Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation
in England

Report for

Kansalaisareena r.y.

Citizen Forum - Service, development and information centre for

voluntary actors in Finland

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Abstract: Quality accreditation for volunteer infrastructure starts with the definition of goals to be achieved. In England, these are connected to volunteer brokerage, marketing, good practice development, development of volunteering opportunities, policy response and strategic development. Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation is based on a self-assessment report compiled by a volunteer development agency. This portfolio of evidence is analysed by a team of independent assessors. Volunteering England offers detailed support for the accreditation process. Establishing a similar process in Finland requires, first of all, the definition of core functions for volunteer development agencies, as well as the creation of a network of trained and experienced assessors. Quality management tools can easily be adapted to the Finnish context.

1 Introduction

Volunteering had long been taken for granted. It emerged out of social contexts of families and social milieus. A renewed interest in volunteering recognises it as a productive source in society and as a channel to enhance citizen participation. The last two decades saw a reorganisation of institutions that are geared towards the support of volunteering in its various forms. Along with this institutional interest, questions of quality of volunteer support services emerged. At the heart of this process is what in England is called quality accreditation of volunteer centres. This paper introduces the elements of this approach and tries to summarise the main points relevant for the establishment of quality standards in Finland.

Volunteering is generally defined as time spent to benefit a third party without the aim of receiving payment for it.[1] It is based on a free decision; the beneficial can be the environment or another person beyond ones own close relatives. Its forms are mutual- or self-help; philanthropy or service to others; participation or civic engagement; and advocacy or campaigning. Volunteer development agencies, or so-called volunteer centres, are organisations that try to support this type of civic activity within a local community. They serve several functions ranging from general information about volunteering to volunteer brokerage. In England, the development of volunteer centres is closely connected to the adaption of quality standards.

2 Volunteer centre accreditation

2.1 The rationale behind Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation

In 2003 three English umbrella organisations concerned with the support of voluntary activity merged into a new organisation called Volunteering England (VE). Already before this merger, quality of volunteer support services had been an issue. The National Association of Volunteer Bureaux, one of Volunteering England's predecessors, had earlier started to establish standards for its member organisations. A milestone concerning such issues was the

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[1] See the definitions according to the English Compact Code for Good Practice in Volunteering
http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4C135BDF-E1E2-43D4-8FD8-
DB16AE4536AA/0/DefinitionsofVolunteeringVE08.pdf (19.4.2010)

sealing of a Compact between the government and the voluntary sector in 1998. This document guaranteed cooperation and consultation between the sector and government on all issues that are of mutual interest. In this context, the voluntary sector on its parts acknowledged striving for internal development and quality.

Volunteering England started to re-launch the heterogeneous field of volunteer agencies, bureaux and similar organisations as a common brand. The name volunteer centre was reserved exclusively for volunteer development agencies that had undergone a process of quality assessment. This is called Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA). A unique feature of this process is its connection to core functions of volunteer centres. These functions were defined in a strategy document that resulted from a major review carried out by Volunteering England. In "Building on Success" Penberthy and Forster (2004) defined six central <u>functions</u>:

- Brokerage for volunteers and organisations
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

The strategy report suggested that every volunteer centre has to ensure that each of these six functions is being met. Therefore, agencies wishing to adopt the brand name "Volunteer Centre" have to undergo an assessment that is "sophisticated and be both tough and credible" (Penberthy and Forster 2004, 49). More precisely, VCQA states that "for each of these [functions], a volunteer centre is asked to demonstrate that it has processes in place to <u>deliver</u> that function and to <u>monitor</u> the outcome of its delivery."[2] Thus, the label Volunteer Centre is conditionally linked to a prior assessment according to VCQA. Currently more than 300 centres have undergone this process.

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[2] emphasis added;
http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Local+and+Regional/Volunteer+Centre+Quality+Accreditation.htm (19.4.2010)

In other words, VCQA is an assessment against the delivery and monitoring of outcomes connected to these six functions. Evaluation is basically a research process that investigates something against a pre-defined yardstick. Its core elements are a goal, an instrument for analysis and a report. The evaluation can be carried out with external reviewers, as an internal self-assessment or a combination of both. The reason for an evaluation are an improvement of internal processes or demands for certification emerging from external actors such as funders, clients, the general public or other stakeholders.

