

# MICRO-VOLUNTEERING MASTERCLASS

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**NCO**  
CHAMPIONING  
VOLUNTARY  
ACTION

# AIMS OF THE MASTERCLASS

- To share and discuss the research findings
- To discuss micro-volunteering good practice
- To consider why you might offer micro-volunteering in your organisation and what opportunities it might offer
- Identify challenges around implementing micro-volunteering and share potential solutions to help you develop opportunities in your organisation
- Identify next steps for taking micro-volunteering forward in your organisation

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Organisation
- Do you offer micro-volunteering opportunities? Or are you thinking about it?

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

# WHY MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

Increased interest and attention

From volunteers and organisations

- From commentators
- From the Government - 2011 Giving White Paper:  
*“...great opportunities to get new volunteers involved in social action”*

New technologies contributing to the development of social action

Lots of enthusiasm and some scepticism

Lack of evidence

# DEFINITION: KEY FEATURES

- **Duration** – it involves small increments of time
- **Access** – It is easy to get started
- **Immediacy** – it is quick to start and continue, and requires minimal planning
- **Regularity** – it can be a one-off or repeated
- **Activity** – it involves discrete actions
- **Convenience** – you decide when and where
- **Level of formality** – no formal agreement between the organisation and the volunteer is needed
- **Location** – it can be online and offline

## DEFINITION

Micro-volunteering is small bite-size volunteering with no commitment to repeat and with minimum formality, involving short and specific actions that are quick to start and complete.

# POP QUIZ

1. Teaching someone to read
2. Street collection
3. Mentoring someone online
4. Complete an online questionnaire
5. Working in a charity shop
6. Working front of house at a museum
7. Sign a petition
8. Information assistant for 3 hours a week
9. Proof-read a document
10. Knit a hat for a premature baby
11. Befriend a young person
12. Helpline volunteer for bereavement service
13. Bake a cake for a fundraising event
14. Clean up a park for 2 hours

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# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Micro-volunteering actions have always existed but have not been labelled as such

Smalls actions often not fully recognised or promoted

Most disliked the term

- **Is it just another buzzword?**
- **Lack of clarity - not very intuitive, no shared understanding**

'Micro' has a negative connotation for some, as does 'volunteering'

# POTENTIAL OF MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

## For volunteers

- Greater control over their own volunteering experience
- Quicker engagement
- Taster of different experiences
- Expression of values and beliefs
- A feel-good factor of being able to contribute

# POTENTIAL OF MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

## For organisations

- Increase diversity of volunteering offer
- Broaden the volunteer base
- Help retain volunteers
- Enhance the reach and capacity of organisations
- Improve cross-team working

# POTENTIAL OF MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

## **For beneficiaries and the community**

- Raising awareness
- Increase funds
- Increase community engagement
- Tackle social issues
- Enhance local services

# THE CHALLENGES

Several challenges of micro-volunteering were identified:

## **Creating and managing micro-volunteering activities**

- Lack of time, skills and resources
- Lack of suitable activities

## **Managing micro-volunteers**

- Recruitment and retention e.g. Digital divide
- Building relationships
- Identifying, assessing and managing risks

# THE CHALLENGES

**Measuring, monitoring and demonstrating impact**

**Need for a culture change – organisational and beyond**

- Cynicism
- Cross-team working
- Branding



Before you take the  
plunge...

Photo:  
Zurich Community Trust  
17 NCVO member since 1996

# IS MICRO-VOLUNTEERING RIGHT FOR MY ORGANISATION?

# WHAT WILL VOLUNTEERING LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

1) Write a newspaper headline from 2025 to sum up the latest volunteering news.

2) What is your strategic direction and how does micro-volunteering fit into this?

# YOUR MICRO-VOLUNTEERING OFFER

Looking at the key features of MV, what micro-volunteering opportunities do you or could you offer?

What is the potential impact ?

- On volunteers
- On organisation
- On beneficiaries and wider community

# CHALLENGES

Which challenges are the biggest or most relevant for your organisation, and why?

1. Lack of time, skills and resources to create & manage activities
2. Lack of suitable activities
3. Recruitment and retention (incl. digital divide)
4. Building relationships
5. Identifying, assessing and managing risks
6. Demonstrating, monitoring and measuring impact
7. Cynicism – among organisation, volunteers, wider society (incl. need for cross-team working)
8. Branding and promoting MV
9. Other

# SOLUTIONS

## **Select one challenge**

How might you overcome this challenge in your organisations?

## **For those organisations offering MV**

Is there anything you would do differently?

Is there anything that has or has not worked?

# CHALLENGE 1

## CREATING MEANINGFUL MICRO-VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

- Adapt existing opportunities
- Consider remote opportunities and volunteering out of usual office hours
- Run events
- Volunteer generated ideas
- Speak to other colleagues and teams
- Run a pilot
- Be transparent and clear

# CHALLENGE 2

## MANAGING MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

- Adapt existing opportunities
- Consider remote opportunities and volunteering out of usual office hours
- Run events
- Volunteer generated ideas
- Speak to other colleagues and teams
- Run a pilot
- Be transparent and clear

# CHALLENGE 3

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MICRO-VOLUNTEERS

- .Give volunteers control over how much contact they have
- .Understand motivations
- .Say thank you
- .Communicate about impact
- .Offer social opportunities
- .Accept they might come and go

# NEXT STEPS

Are there any actions you are going to take forward?

Who are you going to engage with?

Overall reflections



Photo:  
Learning through Landscapes  
NCVO member since 2000

# FURTHER INFORMATION

## **Micro-volunteering research and guidance**

<http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2014/01/23/leave-the-micromanagement-out-of-micro-volunteering/>

## **Practical support**

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/volunteering>

<http://knowhownonprofit.org/>

## **Data and research**

<http://data.ncvo.org.uk/>

<http://www.ivr.org.uk/>

# FURTHER INFORMATION

## **Blogs**

<http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/>

## **Investing in Volunteers**

<http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>

## **Become a member**

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/join-ncvo>

## GET IN TOUCH

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