

Ethnic minority volunteering in Scotland

A perspective of mainstream organisations

Vibha Pankaj



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“In Scotland, how we develop our multi-ethnic country with all its complexities, differences, diversity and interests is one of the most challenging questions, and our responses will determine how far we are a civilised, tolerant and intelligent nation.”

Foreword

On being asked by Vibha Pankaj to write a brief foreword to her study of ethnic minority volunteering in Scotland, I willingly agreed to be personally associated with this excellent insightful work. Vibha also asked me to express a personal view on the study's connection to the wider context of volunteering.

My personal perspective is that if you observe volunteer activity it will provide an “eye to the soul” of a country. Volunteering is not an abstract thing detached from identity, passions, issues, needs and hopes. Look closely at volunteer development and you will see the characteristics of people and places, their needs and their motivation to act together for common good. In Australia for instance there are 150,000 volunteer rural fire fighters, this says a lot about the landscape of Australia and how people have responded to a common shared need. In Brazil, a young democracy, you'll see the church playing a leading role in combating poverty and also in developing the democratic strength of the country.

In Scotland, how we develop our multi-ethnic country with all its complexities, differences, diversity and interests is one of the most challenging questions, and our responses will determine how far we are a civilised, tolerant and intelligent nation.

This study written by Vibha Pankaj, published by VDS and funded through the Scottish Executive's Active Communities Initiative, provides an invaluable initial analysis about ethnic minority volunteering in mainstream organisations in Scotland. It builds our picture of the volunteer landscape of Scotland and is a vital start with relevance to the many thousands of volunteer-involving organisations and for anyone interested in volunteering and its role in developing a positive and multi-ethnic Scotland. If I'm right in thinking that volunteering is the “eye to the soul” of a country then it is essential to understand the relationship of volunteering and our ethnic minority communities.

George Thomson
Chief Executive
Volunteer Development Scotland
June 2002

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Finally I would like to thank Lesley Greenaway, Philip Bryers, Robert Pickles, Laura Baird, Shirley Bwye, Norrie Murray and Nick McBain for their suggestions and useful comments on the report. Support from all colleagues who helped in the organisation of dissemination seminars is gratefully acknowledged.

Volunteer Development Scotland

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) is the National Centre of Excellence for volunteer development. It was established in 1984 and has had considerable success in obtaining recognition for volunteering as a major and essential national asset and thereby increasing the profile of volunteering. VDS sees volunteering as something which defines the very essence of Scotland and seeks to support the ways in which volunteering can help meet visions and dreams of a fair society at home and abroad.

VDS serves to maximise the positive impacts of volunteering by providing quality services to local Volunteer Centres and a wide variety of volunteer-involving organisations and groups, by promoting, supporting and developing best practice and innovation in volunteering. VDS also provides training courses to help organisations understand various aspects of volunteering and develop new ideas. It acts as a voice for volunteering and consults on policy issues with national impact. It also contributes to and disseminates research on volunteering. It works across the sectors and through national and local networks and builds public recognition for the role of volunteers. It has a vital role in supporting the advancement of volunteering through its various programmes and services.

The Black and Minority Ethnic Volunteering Project

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Volunteering project emanated from the perception that the levels of volunteering by people from ethnic minority communities in the mainstream volunteer involving organisations was low. The Active Communities Initiative Demonstration Project (Hopkins and Lynn 2000) found a fairly high representation of ethnic minority volunteers in many organisations and a fairly low percentage in others. This project also identified the need to increase the opportunities for volunteering for people from ethnic minority groups as its main priority. The BME volunteering project is funded through the Active Communities Initiative of the Scottish Executive (2001-2003). It is hoped that this project will serve as a vehicle to address inequality and help integrate cultural diversity within all volunteering activities helping to meet the needs of the whole community. This will increase the capacity of Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) to represent the voice of volunteering in different cultural contexts.

The project sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- To assist mainstream organisations to remove the barriers to volunteers from ethnic minority communities.
- To develop capacity of local Volunteer Centres and other networks to provide appropriate assistance to ethnic minority groups.
- To support and expand the scope of volunteering programmes of ethnic minority organisations.
- To support mainstream volunteering organisations to adapt/incorporate inclusive practices and procedures.
- To produce good practice guidance in managing volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- To assist Volunteer Development Scotland incorporate race equality into its policies, informed by the findings of the project initiatives.

