.

With their help the research has demonstrated that volunteering can develop skills and competencies across a broad range of business relevant areas. These companies have also shown that volunteering delivers wider benefits for its employees and the business itself.

Perhaps most importantly, working to provide structured support for community partners delivers real social benefits to the partner organisation which gains from the advice, guidance, knowledge and experience of the volunteers. It is this potential for both partners to benefit that underlines the real business value of supporting employee volunteers.



# Acknowledgements

Corporate Citizenship would like to thank the following people and organisations for their involvement in this research study:

Kevan Baker, Aviva  
Camilla Fletcher, Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
Joanne Dooley, BDO LLP  
Karen Green, BNY Mellon  
Bryony Scragg, BNY Mellon  
Geoff Lane, Business in the Community  
Petra Wilton, Chartered Management Institute  
Davina Pilkington, City Action  
Andrea Eccles, City HR Association  
Melanie Beskin, CMS Cameron McKenna  
Zoe Humphrey, Community Service Volunteers  
Joanna Keefe, Credit Suisse  
Kate Cavelle, Deutsche Bank  
Louise Muller, East London Business Alliance  
Nicky Major, Ernst & Young  
James Daffurn, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP  
Linda Harris, Financial Services Authority  
Fiona Rawes, Heart of the City  
Donna Ore, HSBC  
Alison Gardner, Investec  
Anthony Harte, Nomura  
Victoria Hoe, Nomura  
Caroline Pyke, Rothschild  
Sheralee Morris, Santander  
Steve Acklem, SGOSS  
Michael Collins, Société Générale  
Patsy Francis, UBS

In addition, the authors of this report would like to thank colleagues in Corporate Citizenship for their help, advice and guidance throughout the research project. These include Mike Tuffrey, Jon Lloyd, Chad Rogerson, Sue Woolcott and Nicole Clucas.

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# Appendix A – Aviva UK Volunteer Research Results

**Table 1**  
Personal Impact

	Not relevant	No Difference	A little Improvement	Some Development	Significant Development
Volunteering has improved my...					
... adaptability	5.2% (5)	8.3% (8)	33.3% (32)	42.7% (41)	10.4% (10)
... teamworking skills	11.7% (11)	9.5% (9)	18.0% (17)	44.6% (42)	15.9% (15)
... communication skills	3.1% (3)	6.1% (6)	16.4% (16)	54.6% (53)	19.5% (19)
... influencing / negotiating skills	15.4% (15)	13.4% (13)	13.4% (13)	47.4% (46)	10.3% (10)
... problem solving skills	16.8% (16)	13.6% (13)	25.2% (24)	33.6% (32)	10.5% (10)
... leadership skills	12.2% (11)	17.7% (16)	30.0% (27)	22.2% (20)	17.7% (16)
... planning & organisation skills	10.0% (10)	20.0% (20)	28.0% (28)	25.0% (25)	17% (17)
... decision making	15.2% (14)	23.9% (22)	23.9% (22)	26.0% (24)	10.8% (10)
... maximising performance of others	8.6% (8)	9.7% (9)	32.6% (30)	20.3% (27)	19.5% (18)
... financial skills	66.6% (58)	24.1% (21)	5.7% (5)	3.4% (3)	0
... customer focus	32.2% (29)	14.4% (13)	31.1% (28)	16.6% (15)	5.5% (5)
... excellence & continuous improvement	34.0% (30)	14.7% (13)	25.0% (22)	21.5% (19)	4.5% (4)
... business awareness	50.0% (44)	27.2% (24)	17.0% (15)	5.6% (5)	0
... technical / professional skills	53.4% (47)	23.8% (21)	14.7% (13)	7.9% (7)	0