There are a number of tools for quality management and assessments in the voluntary sector (see appendix 1; SAVO 2009). Among these, VCQA is the only one specifically designed to meet the needs of volunteer centres on the local and sub-regional level. Currently, the third wave of VCQA is in operation. Now, volunteer centres are encouraged to establish a partnership with other local or sub-regional organisations, share the work and together deliver on the six functions. New is also the requirement to systematically monitor the outcomes of the centre's activity. The current, third wave of the quality accreditation process was launched in March 2005; the first round of assessment took place in October 2005.

In essence, VCQA consists of a guided self-assessment report, a so called portfolio, that will be analysed by an independent assessment group. On successful accreditation, the board of Volunteering England grants a quality seal that has to be renewed every three years. At the heart of accreditation is the portfolio. It consists of a number of indicators linked to the functions of volunteer centres. It is the task of the applying centre to investigate its own activity and provide evidence connected to 21 pre-defined outcomes. The rationale behind this is to provide for a reliable assessment that is simple, relatively economic and flexible to handle. The high level of standardisation together with the tools provided by VE support reliability, while it remains the decision of the applicant to choose the most suitable way to compile the portfolio report according to its own resources and needs.

Carrying out this internal analysis is thought of as a process of posing questions and providing answers. Volunteering England supports this process with specially developed tools, e.g. a detailed handbook, a guide for research and supporting workshops. In other words, the main workload lies with the centre itself that has to collect evidence and deliver it systematically in a portfolio. This basically means that the applying volunteer centre has to carry out a comprehensive analysis of its organisation.

Volunteering England recommends applicants to use a tool for the management of quality standards. Centres are free to choose how they want to go about this process. They may use whatever system they like as long as they are able to produce the data and strategies needed for completing the portfolio and establish a continuous process of quality management. Apart from the goal of *continuous improvement* Volunteering England lists a number of further benefits that can be summarised as follows:

- *Strengthening the organisation and its credibility*: An assessment of the centre's practices leads to improvements. A proactive approach to quality increases the centre's credibility; it also prevents others from imposing quality standards on the centre that are not related to its core tasks.
- *Better services for users*: Volunteer centre services can be improved when weaknesses in the organisation are tackled and user involvement grows.
- *Increased funding*: Funders values that money is spend efficiently and effectively. Quality assessment helps to convince funders of the positive impact of their support.
- *Better networking and membership relations*: A centre with a commitment to quality is taken more serious as a partner by other organisations. Cooperation with close partners improves since a common understanding of quality is promoted.

2.2   The process of quality accreditation

The process of quality accreditation actually takes off with the <u>definition of core functions</u> of volunteer development agencies. Only against the background of defined goals, it is possible to measure whether a certain standard of quality has been achieved. A centre has to decide whether it operates as an individual volunteer centre or works in a close partnership with other organisations from the same county. For partnership submissions, it is essential that the partners closely cooperate across all six functions. Membership of Volunteering England is required. The different stages of the process are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Stages in the accreditation process

Stage	Contents and actors involved
Registration	Registration for an assessment round according to the region
Self-assessment	Provision of a report containing detailed evidence of standards in all six functions
Submission	Submission of a portfolio as a paper copy to VE, a second copy remains with the VC
Assessment report	The assessment team issues a report and awards VCQA. If only rated 'Pass with conditions', resubmission within 6 month.
Standardisation panel	Analysis of the assessment round, identification of good practice examples and ratification of assessment results.
Certificate	Issuing of certificates. The board of VE hands out a VCQA certificate valid for three years.
Publication of results	Dissemination of results to the general public and to funders. Adaption of the Volunteer Centre brand.
Reapplication	Every three years: A centre can re-apply when the certificate expires.

Once a centre (or its partnerships consortium) has decided to embark on the accreditation process, it has to register with a form available at the VE webpage. There is a password protected area solely omitted to the accreditation process. The VCQA section offers all necessary forms and support material. The main task of the volunteer centre is to assemble a portfolio that contains all information and evidence needed for accreditation (see next chapter). Submission dates vary according to region.