The project team at VDS comprises of Brid Cullen (Project Manager), Vibha Pankaj (Development Officer) and Maxine Iffla (Community Development Officer).

Executive Summary

Background and Aims

The study was conducted as a part of the Black and Minority Ethnic Volunteering project, which aims to serve as a vehicle to increase cultural diversity in all volunteering activities.

The objectives of the study are: to assess the current levels of ethnic minority volunteering within mainstream organisations; to highlight issues related to recruitment and retention; identify perceived barriers; assess training needs; to learn from previous experience; and to gauge possible proactive approaches. An understanding of these will pave the way to fulfilling some of the objectives of the Active Communities Initiative of the Scottish Executive.

The study drew information from:

- completion of questionnaires sent to 21 Volunteer Centres (VCs) and 72 volunteer involving organisations (VIOs).
- discussions held with project managers of Volunteer Centres and mainstream volunteer involving organisations
- discussions and workshops held at two dissemination seminars

This study was carried out between February and June 2002. The results only provide perceptions and information from mainstream organisations. The study used ethnic group categories that are consistent with the categories used in Census 2001.

Key Findings

1. Is participation of people from ethnic minority groups important in volunteering?

Almost all responding VCs and VIOs see volunteering by ethnic minority groups in mainstream organisations as important. An overwhelming majority of the research population felt that volunteers from diverse communities bring diversity of skills and that volunteering should be representative of the diversity within the population of Scotland. A majority of the respondents also felt that ethnic minority volunteers are essential to meet specific needs such as catering to ethnic minority service users.

2. Ethnic Monitoring

A significant percentage of responding organisations do not have ethnic monitoring for volunteers and a relatively small percentage do not have it for their paid work force. A larger percentage of responding Volunteer Centres have ethnic monitoring for their paid staff and registered volunteers as compared to the volunteer involving mainstream organisations.

3. Ethnic minority representation

In the recent past only one fifth of the responding organisations have had people from ethnic minority groups in their staff and about three fifths have had volunteers from these groups. The proportion of volunteers from ethnic minority groups is higher for VCs as compared to VIOs.

4. Ethnic minority volunteers recruited

More organisations have been able to recruit and retain volunteers from Pakistani, Indian and Chinese groups, which constitute the three largest ethnic groups in Scotland. Even members of smaller ethnic groups have worked as volunteers.

5. Awareness and understanding

Less than a quarter of the responding VCs and VIOs are fully aware of their local ethnic minority population makeup. Extremely low percentage of organisations feel that they are well informed about various ethnic minority cultures.

6. Motivations to volunteering and volunteer profile

The motivation and profile of ethnic minority volunteers does not appear to be significantly different from that of volunteers from the majority ethnic community. It was suggested that they were generally well educated, some of them being trained professionals. Others were from the resident and overseas student population looking for work experience, pursuing interests or learning English.

7. Barriers to ethnic minority volunteering

Barriers to volunteering by people from ethnic minority groups include: the 'white middle class' image of many organisations; lack of information on effective ways to contact and reach out to ethnic minority groups; poor understanding of ethnic minority cultures; and absence of integrated networks with ethnic minority organisations. Racism, prejudice and perceptions (sometimes stereotypical) about ethnic minority groups also serve as barriers. Many organisations perceive language (absence of the knowledge of English) as an important barrier.

Existence of formal procedures, such as the need for disclosures for volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, is a barrier for some ethnic minority individuals. Lack of understanding of volunteering and its benefits amongst ethnic minority groups may also serve as a barrier.

8. Proactive approaches in recruiting volunteers

Word of mouth was suggested as the most effective method for recruiting volunteers from all groups. Volunteer's Week was seen as effective in this regard by more than three fifths of the responding VCs whereas only two fifths of VIOs found it effective. More VCs had used electronic and print media and the internet to advertise volunteering opportunities and had found them effective as compared to VIOs. Advertising tools for ethnic minority groups are not seen to be very different from those for the majority ethnic group.

