

Valuing Volunteering

By Petra Cook and Nicky Jackson

chartered

management

institute

inspiring leaders



A route to professional development:
Views from VSO volunteers and managers
January 2006

Supported by



Sharing skills
Changing lives

Foreword

Governments, community-based organisations and small enterprises in the developing world are recognising the need to improve their internal structures and processes in order to meet the task of tackling poverty and disadvantage in their communities. This is reflected in an increasing number of requests received by VSO from overseas partners seeking volunteers with management or business backgrounds. Yet previous VSO research suggests that some individuals in the UK may be reluctant to commit to volunteer placements because of concerns about the impact absence might have on their career.

For the past five years we have been working in partnership with VSO, enabling our people to take advantage of challenging overseas volunteer placements. As a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, innovation is important to us. At the core of delivering innovation to our clients is a dynamic, diverse and creative workforce.

I therefore welcome the research that has been carried out by the Chartered Management Institute, in partnership with VSO, to evaluate the professional development benefits of volunteering. The findings demonstrate that volunteering can be a route to gaining and enhancing important business and management skills. Employers in the UK should do more to embrace the skills and experience that managers with volunteering experience could contribute to their organisations. Individuals should also take advantage of the development opportunities that volunteering could present to them; career paths are becoming more diverse and there are more ways to get ahead than staying in the office.

Vernon Ellis, International Chairman, Accenture

Acknowledgements

The Chartered Management Institute acknowledges the financial support and advice provided by VSO for this project. The authors would particularly like to thank Sonja Mitchell, Laura Solomon and Reshna Shah from VSO for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the project. The Institute is very grateful to all Institute members and VSO volunteers who participated in this research and acknowledges the work of Nick Rubashow at Makrotest, the specialist research consultancy, who undertook the telephone interviews and detailed qualitative interviews. Thanks also to Ben Langdon for providing the front cover photograph.

Introduction

With markets becoming ever more globalised, the UK is increasingly dependent on its knowledge economy, in which being able to solve issues of complexity is paramount. In many environments, managers need to be able to work with people who have different timeframes, values and interests. Having a broad viewpoint, being able to communicate well across all levels and having the ability to take responsibility for delivering results are critical management skills in today's workplace.

This research primarily explores the extent to which volunteering can help to develop these critical professional management skills. It assesses the personal experiences of senior managers and also their views on volunteering in their capacity as employers. The study also examines the views and actual experiences of returned VSO volunteers.

The findings help to illustrate the business benefits for companies and personal development opportunities for individuals that can be gained through voluntary activity. It also helps to highlight routes available, such as Chartered Manager status, for returned volunteers to achieve recognition for the skills they have gained whilst volunteering.

Research Method

The quantitative research was undertaken among a stratified sample of 5,000 individual Institute members to represent the employer sample, drawn across senior managers and across all sectors and sizes of organisation. These managers were sent an online survey in October 2005 and 516 managers replied. At the same time, a telephone survey was conducted with 100 returned VSO business and management volunteers, who had completed a two-year placement overseas.

From these two quantitative surveys, a total of 20 follow-up qualitative telephone interviews were carried out. These were split evenly amongst both VSO returned volunteers and employers of potential or returned volunteers.

Key Findings

Extent of voluntary activity

- 78 per cent of managers are actively involved in some form of voluntary activity. For 60 per cent of managers this takes place in their local community, whilst 6 per cent have had some experience of voluntary work in a developing country.
- Managers who volunteer are particularly keen to work in areas relating to business advice (37 per cent); education (36 per cent); environment (19 per cent); and tackling poverty in developing countries (16 per cent).

Motivations

- 79 per cent of managers cited the desire “to give something back” and “to improve things, help people” as the key reasons for volunteering.
- Although such altruistic reasons came first, there was significant appreciation that those volunteering could benefit themselves, in terms of meeting new people and building networks (23 per cent), learning new skills (16 per cent) and as a route to professional development (12 per cent).
- Among the returned VSO volunteers, the key reason for volunteering was “to experience living and working in a different culture”, alongside the desire to give something back and specifically to help make a difference in a developing country.
- Only one in ten of the returned VSO volunteers identified the desire to develop their professional skills or broaden their management skills at the outset of their placement. However, on reflection, the majority then highly rated the skills they developed during their two-year placements overseas on return to the UK.

Management skills developed through volunteering

- 94 per cent of employers agree or strongly agree that long-term overseas voluntary activities broaden skills and experiences, and 48 per cent claim that it increases employability.
- Nearly 60 per cent of employers agree that local voluntary projects can be an effective method in developing management skills, and 39 per cent consider long-term overseas voluntary projects as a specific development tool.
- People skills are considered to be highly developed through volunteering and over a third of employers reported skills gaps in this area.
- Those volunteers who had returned from two-year placements overseas felt that it was an extremely effective route to developing many of the particular management skills that employers are experiencing difficulty in recruiting such as: working with different cultures; communication; problem-solving; managing change; influencing and persuading; conflict management; and coaching and mentoring.