An independent assessment team consisting of three trained and experienced individuals will analyse the portfolio and deliver an assessment report. If the evidence provided shows that the required standards are met in all six core functions, a portfolio receives 'Pass'-rating. The report also specifies areas for further development and offers recommendations. It remains in the centres own responsibility whether to adapt them or not. If not all requirements are met, the assessment teams issues a 'Pass with conditions'-rating. This requires the applicant centre to improve conditions within six month and resubmit a portfolio that documents the changes. Only after the required standard is achieved, Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation will be awarded; otherwise the centre loses the right to use the Volunteer Centre brand.

At the end of each round of assessment, Volunteering England sets up a <u>standardisation panel</u> that analyses the assessment process in order to ensure equal standards, further improve the quality accreditation process and select examples of high standard. Examples of <u>good practice</u> are highlighted on the VE website and in its publications. The standardisation panel ratifies the results of the assessment round.

The <u>certificate</u> itself will be handed over by the board of Volunteering England. It is valid for three years; and it is in the obligation of the centre to ensure that conditions remain up to standard during this period. After <u>three years</u> it can reapply for the accreditation seal.

The final step is dissemination of the results of the accreditation. The volunteer centre <u>publishes</u> the outcome and informs the public and funders of the achievement of VCQA. It has to use the Volunteer Centre brand which is seen as the "public face of quality accreditation" (Handbook, 20).

2.3   The self-assessment portfolio

At the heart of VCQA is the self-assessment portfolio. It requires the applicant centre to investigate its structure and activity according to the requirements arising from the core functions of volunteer centres. The portfolio also has to provide background information on the local environment in which a centre operates. This includes a map of the area, demographic structure, the level of volunteering and other details. A separate guide to research advises applicants on how to gather the particular information required.

For each function, the <u>accreditation handbook</u> specifies one general outcome and the main activity connected to it. Each of these is subdivided into more specific activities a centre is required to perform. The portfolio then refers to the function by giving detailed evidence, called "essential evidence outputs". The accreditation handbook defines precisely what kind of evidence has to be included and how recent it has to be. By working its way through the handbook, the applicant step by step completes the portfolio for submission. The essence of the six functions, activities and outcomes are summarised in table 2:

Table 2: Volunteer centre functions and outcomes

Core function	Activity of the VC/VC partnership	Outcome
Brokerage	VCs service is managed effectively and efficiently; and it meets local needs.	Awareness of the VC as the body best informed and most capable of volunteer brokerage for individuals and organisations.
Marketing	Targeted promotional events and campaigns using creative methods.	All actors, including hard-to-reach groups and actors from others sectors, will be aware of the nature, value and contribution of volunteering.
Good practice development	VC offers quality volunteer management learning to all volunteer involving organisations.	Positive volunteering experience across the area served by the VC.
Developing volunteering opportunities	Cooperation with diverse volunteer-involving organisations guided by an understanding of the potential within the community and a clear plan for realising this.	Improvement of quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering opportunities.
Policy response and campaigning	Awareness of all proposals with a potential impact on volunteering; seeking influence on decision-makers and local media; active as a commentator on volunteering related issues.	Volunteering is high on the local agenda, and local decision-makers are engaged with the topic.
Strategic development of volunteering	VC's expertise and experience is referred to by local networks and decision-makers to create a positive environment for volunteering.	A strategic approach with clear priorities towards the development of volunteering and the improvement of the own organisation.

These activities are further specified in order to make them assessable for analysis (appendix 2). "Essential evidence outputs" (indicted here with Arabic numbers) and adjacent guidance notes (small Roman numbers) break down these function into simple items that support the collection of evidence. For example the first function, brokerage, is divided into three sub-actions. They consist of the following:

1. *Promotion of the brokerage service to the local community*: This requires the existence of (1a) current *leaflets* aimed at the general public and (1b) a *link* to web based information. Each of these should show (i) the availability of a confidential introductory interview, (ii) personal benefits of volunteering, (iii) the VC's address, telephone number, email and website address, and (iv) the VC's hours of access.