**Table 2**  
Personal Outlook on Aviva / job

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Volunteering has improved my...					
... self confidence	0.9% (1)	5.9% (6)	55.4% (56)	32.6% (33)	4.9% (5)
... sense of well being and happiness	0	2.4% (2)	53.6% (44)	41.6% (34)	2.4% (2)
... understanding & empathy with people	0	2.8% (3)	49.0% (51)	45.1% (47)	2.8% (3)
... awareness of wider social issues	0	3.8% (4)	44.6% (46)	47.5% (49)	3.8% (4)
... job satisfaction	3.1% (3)	6.3% (6)	51.5% (49)	22.1% (21)	16.8% (16)
... pride in Aviva / my job	2.0% (2)	5.0% (5)	56.5% (56)	25.2% (25)	11.1% (11)
... commitment to Aviva	1.9% (2)	8.7% (9)	52.4% (54)	23.3% (24)	13.5% (14)
... motivation	1.0% (1)	9.3% (9)	53.1% (51)	29.1% (28)	7.2% (7)

**Table 3**  
Impact on behaviour

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Since volunteering I am more likely to ...					
... undertake more volunteering	0	9.0% (9)	50.0% (50)	40.4% (40)	0
... recommend volunteering to a colleague	0	4.9% (5)	40.5% (41)	53.4% (54)	0.9% (1)
... talk positively about Aviva	0.9% (1)	4.9% (5)	52.9% (54)	29.4% (30)	11.7% (12)

**Table 4**  
Impact on career development

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Skills and experience gained through volunteering ...					
... has helped me perform better in my job	1.2% (1)	20% (16)	43.7% (35)	13.7% (11)	21.2% (17)
... helps me apply for more senior roles	2.2% (2)	37.7% (34)	23.3% (21)	13.3% (12)	23.3% (21)
... has been / will be used in my review	5.8% (6)	25.4% (26)	39.2% (40)	12.7% (13)	16.6% (17)

# Appendix B – Retrospective Survey

## Employee volunteer impact assessment form

You have recently taken part in an employee volunteering activity.

This survey has been created in order to assess the skills and competencies you have gained through volunteering.

All answers are strictly confidential. We would be very grateful if you could please take a moment to answer the questions below

## About the volunteering opportunity

Volunteering opportunity name

Volunteering opportunity description (select from list)

- School governor
- Reading/language/number partner
- Student mentoring
- Mentoring or other support to school staff
- Enterprise workshop
- Work experience programme
- Support education related charity
- Other

School / Education partner name (write name in box)

Date volunteering opportunity started (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY)

Date volunteering opportunity ended (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY)

How many paid working hours did you contribute?  
(write hours in box)

How many non-working hours did you contribute?  
(write hours in box)

Date you are completing this questionnaire (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY)

## Objectives

What was the main driver behind you volunteering?  
(select one from list)

- Develop new skills
- Give something back to society
- Meet new people
- Something different from usual day role
- Encouraged to volunteer by colleague
- Other

# Volunteering – The Business Case

Please answer the following questions by indicating the degree to which you feel the statement relates to your volunteering experience

## 1. Impact on job-related skills

Descriptions:

	Not relevant to this activity	No difference	A little: e.g. improvement in my awareness of my ability in this area	Some development: e.g. demonstrable improvement that I can use in my work or personal life from time to time	Significant development: Significant improvement in my ability that I can apply on a regular basis
--	-------------------------------	---------------	---	--	--

### a. Your personal effectiveness

**The volunteering activity improved my...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
teamworking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
influencing / negotiation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
problem solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### b. Management effectiveness

**The volunteering activity improved my...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
planning & organisation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
maximising performance of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
financial skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### c. Your business effectiveness

**The volunteering activity improved my...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

relationship building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
willingness to continually improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
business awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
technical / professional skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 2. Personal impact

Descriptions:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
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### a. Personal

**The volunteering activity improved my...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
sense of well-being / happiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
understanding of & empathy with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
awareness of wider social issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### b. Outlook on company/job

**The volunteering activity increased my...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
commitment to the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3. Impact on behaviour

**Since the activity I am more likely to...**

(tick relevant descriptions)

undertake more volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
recommend volunteering to a colleague	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
talk positively about the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Volunteering – The Business Case

## 4. Impact on career development

The skills and experience gained from the volunteering activity...