Enhanced employability of long-term overseas volunteers

- 80 per cent of returned volunteers felt their confidence in their own abilities had increased through doing a VSO placement. The same proportion of returned volunteers also believed that they had gained skills they would not have acquired if they had stayed in the UK.
- On return to the UK, the majority of returned volunteers were in employment within 3 months, and 83 per cent had found appropriate work within 6 months. Generally, there was not much movement between jobs as nearly half of returned volunteers had not changed jobs more than once.
- Although 88 per cent of employers claimed that they would not be adverse to employing a manager who has recently returned from volunteering overseas, those questioned in more detail still mentioned possible drawbacks such as the difficulty of adapting to being back to the UK; being out of touch; and losing certain technical skills, which was referred to as “skills fade”.
- Employers in the public sector were more inclined to see the benefits of volunteering compared with the private sector. However, there are still perceptions across both sectors that long-term overseas placements were for those wanting to take a ‘gap year’ or simply travel.

Recognising the value of voluntary activity

- It is important that volunteers make the most of their voluntary experiences when presenting them to a potential employer. Key skills that returned VSO volunteers felt should be presented included:
 - **Responsibility** – being in a position of authority with accountability for results
 - **Communication** - with all levels of management and different types of people
 - **Creativity** – having to be resourceful and find ways around problems
 - **Commitment** – to projects and their work in general.
- 41 per cent of managers agreed that they would be more inclined to employ a VSO volunteer who has some form of formal recognition of managing significant change, such as Chartered Manager status, and 36 per cent felt that some form of management qualification would be useful. The VSO volunteers in particular saw value in keeping a workbook to help record their achievements during their voluntary activity.
- 41 per cent of employers also felt that it would be valuable to have more information available about the professional development benefits of overseas volunteering.

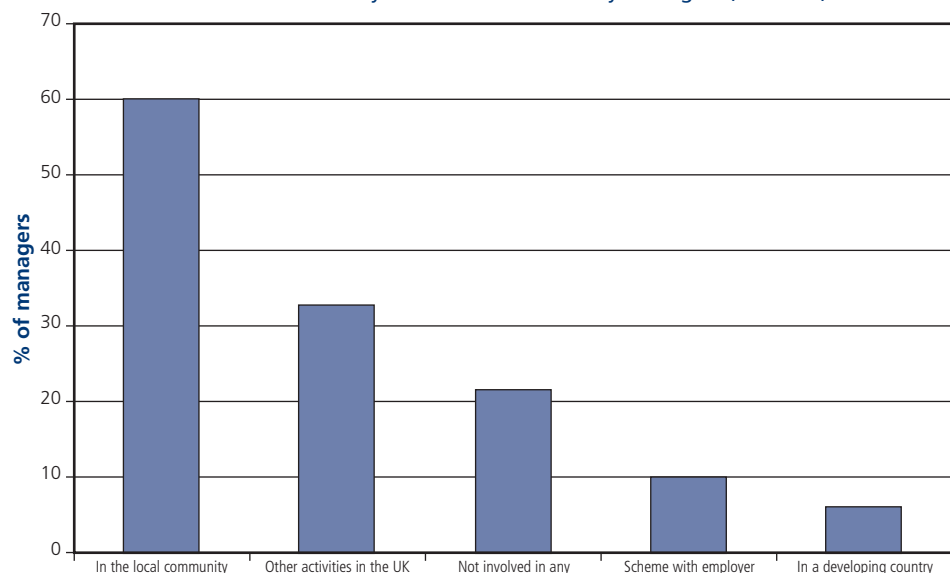
1. Managerial volunteering: the landscape

1.1 Extent of volunteering

At a time when many businesses openly recognise the importance of incorporating social responsibility into business values, it is perhaps not surprising to find that 78 per cent of managers surveyed reported that they have been involved in some form of voluntary activity.

However, only 10 per cent of managers were involved in voluntary work through a scheme organised by their employer. It appears that the majority of managers take up volunteering to meet personal objectives and through their engagement with issues or interests in their local community. Six per cent of managers, a small but significant number, had been involved in activities in developing countries.

Chart 1: Voluntary activities carried out by managers (base 516)



1.2 Volunteering demographics - by organisational size and age

Looking at the results broken down by organisational size (see Table 1), managers in the smallest organisations (0-25 employees) had carried out the most volunteering in the last five years, with 73 per cent volunteering within their local community. From the more detailed interviews with managers, those from smaller specialist companies noted how they used their voluntary activities to help build and maintain networks that could offer potential benefits to their business.