2. *Promotion of the brokerage service to volunteer involving organisations across all sectors*: This requires (2a) current *leaflets* aimed at the general public and (2b) a *link* to web based information. Each of these should show (i) that the service is aimed at the public, the private voluntary and the community sector, and (ii) the VCs address, telephone number, email and website address. Outputs 1 and 2 can be combined into one leaflet. A printout of web based information on outputs 1 and 2 is acceptable.

3. *All clients have a consistent experience of brokerage which is managed effectively and efficiently*: This requires (3) a *customer care policy* set down in a document that includes definitions of what counts as an enquiry and what as an opportunity. It also shows how potential volunteer enquiries are handled (i-vii: clear definitions, how to find opportunities, how to address any mismatch between enquiry and available opportunities, a follow-up system for individuals and organisations, guidelines for a periodic evaluation, a complaints procedure). It further requires (4) *follow-up reports* for individuals and organisations not older than 12 month covering a period of at least three month. A response rate of at least 10% is the benchmark; otherwise detailed learning points to achieve this rate are requested. The report includes a description of the method used, the outcome of contacts and points for further action. Finally, the centre needs to provide an (5) *evaluation survey* not older than 24 month measuring the quality of the service. It includes (i) a description of the method used, (ii) a conclusion on the centre's local impact and action points, and (iii) two completed sample questionnaires, one for organisations and one for individuals.

As becomes clear from this example, the self-assessment portfolio is a rather encompassing document containing fairly detailed information on all essential aspects of a volunteer centre's ooperation. The handbook breaks down these requirements into detailed and tangible pieces of evidence. Evidence can only be anecdotal where no hard information is available; usually it has to consist of minutes, sample copies, working documents, reports or surveys. Volunteering England provides for a hands-on "Guide to research and analysis for VCQA Wave 3". This guide explains how to gather information and to compile statistical data concerning the region in which a centre operates. It particularly helps to make use of statistics on age, ethnic breakdown and unemployment as well as various sources on volunteering activity and hard-to-reach groups.

To support applicants with the submission of their portfolio, Volunteering England also offers tailored workshops in the region where submission is currently under way. These workshops are offered about twelve month before submission is due. In 2007 and 2008 twelve workshops have been conducted (Brevis 2008, 35). Six month prior to the date of submission a personal support session is offered.

The portfolio is not only evidence-based, it also asks for conclusions and strategies adopted as a result of systematic monitoring of a centres activity. This usually requires a resonably sophisticated approach to quality management within the organisation. For that reason VE recommends applicants to use an additional *tool for continuous quality improvement* in small organisations. Such a management tool is instrumental in producing the data and strategies required for the completion of the VCQA portfolio.

One example of such a tool is the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO), developed by Charities Evaluation Services. It has been especially created to support the internal development of volunteer organisations. It covers twelve areas in which quality standards can be analysed and managed. These include planning, governance, management, services, staff, training, money, activities, resources, networking, evaluation and results. In each of these areas, the analysis proceeds through four help-sheets. The first explains the particular standard, its benefits and detailed components. The second consists of a questionnaire with seven indicators that have to be answered on a four-level scale ranking from "fully met" to "not met". Sheet three specifies sources of evidence, and sheet four helps construct an action plan on the basis of the analysis. Here, the user specifies the results achieved, the action planned, a timeline and responsible actors as well as resources needed to achieve the objective of the action plan. Finally, it states a date for review of the action plan. An organisation that has established such a process of quality management will have produced a significant amount of data and evidence to support the VCQA.

VE further recommends the use of a guide to *forming partnerships* as well as a volunteer development agency *impact assessment toolkit*, both developed by Roehampton University. The impact assessment toolkit helps to define in which way different stakeholders are expected to benefit from the work of the volunteer development agency. The first step is to identify stakeholders and analyse in which way each of them benefits from the functions of a volunteer centre. The second step consists of using questionnaires, interviews or focus groups

to ask stakeholders how they actually evaluate the volunteer development agency's impact upon them.

Whatever tool an applicant chooses for quality accreditation, it is essential that on submission day he can come up with a self-assessment portfolio that conforms to the requirements. The *password protected members area* of Volunteering England's VCQA website offers a submission score sheet, a checklist and other guidance that help the applicant to ensure that standards of submission are met.