(tick relevant description)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
have helped me perform better in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
make me better able to apply for more senior positions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
have been/will be assessed in my appraisal process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Additional Information

Have you benefited in any other way from the volunteering activity?

- Yes
- No

(if yes, write a brief description in this box)

### About the volunteer

What is your job grade/level?

- Admin
- Supervisor
- Line manager
- Senior manager
- MD/Partner
- Other

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

How long have you worked in this company?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-6 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Is this your first experience of volunteering?

- Yes
- No

How old are you?

- 25 or under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56 or above

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

# Appendix C – Before and after survey

## New employee volunteer impact assessment form

This research takes the form of two questionnaires with the same format – the first will be carried out before you begin your volunteering, to provide a self-assessment of your current level of skills and / or knowledge in a particular area. You will be asked to fill out the same questionnaire again at a later date to see whether you feel that you have noticed an improvement in any of these areas.

We anticipate that each of the questionnaires should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The results that we collect will be very useful in assessing volunteering learning and development through volunteering- we also hope that these will be useful to you in monitoring the impact that volunteering is having on your personal development. All answers are strictly confidential.

### 1. About the volunteering opportunity

Volunteering opportunity name

Volunteering opportunity description (select from list)

- School governor
- Reading/language/number partner
- Student mentoring
- Mentoring or other support to school staff
- Enterprise workshop
- Work experience programme
- Support education related charity
- Other

School / Education partner name (write name in box)

Date volunteering opportunity started (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY)

Your details; in order to track your response when we survey you again in December, please provide your first name and surname in the boxes below. This information will be held in the strictest confidence and is for research purposes only. Your name and individual response will not be disclosed to your employer.

First name

Surname

### Objectives

What was the main driver behind you volunteering?

(select one from list)

- Develop new skills
- Give something back to society
- Meet new people
- Something different from usual day role
- Encouraged to volunteer by colleague
- Other

## Volunteering – The Business Case

Please answer the following questions by indicating your ability / skill level in the following competencies.

For the following questions, please indicate your ability using a 1 – 10 scale. This should reflect your current skill level and you will be asked again in December whether there has been any change to this rating. 1 indicates minimal ability and 10 indicates a full understanding and ability in that area.

### 2. Job-related skills

#### a. Your personal effectiveness

(tick relevant scale box)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	not applicable
adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
teamworking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
influencing / negotiation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
problem solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### b. Management effectiveness

(tick relevant scale box)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	not applicable
leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
planning & organisation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
decision making and exercising judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial skills; eg planning budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### c. Your business effectiveness

(tick relevant scale box)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	not applicable
building relationships and networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
willingness to continually improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
business awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
technical / professional skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Personal attributes

#### a. Personal

(tick relevant scale box)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	not applicable
self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
sense of well-being / happiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
understanding of & empathy with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
awareness of wider social issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pride in the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commitment to the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Additional Information

**What aspect of the volunteering experience do you/did you expect to help you build or develop new/existing skills and competencies?**

- Yes
- No

(if yes, write a brief description in this box)

**Do you anticipate the volunteering activity will benefit you in any other way/did you anticipate that the volunteering would benefit you in any other way?**

- Yes
- No

(if yes, write a brief description in this box)

About the volunteer

**What is your job grade/level?**

- Admin
- Supervisor
- Line manager
- Senior manager
- MD/Partner
- Other

**What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

**How long have you worked in this company?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-6 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

**Is this your first experience of volunteering?**

- Yes
- No

**How old are you?**

- 25 or under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56 or above

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



# Appendix D – Line Manager Survey

## Line manager assessment of the impact of employee volunteering

Many of your colleagues, some of whom report to you (your 'reports'), have completed a survey looking at the skills and competencies they have gained through volunteering.

This questionnaire seeks YOUR views on the potential of volunteering activities to help employees develop skills and competencies.

In providing your responses, please think about the skills development you have observed in your direct staff reports who you know have undertaken volunteering activities.

As far as possible, please try to assess the skills gain that you think can be directly attributed to the learning and development employees have experienced through volunteering.

We would be very grateful if you could please take a moment to answer the questions below.