Not surprisingly, more managers in larger organisations have done some voluntary work through a scheme with their employer (12 per cent), as typically larger organisations will often have more flexibility in terms of time and investment to help support employees who participate in these schemes.

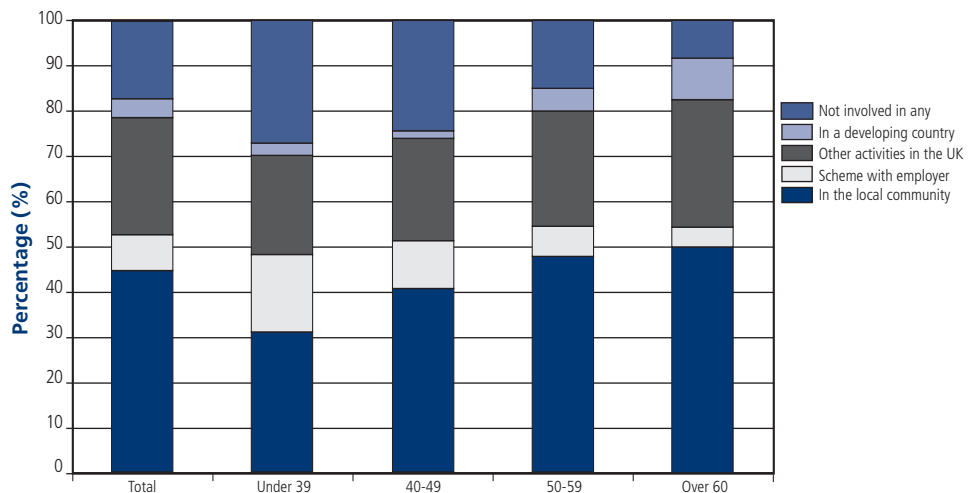
Looking at those managers who had volunteered overseas, they come from either end of the spectrum in terms of the size of their organisation - either micro businesses or large organisations. This was also reflected in the sample of returned volunteers, who either came from companies with less than 25 employees or companies with over 1,000 employees

Table 1: Type of voluntary activities managers have been involved in broken down by organisation size

<i>Base: 516 managers</i>	0-25 employees (%)	26-250 employees (%)	Over 250 employees (%)
Voluntary work with your local community	73	60	52
Voluntary work through a scheme with your employer	7	9	12
Other voluntary activities in the UK	43	35	27
Voluntary work in a developing country	9	3	6
Have not been involved in voluntary work	17	24	26

(see profile of respondents - page 20). Looking at the age profile of those who volunteer (see Chart 2), there is a noticeable trend for voluntary activity to increase with age. The only exception is that younger managers are more likely to take part in schemes offered by their employers (23 per cent).

Chart 2: Types of voluntary activities managers have been involved in (broken down by age)

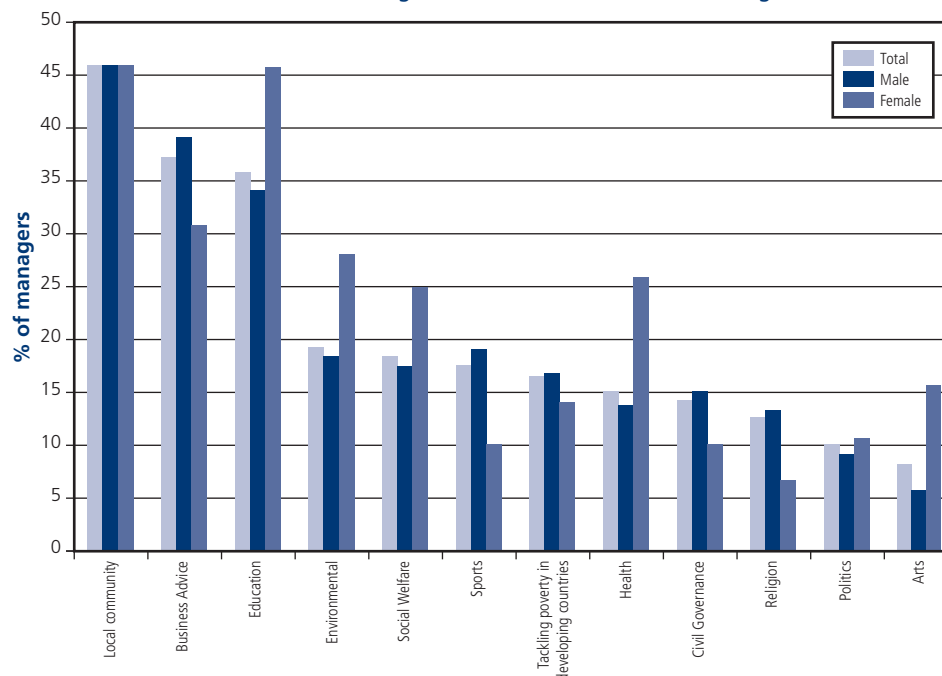


1.3 Key areas of interest for volunteering

As already identified, the area which interests the majority of managers is their local community. Looking at specific issues, managers who volunteer are particularly keen to work in areas relating to business advice (37 per cent); education (36 per cent); the environment (19 per cent); and tackling poverty in developing countries (16 per cent).