2.4   Practical aspects of VCQA

In the previous description an array of tools has been mentioned. Table 3 contains a list of the most important ones.

Table 3: Tools for support in the accreditation process

Tool	Contents
Handbook	Detailed description of the VCQA process and its elements
Guide to research and analysis	Support for gathering background information
Dedicated member section on VE website	Guidelines, registration, checklists, submission forms, dates, networking for consultations and contacts. Email and telephone support
Workshop	Tailor made support in the region, e.g. London, Leeds, Birmingham
Functions guide	Detailed description of VC functions with all indicators
Good evidence examples	Examples of centres that have successfully undergone the process of quality accreditation

VCQA is an exclusive service for members of Volunteering England. There are no immediate costs connected to it, since the membership fee for volunteer development agencies includes the accreditation. The annual fee is £116. However, as it has become clear from the process described above, there are costs involved in carrying out the analysis and delivering the portfolio. The PQASSO workpack is available for £95, and an additional CD-ROM with different forms and materials costs £54.

Further, it is necessary to consider the following components (See: Charities Evaluation Services):

- Depending on whether an external consultant is hired: consultant fees (about £500 per day), travel costs and overnight stays.
- Internal costs connected to carrying out the analysis and completing the portfolio. Support time for the consultant including administrative support and meeting the consultant.
- Steering group costs: travel expenses, room hire and refreshments.
- Administrative costs: telephone, printing, telephone interviews or posting surveys.
- User feedback in workshops, focus groups or interviews, including room hire, refreshments etc.

Whether working with a consultant or carrying out the analysis oneself, the following elements should be included into the time and cost frame:

- Meeting to kick off the process
- Research of existing data
- Drafting interview schedules and developing questionnaires for users
- Qualitative interviews with selected users
- Interviews with staff
- Data analysis
- Writing of report

For an organisation with five members of staff and 200 customers Charity Evaluation Service estimates about 20 external consultant workdays to carry out an evaluation. Doing the evaluation oneself will require more time. Depending on the level of experience and the structure of a volunteer centre, the whole process will at least take half a year. The usual time to complete the process is one year; small organisations with limited resources often need more time.

3   Achievements and problems of the accreditation process

Does the model keep what it promised? A review of the accreditation process carried out by the English Volunteering Hub concluded that "Volunteer Centres were on the whole positive about the accreditation process, which was seen as beneficial" (Brevis 2008, 35). Complaints

were made about the great amount of time required to carry out the process. Also, the quality certificate did not yet disseminate sufficiently into the community of funders. Not all funders recognised VCQA, with the result, that centres that had gone through the lengthy process of accreditation where disappointed when finding out that it did not live up to its promises. A lack of acceptance within VC's, where people might be opposed to quality measurement, also has to be taken into consideration. However, with more than 300 volunteer centres certified by now, it is likely that VCQA establishes itself as an acknowledged standard for VC's in England. The English strategy on volunteer infrastructure in "Building on Success" sets the milestone for general recognition of the VCQA process for the year 2014 (Penberthy and Forster 2004, 49). It is to be reached only at the very end of one decade of strategic development.

The Volunteer Centre brand has helped to raise awareness for volunteering in local communities. The Volunteer Hub report, however, concludes that there is still "much work to do to show statutory bodies how volunteering can help them achieve their objectives at local, sub-regional and regional levels" (Brevis 2008, 39).

On the practical level, problems can arise from the work load connected to the process. There is a danger of organisations getting stuck in implementation. And there is, of course, the need to first achieve the standards that are required. Some complain that, in practice, the six functions lead to overload for many volunteer centres that work with rather limited resources (Howlett 2008). They often take on additional projects to enlarge their pool of resources. This, however, can even increase overload because new projects entail additional tasks.

The paradox is that quality accreditation has to be managed besides core activities; but at the same times, it requires the full commitment of a VC's staff, at least for the crucial period of completing the portfolio.