ALL ANSWERS ARE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

### 1. Your role as line manager

Approximately how many people report into you?

Of these people, approximately how many have been actively involved in your company's volunteering activities during the past 12 months?

Of these volunteers, approximately how many were engaged in volunteering in schools, colleges or other educational initiatives?

For the following questions, please indicate the degree to which you feel each statement relates to your staff who have been involved in volunteering in education programmes.

### 2. Impact of volunteering activity on skills development

EXAMPLE RESPONSE:

Think about the number of staff who report to you that you know have been involved in volunteering in education programmes.

How many people and to what extent, did they develop skills in the following areas:

**Example: I have 15 people who report to me that have been involved in volunteering in education programmes. They have developed skills as follows:**

	No difference	A little development	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant	Don't Know
Adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	3	4		6		2
Teamworking skills	2		5	5	3	

## Volunteering – The Business Case

**Thinking about the staff who report to me that have been involved in volunteering in education programmes, I believe the following number of people have developed skills to the following extent in these areas:**

	No difference	A little development	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant	Don't Know
Adaptability;						
being effective in different surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teamworking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influencing / negotiation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning & organisation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision making and exercising judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping others improve; guiding and						
evaluating their performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial skills; eg planning budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to build relationships and networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to continually improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical / professional skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Impact of volunteering activity on career development

**Thinking about all those staff who report to me, I feel that the experience they have gained through volunteering in education has:**

(Please insert "X" in the appropriate box for each statement)

Helped them to perform better in their job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made them better prepared to apply						
for more senior positions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been/will be assessed in their appraisal process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 4. Additional Information

**Overall, do you feel that the experience gained by volunteers helps them to develop skills and competencies that are useful to your business?**

Yes

No

**If yes, what aspects of the volunteering experience do you think are most important in helping staff to develop their skills and competencies?**

(Please write a brief description in the box)

**Are there any aspects of employee volunteering that are NOT helpful for the business?**

(If yes, please write a brief description in the box)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

## Appendix E – Skills Developed Through Specific Volunteering Activities

**Table 1**  
Reading / language / number partners

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Impact on job-related skills. The volunteering activity improved my...						
... adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	16.0% (32)	30.5% (61)	40.5% (81)	8.0% (16)	5.0% (10)	200
... teamworking skills	33.0% (66)	23.0% (46)	27.0% (54)	6.5% (13)	10.5% (21)	200
... communication skills	10.0% (20)	26.4% (53)	42.8% (86)	17.9% (36)	3.0% (6)	201
... influencing / negotiation skills	28.5% (57)	23.5% (47)	26.5% (53)	10.5% (21)	11.0% (22)	200
... problem solving skills	34.5% (69)	19.5% (39)	26.5% (53)	8.0% (16)	11.5% (23)	200
... leadership skills	36.3% (73)	17.4% (35)	25.9% (52)	8.0% (16)	12.4% (25)	201
... planning & organisation skills	37.0% (74)	22.0% (44)	25.5% (51)	7.5% (15)	8.0% (16)	200
... decision making and exercising judgement	36.0% (72)	22.5% (45)	23.5% (47)	6.5% (13)	11.5% (23)	200
... helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	13.1% (26)	16.6% (33)	39.7% (79)	25.6% (51)	5.0% (10)	199
... financial skills; e.g. planning budgets	57.5% (115)	2.5% (5)	5.0% (10)	1.0% (2)	34.0% (68)	200
... building relationships and networks	23.5% (47)	31.0% (62)	30.0% (60)	10.0% (20)	5.5% (11)	200
... willingness to continually improve	28.5% (57)	24.0% (48)	33.0% (66)	8.5% (17)	6.0% (12)	200
... business awareness	52.2% (105)	9.0% (18)	10.4% (21)	0.5% (1)	27.9% (56)	201
... technical / professional skills	51.0% (102)	11.5% (23)	12.5% (25)	0.5% (1)	24.5% (49)	200