There are certain areas of volunteering which attract more interest from female managers, most notably education, the environment, health and the arts. Male managers, on the other hand, expressed a keener interest in business advice, sports and religion than their female counterparts (see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Managers' areas of interest in volunteering



From the detailed interviews with managers, there was a considerable variety of voluntary activities, and these included:

- working as a trustee / governor for a local organisation or school, or in one case a large national organisation
- working as a sports coach or trainer
- working as a fundraiser
- running specific projects for a voluntary organisation
- carrying out specific projects overseas.

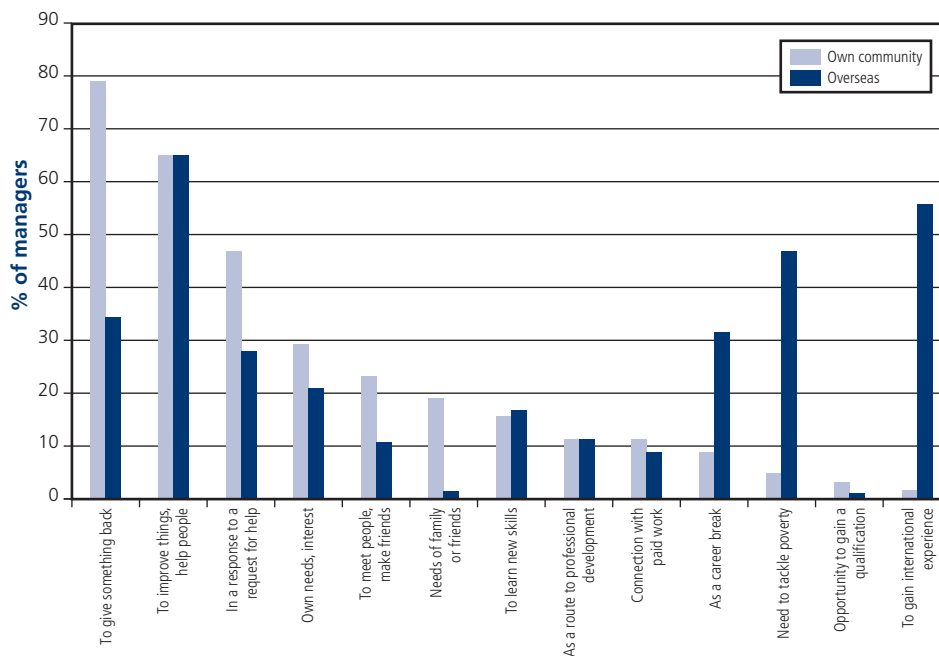
1.4 Motivations to volunteer

Managers felt that the top motivation for people to volunteer within their own community was 'to give something back' (79 per cent). The main reason cited for volunteering overseas, was 'to improve things, help people' (65 per cent).

Although altruistic reasons came first, there was a significant appreciation that volunteering could also help career development in terms of meeting new people (23 per cent); learning new skills (16 per cent); and as a route to professional development (12 per cent).

Volunteers who had returned from placements overseas cited a variety of reasons for wanting to go, including 'to experience living and working in a different culture' (37 per cent), as well as 'to give something back to society' (28 per cent). Many also felt it was time for a new challenge and adventure or wanted a change from their current role. One in ten mentioned that they had been motivated to volunteer in order to develop their professional skills or broaden their business and management skills.

Chart 4: Managers' perceptions as to the motivations to volunteer



Personal perspective – challenging traditional career paths

A returned volunteer, who had worked in a senior role as a marketing director for a telecommunications company before going overseas with VSO, believes that *“taking on job after job within a commercial environment is not the only way to career development”*. When signing-up to volunteer overseas, admittedly professional development was not his key reason, but in hindsight he considers that it was a unique opportunity to broaden his management and international skills: *“In terms of the experiences and different cultural views, I have developed a different way of treating people and approaching problems. I think it was a completely invaluable experience”*. He found no problem getting employment with another commercial organisation on return to the UK and said that they saw his voluntary placement as a major benefit.