Volunteering England has developed a number of other programmes and processes to support quality development of volunteer developing agencies. These include Excellence in Volunteer Management, a programme based on a national training needs analysis 2006. It offers tools and training for managers. Another programme, the Management Development Programme for Volunteer Centre Managers (MDPVCM), was funded by the Volunteering Hub but could not be continued due to lack of funding. Further, there are Investment in Volunteers (IiV) and Training Needs, both also aimed at improving support for volunteering.

4   Transferability of the model

The Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation certificate is geared towards a large network of volunteer development agencies and volunteer centres. Its background is an intensive political and administrative debate in England on the culture and significance of volunteering on the one hand, and a powerful national umbrella organisation (VE) to support volunteering. The accreditation process departs from a well defined consensus on core functions of volunteer centres. These have been developed as the result of several major reviews on the state of the volunteer sector.

Currently, comparable conditions are not met in Finland. A first step would be the definition of the role and function of volunteer development agencies. Only against this background, it is possible to define quality standards that are to be met. At the moment, first steps into this direction are taken. A proposal issued by the Finnish Citizen Forum (2010) starts of with ensuring resources to act, it then takes on board information, influencing the public and other functions. Finally, it includes support and cooperation in training. It is a working document that supports the formulation of a national strategy for volunteering infrastructure.

The accreditation process in England is rather sophisticated, and so is the support machinery offered by Volunteering England and related organisations. Since the number of agencies in Finland is much smaller, it does not seem necessary to standardise the process to such an extent. Suggested, a consensus on quality standards based on core functions has been reached, there is no reason not to use the English experience to create similar tools for quality accreditation.

The mixture of self-assessment and an external evaluation of the assessment report seems a reasonable way to proceed. It is also used in other European countries, e.g. Germany and the Netherlands. Self-assessment reduces costs and allows for flexibility that is essential when dealing with small voluntary organisations. External oversight and evaluation is needed to guarantee reliable and equal standards across the country.

The national network of volunteering development agencies can probably be used as a platform, to start such a process. One difficulty will be to reach an agreement on the range and level of indicators that will be used in such an endeavour. A second challenge will most likely be the establishment of a network of experienced peers to externally review the self-

assessment reports of individual agencies. These are the first issues that have to be tackled when aiming at the establishment of quality accreditation for volunteer development agencies.

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Appendix 1:

Table 4: List of selected quality management tools available for quality assessment in voluntary organisations

Tool
PQASSO
Investors in People
EFQM Exellence Model
ISO 9000
Social auditing
Quality marks
Charter Mark
Big Picture
Investing in Volunteers
Quality First
Reach
C3Perform
NAVCA Performace Standard & Quality Mark
The Hallmarks of an Effective Charity

Sources: Charities Evaluation Service (2002); Quality standards for the voluntary & community sector (2009).

Appendix 2: Abridged evidence guide

Table 5: Volunteer centre quality accreditation guide for gathering portfolio evidence

(adapted from the Volunteering England VCQA Handbook)

Core function	Refined activity	Essential evidence outputs	Guidance on required deliveries
Brokerage	Promotion to local community	1a Leaflet, 1b weblink	• Personal interview • Indication of personal benefits, • VCs contact data, • Access hours
	Promotion to organisations	2a Leaflet, 2b weblink	• Indication that VC is aimed at public, private voluntary and community sector • Contact details
	Consistent experience for clients and effective management	3 Customer care policy	• Clear definitions (enquiry, opportunity) • Opportunity guide • Mismatch procedure • Follow-up system (individuals, organisations) • Periodic evaluation • Complaints procedure
		4 Follow-up reports	• Methods • Outcome • Conclusions • 10% response rate, covering three month, not older that 12 month
		5 Evaluation survey	• Methods • Conclusion on local impact and action points • 10% response rate, covering three month, not older that 24 month
Marketing	Plan	6 Annual marketing plan	• Covering 12 month, not older than 24 month • Desired results and measurement method • Tasks • Human and financial resources • Evaluation plan
		7 Published items	• 2 promotional items for events • 2 promotional items generated after events aiming at the public domain
	Evaluation	8 Evaluation report	• Evaluation of success of each activity/event planned • Detailed analysis • Action points and lessons learnt • Reflections on the evaluation mechanism • Local impact of marketing on volunteering