**Table 2**  
Student Mentoring

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Impact on job-related skills. The volunteering activity improved my...						
... adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	11.2% (10)	24.7% (22)	50.6% (45)	11.2% (10)	2.2% (2)	89
... teamworking skills	24.7% (22)	25.8% (23)	34.8% (31)	6.7% (6)	7.9% (7)	89
... communication skills	7.9% (7)	16.9% (15)	56.2% (50)	16.9% (15)	2.2% (2)	89
... influencing / negotiation skills	20.5% (18)	21.6% (19)	40.9% (36)	12.5% (11)	4.5% (4)	88
... problem solving skills	27.0% (24)	24.7% (22)	32.6% (29)	10.1% (9)	5.6% (5)	89
... leadership skills	24.7% (22)	22.5% (20)	37.1% (33)	7.9% (7)	7.9% (7)	89
... planning & organisation skills	21.3% (19)	23.6% (21)	34.8% (31)	12.4% (11)	7.9% (7)	89
... decision making and exercising judgement	19.3% (17)	26.1% (23)	35.2% (31)	11.4% (10)	8.0% (7)	88
... helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	9.0% (8)	10.1% (9)	41.6% (37)	37.1% (33)	2.2% (2)	89
... financial skills; e.g. planning budgets	57.3% (51)	12.4% (11)	2.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	28.1% (25)	89
... building relationships and networks	21.3% (19)	19.1% (17)	31.5% (28)	11.2% (10)	16.9% (15)	89
... willingness to continually improve	21.3% (19)	24.7% (22)	33.7% (30)	9.0% (8)	11.2% (10)	89
... business awareness	44.9% (40)	12.4% (11)	12.4% (11)	1.1% (1)	29.2% (26)	89
... technical / professional skills	41.6% (37)	9.0% (8)	14.6% (13)	7.9% (7)	27.0% (24)	89

**Table 3**  
Enterprise Workshops

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Impact on job-related skills. The volunteering activity improved my...						
... adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	8.8% (5)	15.8% (9)	52.6% (30)	19.3% (11)	3.5% (2)	57
... teamworking skills	10.7% (6)	30.4% (17)	30.4% (17)	25.0% (14)	3.6% (2)	56
... communication skills	3.6% (2)	17.9% (10)	50.0% (28)	25.0% (14)	3.6% (2)	56
... influencing / negotiation skills	17.5% (10)	21.1% (12)	40.4% (23)	14.0% (8)	7.0% (4)	57
... problem solving skills	17.5% (10)	31.6% (18)	35.1% (20)	10.5% (6)	5.3% (3)	57
... leadership skills	19.3% (11)	17.5% (10)	36.8% (21)	21.1% (12)	5.3% (3)	57
... planning & organisation skills	24.6% (14)	19.3% (11)	31.6% (18)	19.3% (11)	5.3% (3)	57
... decision making and exercising judgement	23.2% (13)	26.8% (15)	30.4% (17)	14.3% (8)	5.4% (3)	56
... helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	8.8% (5)	15.8% (9)	38.6% (22)	33.3% (19)	3.5% (2)	57
... financial skills; e.g. planning budgets	49.1% (28)	14.0% (8)	10.5% (6)	1.8% (1)	24.6% (14)	57
... building relationships and networks	15.8% (9)	22.8% (13)	42.1% (24)	8.8% (5)	10.5% (6)	57
... willingness to continually improve	14.0% (8)	26.3% (15)	36.8% (21)	15.8% (9)	7.0% (4)	57
... business awareness	40.4% (23)	24.6% (14)	19.3% (11)	3.5% (2)	12.3% (7)	57
... technical / professional skills	38.6% (22)	24.6% (14)	22.8% (13)	3.5% (2)	10.5% (6)	57