In the detailed follow-up interviews with returned VSO volunteers, several said that the initial motivation had been to give something back using the skills they already had, rather than to develop new skills. However, nearly all the volunteers thought that the experience of working in a different culture would contribute to both their personal and professional development. Many had identified the following management skills as those they thought they might gain prior to their overseas experience: mentoring and coaching; communication; dealing with people with vastly different experiences; problem solving; and taking on more responsibility than in the UK.

2. Management skills developed through volunteering

Employer perspective – management skills developed overseas

A senior manager working for the Ministry of Defence has employed many returned volunteers and believes the skills they learn overseas are invaluable. *“It pushes individuals outside their normal comfort zone and the experiences they get from that can apply to their day job and they may also view the way they do things slightly differently in the future”*. From his perspective, volunteering can help to develop leadership, project and programme management as well as allowing individuals to enhance their people skills. *“When it comes to planning, they are probably more astute and have a better judgement of the various factors they are considering – both through having practised them and just the wider exposure to different environments”*.

2.1 Employers' views: volunteering to develop skills

We asked managers to rate what they thought were the most effective methods of developing management skills. Almost 60 per cent of managers either agreed or strongly agreed that local voluntary projects are an effective development method and 39 per cent valued long-term overseas projects as a development route. It is possible that long-term volunteering did not rate quite as highly compared with other methods as it is likely that most managers have had less experience and exposure to its benefits.

Volunteering can also provide various methods of development indirectly, such as project management and cross-functional working. People skills and communication can also be highly developed through voluntary activities, which involve an element of mentoring, especially during long-term overseas placements.

Base: 516 managers	% of managers agree or strongly agree
Project management	77
Cross-functional working	76
Informal mentoring	74
Formal mentoring	70
Secondment to another organisation	65
Other management qualifications	64
In-company job rotation	63
Action-learning teams	63
360 degree feedback	60
Local voluntary projects	59
Intensive high level training programme	59
MBA	53
Other business school programmes	51
Participation in seminars/conferences	50
Long-term overseas voluntary projects	39
Accelerated learning	20

Table 2: Managers who agreed or strongly agreed that the methods were effective in developing management skills.

Those managers interviewed about the benefits of volunteering that they had experienced, either personally or through employing returned volunteers in terms of management skills, identified the following areas:

- General management skills - the ability to deal with a wide variety management styles and levels, team leading, problem solving, communication skills and greater awareness of others
- Strategic understanding - through working as a trustee at Board level or negotiating with senior Government officials overseas
- Coaching, teaching and mentoring skills
- Building and maintaining networks
- Gaining and further developing technical skills - the ability to design a database, business plan/project management, dealing with planning applications
- Being a good employer - several of those from larger organisations commented that it was valuable for volunteers to build up goodwill and contacts within the local community.

Overall, employers had extremely positive opinions as to the benefits of long-term volunteering. Table 3 shows that 94 per cent believe that volunteering broadens skills and experience, 70 per cent agree that volunteers are more capable of handling diversity and 48 per cent agree that it increases employability.

<i>Base: 516 managers</i>	<i>% of managers agree or strongly agree</i>
It broadens skills & experiences	94
Volunteers are more capable of handling diversity	70
It increases employability	48
Volunteers lose touch with the latest thinking & market trends	18
Volunteers become out of date with new technology	65
Other management qualifications	14
Volunteers are less loyal to employers	11
It is like taking a holiday	5

Table 3: Managers who agreed or strongly agreed to statements regarding volunteering.

2.2 Returned volunteers' perspectives

Personal perspective – valuing skills developed overseas

An EMEA sales and development manager, who was in the Gambia with VSO in 2003, felt that his voluntary placement considerably helped him to develop particular skills. *“People who have spent time in that type of environment show a number of qualities, which you probably don’t find in a lot of other business people”*. He now values the experience within his current role particularly in terms of communicating with people internationally. He no longer assumes that there is just one right way around solving a problem: *“I think what it has made me learn, probably more than anything else, is to be open-minded about the way in which people approach things, different issues, and different problems”*.

Eighty per cent of returned volunteers felt that they had gained skills they otherwise would not have done in the UK by volunteering overseas. The types of skills they felt were developed overseas were extremely broad, ranging from project management to influencing and persuading. Table 4 shows that there is a high positive net level of agreement in terms of the development of key management skills whilst on an overseas placement.

Base: 100 returned volunteers	Net level of agreement
Working with different cultures	92
Communication	74
Problem-solving	57
Influencing & persuading	46
Managing change	37
Coaching & mentoring	37
Encouraging innovation	35
Negotiation	35
Developing personal networks	33
Project management	33
Leadership	33
Conflict management	19
Managing diversity	19
Ethical practice	18
Strategic thinking	17
Managing information & knowledge	12
Meeting customer needs	5

Table 4: Net level of agreement by returned volunteers regarding specific skills that were developed during their VSO placement

As volunteers are immersed into a completely new environment, it is not surprising that ‘working with different cultures’ was the skill which nearly all of the returned volunteers agreed they had developed (92 per cent).