Good practice development	Coherent and logical provision of volunteer management learning	9 Learning needs survey	• Intended audience • Needed skills/knowledge • Best form of delivery • Desired outcomes • How to evaluate • Provided as a report not older than 24 month
		10 Programme of learning provision	• Training session, coaching, workshops, presentations, forums, distant learning etc. not older than 18 month • Published programme • Course materials • Publicity materials • Action plan • Materials for presentation • Forum agenda • Copies of good practice guide
	Evaluation	11 Evaluation report	• Identification of work being evaluated • Analysis of learning outcome • Information on success/actions points • Impact of training provision
Developing volunteering opportunities	Coherent, methodological and rational plan	12 Action plan	• Specified profile of volunteers • Overview of existing volunteering opportunities • Best form of delivery • Desired outcomes • Evaluation plan
	Development of opportunities to increase diversity of volunteers	13a Form A with contact details of four organisations supported	• Indication of support for organisations increasing diversity of volunteers • One organisation each from public, private, voluntary and community sector
	Development of opportunities to increase range/type of opportunities	13b Form B with contact details of four organisations supported	• Indication of support for organisations increasing variety of volunteer opportunities • One organisation each from public, private, voluntary and community sector
	Development carried out with volunteer-led groups	13c Form C with contact details of four organisations supported	• Support for community organisations in developing volunteer opportunities
	Evaluation	14 Evaluation report	• Identification of work being evaluated • Information on success/learning points • Impact on local volunteering opportunities
Policy response and campaigning	Understanding of and campaigning on key policy issues	15 Policy and campaigning activity	• Evidence on attempts to influence policy on at least two issues, not older than 24 month • Planning process, actions plan, evaluation plan • Description of representation of volunteer voices • Supporting documents: minutes, letters, emails, documents, plans, press releases etc. • Impact on local volunteering

Strategic development of volunteering	Strong relationships with stakeholders	16 Evidence of engagement with local stakeholders	- Evidence of working with three central organisations or strategic bodies like Local Strategic Partnership, Capacity Builders, Sports Consortium etc. - Business plan, volunteering strategies, partnership agreements about Volunteer Centre staff etc. - Minutes of meetings - Activity undertaken - Impact
	Strategy for long term sustainability of volunteering support	17 Business plan for development of volunteering infrastructure services	- Planned development of delivery in the six core functions - Partners - Short, medium, long term goals - Best form of delivery - Identification of barriers/risks - Evaluation plan - Impact - SMART targets: goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and hava a time limit - Schedule of work: tasks, activities, responsible person

Appendix 3: Overview of VCQA

Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation
- Conditional to use the brand Volunteer Centre
- *Delivery* of functions: brokerage, marketing, good practice development, developing volunteer opportunities, policy response and campaigning, strategic development of volunteering
- *Monitoring* of outcomes
- Builds on internal quality management
- Conducted as self-assessment
- Membership fee (no other official costs), process costs, costs of surveys etc.
- About 12 month needed

Elements
- Self-assessment report: portfolio of evidence
- Support: workshop, 1-2-1 session, website
- Independent assessment report
- Certification

Process

Goal > registration > internal analysis > portfolio > assessment > standardisation > certification > dissemination > reapplication

Tools for support
- Handbook
- Website
- Guides (research, functions), forms
- Internal management tool (e,g, PQASSO)
- Workshop, 1-2-1 session
- Email, telephone
- Good evidence examples

Benefits
- Continuous improvement through monitoring: own organisation's efficiency and effectiveness: processes, goals, staff etc.
- Improvement of service
- Credibility
- Funding
- Networking

Structure of portfolio
- Function - outcome – activity - refined activities - essential evidence outputs - guidance on deliveries
- 21 essential evidence outputs

Appendix 4: The VCQA process

Goal definition	• delivery of 6 functions
Registration	• online
Analysis	• self-assessment process • internal quality management • collection of evicence
Delivery of portfolio	• paper copy
Assessment	• independent team • report; "pass "or "pass with conditions" (resubmission after 6 month)
Standadisation panel	• ratification of assessment results • selection of good practice examples
Certification	• seal for three years • branding as Volunteer Centre
Dissemination	• informing stakehholders and public • informing funders
Re-application	• after three years