**Table 4**  
Supporting an Education Related Charity

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Impact on job-related skills. The volunteering activity improved my...						
... adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	24.1% (13)	25.9% (14)	37.0% (20)	7.4% (4)	5.6% (3)	54
... teamworking skills	27.8% (15)	14.8% (8)	37.0% (20)	14.8% (8)	5.6% (3)	54
... communication skills	13.0% (7)	20.4% (11)	51.9% (28)	13.0% (7)	1.9% (1)	54
... influencing / negotiation skills	33.3% (18)	24.1% (13)	25.9% (14)	13.0% (7)	3.7% (2)	54
... problem solving skills	31.5% (17)	20.4% (11)	24.1% (13)	13.0% (7)	11.1% (6)	54
... leadership skills	24.1% (13)	24.1% (13)	27.8% (15)	14.8% (8)	9.3% (5)	54
... planning & organisation skills	24.1% (13)	25.9% (14)	25.9% (14)	18.5% (10)	5.6% (3)	54
... decision making and exercising judgement	29.6% (16)	22.2% (12)	35.2% (19)	5.6% (3)	7.4% (4)	54
... helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	18.5% (10)	25.9% (14)	33.3% (18)	13.0% (7)	9.3% (5)	54
... financial skills; e.g. planning budgets	50.0% (27)	14.8% (8)	16.7% (9)	3.7% (2)	14.8% (8)	54

**Table 5**  
School Governors

	No difference	A little	Some development	Significant development	Not relevant to this activity	Response Count
Impact on job-related skills The volunteering activity improved my...						
... adaptability; being effective in different surroundings	12.2% (6)	26.5% (13)	36.7% (18)	22.4% (11)	2.0% (1)	49
... teamworking skills	10.4% (5)	18.8% (9)	54.2% (26)	16.7% (8)	0.0% (0)	48
... communication skills	6.3% (3)	18.8% (9)	45.8% (22)	29.2% (14)	0.0% (0)	48
... influencing / negotiation skills	12.2% (6)	20.4% (10)	46.9% (23)	20.4% (10)	0.0% (0)	49
... problem solving skills	20.4% (10)	24.5% (12)	38.8% (19)	16.3% (8)	0.0% (0)	49
... leadership skills	18.4% (9)	32.7% (16)	32.7% (16)	16.3% (8)	0.0% (0)	49
... planning & organisation skills	22.4% (11)	30.6% (15)	32.7% (16)	14.3% (7)	0.0% (0)	49
... decision making and exercising judgement	16.3% (8)	30.6% (15)	34.7% (17)	18.4% (9)	0.0% (0)	49
... helping others improve; guiding and evaluating their performance	18.4% (9)	28.6% (14)	36.7% (18)	14.3% (7)	2.0% (1)	49
... financial skills; e.g. planning budgets	42.9% (21)	14.3% (7)	26.5% (13)	12.2% (6)	4.1% (2)	49
... building relationships and networks	20.4% (10)	36.7% (18)	24.5% (12)	8.2% (4)	10.2% (5)	49
... willingness to continually improve	22.4% (11)	32.7% (16)	28.6% (14)	12.2% (6)	4.1% (2)	49
... business awareness	22.4% (11)	32.7% (16)	24.5% (12)	8.2% (4)	12.2% (6)	49
... technical / professional skills	34.7% (17)	22.4% (11)	30.6% (15)	2.0% (1)	10.2% (5)	49





## The City of London Corporation

The City of London is exceptional in many ways, not least in that it has a dedicated local authority committed to enhancing its status on the world stage. The smooth running of the City's business relies on the web of high quality services that the City of London Corporation provides.

Older than Parliament itself, the City of London Corporation has centuries of proven success in protecting the City's interests, whether it be policing and cleaning its streets or in identifying international opportunities for economic growth. It is also able to promote the City in a unique and powerful way through the Lord Mayor of London, a respected ambassador for financial services who takes the City's credentials to a remarkably wide and influential audience.

Alongside its promotion of the business community, the City of London Corporation has a host of responsibilities which extend far beyond the City boundaries. It runs the internationally renowned Barbican Arts Centre; it is the port health authority for the whole of the Thames estuary; it manages a portfolio of property throughout the capital, and it owns and protects 10,000 acres of open space in and around it.

The City of London Corporation, however, never loses sight of its primary role – the sustained and expert promotion of the 'City', a byword for strength and stability, innovation and flexibility – and it seeks to perpetuate the City's position as a global business leader.



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