In addition to this, in the detailed follow-up interviews, returned volunteers mentioned specific skills such as training, financial skills and problem-solving. They also specified that they had to operate at many different levels, for example, communicating with senior government officials. As a result, many felt that communication was a key skill that has been developed through volunteering and this was mentioned in many different contexts by the volunteers.

Some of the volunteers commented that they became more patient when dealing with people from many different backgrounds and cultures. They had developed “more of the ‘softer’, people-focused skills such as communication and coaching and mentoring”.

Eighty per cent also agreed that doing a VSO placement had helped to increase their confidence in their own abilities. Indeed, in follow-up interviews, several volunteers attributed their increased confidence to the fact that they had taken on far more responsibility than in their previous employment.

Personal perspective – confidence gained overseas

“The diversity, the self-confidence, the openness to change. The good side of being abroad is you can come back to the UK and say ‘No, I know you’ve been doing that for the last 20 years, but believe me, there is another way to do this’”. You can look clearly at problems. I think passion as well – that ties into the self-confidence.”

VSO Returned Volunteer – Management Advisor in Nigeria 2003.

3. Attitudes to employing volunteers

3.1 Context - the market for management skills

Around a third of employers agreed that their organisation has problems recruiting managers. Table 5 shows some of the particular skills gaps in organisations as mentioned by employers. This has been set alongside the list of key skills developed by VSO volunteers whilst on their placements. This clearly shows some alignment in the skills which managers have problems recruiting in and the skills which are developed by volunteers.

For the top three skills gaps mentioned by managers, on average 50 per cent of returned volunteers agreed that they developed these particular skills abroad. This indicates that returned volunteers may potentially provide an untapped resource for organisations recruiting managers to consider.

Table 5: Skills gaps in organisations vs. skills developed by returned volunteers

	Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed (%)	
	Skills gaps in organisations <i>Base: 516 managers</i>	Skills developed by returned volunteers <i>Base: 100 returned volunteers</i>
Managing change	38	54
Coaching & mentoring	35	53
Conflict management	34	48
Strategic thinking	31	44
Leadership	30	53
Encouraging innovation	29	51
Communication	27	78
Managing diversity	26	48
Project management	25	58
Influencing & persuading	23	63

3.2 Employer attitudes towards volunteering

Overall, the experience of employing returned volunteers was generally viewed as positive. Sixteen per cent of the sample of managers had employed someone who had worked overseas in a voluntary capacity, and 67 per cent agreed that they brought different skills and experiences to the organisation in comparison with other employees. The attributes specifically mentioned included confidence, breadth of experience, ability to manage diversity, a wider perspective and greater flexibility.

Employer perspective - attitude to employing VSO volunteers

"I think VSO can add a great deal to an individual's outlook and perceptiveness. It can give a lot of positive evidence about public service, commitment to others and integrity."

Head of Legal & Democratic Services, a Borough Council

In the detailed interviews, employers had mixed reactions as to the impact of long-term volunteering on managers' employment prospects. Most employers believed that volunteering would improve employability due to broader skills, experience and confidence, although some thought this would depend on the type of job that was being considered. A minority felt that a long-term placement could have a detrimental impact, in terms of becoming out of date with the latest thinking and market trends or could make volunteers less loyal to their employers (see Table 3, page 10).

Table 6: Reaction from prospective employers to voluntary placements

<i>Base: 100 returned volunteers</i>	Returned volunteers (%)
Generally positive	51
Generally negative	7
Mixed reactions from different employers	18
No specific reaction	13

However, returned volunteers reported a positive response to their experience from prospective employers. Table 6 shows that 51 per cent of those in employment found that they had received a positive reaction, only 7 per cent had a negative reaction.

Table 7: Perception of returned volunteers of extent to which employers value volunteering as development of skills

<i>Base: 100 returned volunteers</i>	Returned volunteers – agree or strongly agree (%)
Communication	30
Problem-solving	29
Encouraging innovation	26
Influencing & persuading	24
Project management	24

Yet despite this, there was still concern from some returned volunteers that their skills were not fully appreciated by prospective employers. Looking at the top five skills which they personally felt were developed, Table 7 shows the extent to which they felt their employer valued their VSO experience in terms of developing particular skills.

In addition to this, 42 per cent of returned volunteers agreed that they were more focused on what they wanted from their careers having been overseas. Contrary to the perception amongst some employers that taking time out to volunteer was likely to decrease their loyalty to employers the opposite appears to be true.

Employer perspective – benefits of long-term volunteering

A group HR director for a large quantity surveyor was a strong advocate of the skills that can be developed through long-term overseas volunteering. His organisation offers sabbaticals to their staff and has found that returned volunteers come back refreshed and re-energised having taken the time to do something abroad and look at things from a different perspective. He feels that volunteers gain a sense of maturity and *“as volunteers go into a different areas, they learn to work with a different mind set ... we’ve found that they have been quite successful in moving on upwards within the organisation when they’ve come back”*.

3.3 Overseas volunteers’ experience of returning to work

Interestingly, out of the returned volunteers interviewed in the quantitative survey, of those seeking employment only 5 per cent found it difficult to find work on returning to the UK. Despite some employers’ concerns that returned volunteers may have trouble settling back into life in the UK, 68 per cent of returned volunteers were in employment within the first 3 months, 83 per cent had found appropriate work within 6 months; and nearly half have stayed in the same job since.

Returned volunteers during the qualitative interviews mentioned that their experience on return to the UK also depended on the type of sector or job for which they were applying. Those returning or entering the international charity sector found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that their experience was viewed in a very positive light.

Within the public sector, attitudes of employers to returned volunteers varied considerably. Although many were positive, there was still the perception that long-term overseas placements were for those wanting to take a ‘gap year’ or simply travel. There was also less understanding as to the benefits of volunteering from employers in the private sector and it was harder to persuade these employers as to the value of the experience.

4. Recognising and marketing the value of voluntary activity

A key issue for those who are involved in voluntary work is learning how to present their activities in a positive light to prospective employers. Although most returned volunteers claimed to have had a positive response from employers, there are still concerns that the prejudice still stands that volunteers are taking time-out from their careers, treating it as a break and will be out of touch with current markets.

In retrospect, most returned volunteers felt that it was important to present their voluntary placement as an integral part of their career development. It was crucial to highlight their placement in a positive light, emphasising the skills developed, especially as 80 per cent agreed that they had gained skills they otherwise would not have done if they had remained in the UK.

From the detailed follow-up interviews, most employers emphasised that employing anyone would always depend on how they presented themselves and their experience. However, employers generally had a clearer idea about the benefits that might be gained from short-term volunteering compared with long-term. In general, it was viewed that it was of considerable benefit to the organisation to encourage employees to volunteer on a short-term basis. In contrast, a few felt that there might be more risks involved with long-term volunteering due to 'skills-fade' and settling back into life in the UK.

Many employers commented that long-term volunteers would not necessarily be any less commercial, the important factor was that they were focused on specific goals and could show evidence that they were able to get tasks and jobs done.

Employers agreed that certain forms of accreditation would help present long-term volunteering in a more credible light (see Table 8). Forty-one per cent thought that having formal recognition of managing significant change, for example, Chartered Manager, would make them more inclined to employ a returned volunteer.

<i>Base: 516 managers</i>	Managers (%)
Formal recognition of managing significant change e.g. Chartered Manager	41
More info as to the professional development benefits of overseas volunteering	41
Reference from overseas employer	40
Endorsement of skills by key opinion formers	39
Formal management qualification	36
Nothing	12

Table 8: What managers felt would make them more inclined to employ a recently returned volunteer

During the interviews employers emphasised that it was important that the returned volunteers should clearly set out in their CVs and at interviews the specific skills that they had developed and how they had applied these in achieving successful outcomes whilst overseas. Several thought that some sort of accreditation, such as a qualification or Chartered Manager, would be useful, especially those working in public authority or larger organisations.

Returned volunteers also suggested that some form of accreditation through a work book would be useful in terms of presenting their achievements from their placement to employers. It was also mentioned that doing a distance learning course whilst volunteering could be valuable. In terms of the experiences and skills that they felt were important to present to potential employers, these included:

- **Responsibility** – being in a position of authority with accountability for results
- **Communication** - with all levels of management and different types of people
- **Creativity** – having to be resourceful and find ways around problems
- **Commitment** – to projects and their work in general.

Conclusions

Despite finding evidence of widespread volunteering, too many employers and also individual managers who engage in volunteering are failing to realise the full benefits that volunteering can offer as a route to learning highly transferable skills and professional development.

The research clearly showed how many VSO volunteers returned to the UK with new skills, far greater confidence and commitment, and as a result found new career paths opened up to them. Some selected to take up international positions in major companies and others took new insights and skills into their former working environments.

Recommendations for individual managers

Managers often decide to volunteer for altruistic reasons however they should also appreciate that a range of new skills can be developed through volunteering. It should be viewed as a reciprocal relationship where both parties gain benefits through the use of skills in a new context, culture or country.

Managers should record and recognise their voluntary achievements so that they can also improve their potential employability. They can do this by keeping an informal log or workbook of achievements or through formal accreditation through management qualifications, which can also be done through distance learning. For qualified managers looking to provide a portfolio of how they have achieved significant change, the Chartered Manager programme may be appropriate.

In today's flatter organisations, the concepts of a 'linear career ladder' or a 'job for life' are becoming anachronistic. Managers need to be more proactive in managing their own career development. Long-term volunteering should be considered as a route to professional development, particularly by those interested in seeking international jobs or working across diverse cultures.

**Recommendations
for employers**

Employers need to consider the value of volunteering as a route to professional development. Volunteering provides managers with the opportunity to undertake new challenges beyond the scope of their current employment and it is in the interest of organisations to do much more to support and encourage them to develop highly sought after skills.

In particular, employers should consider the relative benefits of providing or supporting time off for their employees to engage in voluntary activities ranging from short-term activities, to sabbaticals and also long-term placements overseas.

When recruiting new managers, employers should consider the particular benefits that can be offered by candidates who have volunteered overseas. This is particularly true of employers in the private sector as they are less likely to value the benefits of volunteering compared with the public sector. This should enable them to access a much wider talent pool of managers with valuable transferable skills developed through volunteering.

Profile of respondents

	% Base: managers 516	% Base: returned volunteers 100	
Sex			
Male	82	45	
Female	17	55	
No response	1	0	
Age			
Under 30	2	4	
30-39	8	27	
40-49	27	30	
50-59	48	14	
60-65	10	21	
Over 65	4	4	
No response	1	0	
Organisation size			
None, i.e. sole trader	9	12	
1-25	22	9	
26-50	5	3	
51-100	6	7	
101-250	8	2	
251-1,000	12	7	
1,001-5,000	16	14	
5,001-10,000	7	4	
Over 10,000	13	7	
No response	2	2	
N/A (not working)	0	33	
		<i>Before volunteering</i>	<i>After volunteering</i>
Status of organisation			
Public sector	24	19	27
Public limited company	18	3	1
Private limited company	31	21	6
Charity/not for profit	12	13	5
Partnership	4	34	15
Owner managed/sole trader	9	8	13
No response	2	2	33
Sector			
Banking/insurance/finance	3	21	10
Computer/IT services	6	2	1
Other business services	13	9	4
Central/local government	9	16	7
Construction	5	0	0
Education	12	9	10
Engineering	5	0	1
Health/social care	8	7	1
International development	2	0	4
Manufacturing	8	3	0
Sales/marketing/advertising	2	7	2
Uniformed/emergency services	5	1	0
Utilities	3	0	0
Transport	2	1	1
Retail	1	2	1
Tourism/hospitality/leisure	1	3	1
Charity/voluntary	0	17	21
Other	13	1	3
N/A (not working)	0	0	33
No response	2	1	0

Chartered Management Institute

The leading organisation for professional management

As the champion of management, the Chartered Management Institute shapes and supports the managers of tomorrow. By sharing the latest insights and setting standards in management development, we help to deliver results in a dynamic world.

Encouraging management development, improving business performance

The Institute offers a wide range of development programmes, qualifications, information resources, networking events and career guidance services to help managers and organisations meet new challenges in a fast-changing environment.

Shaping future management practice

With in-depth research and regular policy surveys of its 74,000 individual members and 480 corporate members, the Chartered Management Institute uses its deep understanding of the key issues to improve management performance.

VSO

Founded nearly 50 years, VSO is an international development charity that believes in the power of individuals to make a difference. Instead of sending emergency relief, we send people who live and work with local communities in some of the poorest countries across Africa and Asia.

At any one time there are 1,500 skilled, professional volunteers working in carefully selected partner organisations, from grassroots groups to government ministries, to help fight poverty and build a fairer world. A quarter of the people we now send come from management or business backgrounds. They have the skills to help our partners better plan and prioritise their work. By strengthening organisations, rather than just individuals, our volunteers provide a sustainable framework for change. The effects of their work can be multiplied and last long after they return home.

For further information contact:
VSO, 317 Putney Bridge Road
London, SW15 2PN
Tel: 020 8780 7500 Fax: 020 8780 7300
Email: enquiry@vso.org.uk
www.vso.org.uk

For more information contact the
Chartered Management Institute on:
Tel: 020 7421 2721 Fax: 020 7497 0463
Email: research@managers.org.uk
www.managers.org.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Certificate No FS28404

The Public Affairs Department
Chartered Management Institute
2 Savoy Court, Strand, London, WC2R 0EZ
Registered charity number 1091035
Incorporated by Royal Charter
ISBN 0-85946-440-7
©Chartered Management Institute, January 2006