A number of organisations (almost two thirds) have made an effort in establishing links with local ethnic minority groups through different means.

Recommendations

The study shows that there is scope for enhancing volunteering by ethnic minority groups in mainstream organisations. Although a number of organisations have initiated proactive approaches, there remain a number of issues that still need to be addressed.

Specific recommendations that emanate from this study are as follows:

1. Need for further research

This study included only the organisational perspective of mainstream organisations. It did not include views of volunteers from ethnic majority or minority groups. Further research should include these.

2. Networking

Better networking needs to be built up with ethnic minority organisations and amongst mainstream organisations to help in obtaining referrals and initial support, dissemination of information, ideas and experiences.

3. Training

Training related to cultural and religious awareness and equal opportunity issues is essential for everybody involved. Such training should include reflection on the beliefs, understanding and prejudices and sensitivity to individual values. Training of managers could include understanding of possible support needs of some volunteers.

4. Ethnic monitoring and recruitment of ethnic minority staff

All organisations should adopt ethnic monitoring in recruiting their staff and volunteers. It is essential to promote recruitment of staff from ethnic minority communities to help volunteers and users identify with these organisations.

5. Proactive dissemination of information

Audio-visual materials designed to explain volunteering and its benefits need to be prepared. Such material should aim to attract volunteers from all groups. All opportunities to advertise at low or no cost should be utilised. Use of internet will be increasingly important as a low cost medium. Presentations on volunteering emphasising its benefits may be delivered at the premises of various ethnic minority organisations.

6. Inclusive policies for a multi-ethnic Scotland

Policies to promote and support participation by ethnic minorities in volunteering need to be developed. Organisations need to promote equality and diversity issues into all policy development, its implementation, evaluation and review process with a clear directive from the top.

1. Introduction

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) strives to work towards policies and practices that provide opportunities to all sections of the society and to support and facilitate best practice in volunteering.

The Black and Minority Ethnic Volunteering Project aims to serve as a vehicle to increase cultural diversity in all volunteering activities. This will increase VDS's capacity to represent the voice of volunteering within different cultural contexts. The project sets out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assist mainstream organisations to remove barriers for volunteers from ethnic minority communities.
2. To develop capacity of local Volunteer Centres and other networks to provide appropriate assistance to ethnic minority groups.
3. To support and expand the scope of volunteering programmes of ethnic minority organisations.
4. To support mainstream voluntary organisations to adopt/incorporate inclusive practices and procedures.
5. To produce good practice guidance in managing volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.
6. To assist VDS incorporate race equality into its policies, informed by the findings of the project initiatives.

The project emanates from the Active Communities Initiative (Scottish Executive, 2000) whose central aim is to *create a long-term strategic framework that will make it easier for all those who wish to engage in volunteering and community action to do so*. Two of the key objectives of the Initiative are directly relevant and in harmony with the aims of the current project. These are:

- to broaden the range of people involved in volunteering and community action
- to increase the number of people involved in volunteering and community action

The project also conforms to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which came into force in April 2001. The Act imposes general duties on public bodies to promote race equality. The law may have implications for voluntary organisations that provide services for authorities, are funded by authorities, or who work in partnership with authorities (Home Office, 2001). Therefore those voluntary organisations that fall in the above categories may need to comply with the Act.

In the international context, the UN has highlighted volunteering as an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development and social integration, in particular overcoming social exclusion and discrimination (United Nations, 2001, 2002). Similarly the Universal Declaration on Volunteering (International Association for Volunteer Effort, 2001) also underlines the role of volunteering in the involvement of the entire community in identifying and addressing its problems; and promoting family, community, national and global solidarity.

2. Aims of the study and research methods

There has been a general perception that representation of volunteers from ethnic minority groups in mainstream organisations is low and there is a need to enhance participation from diverse ethnic minority communities. It should be pointed out that this is a mere perception and there is no evidence to substantiate it. In fact the little available evidence indicates reasonable participation of ethnic minorities in volunteering in general (Evidence from Scottish Household Survey 2000, 2001); and with mainstream organisations in particular (Hopkins and Lynn, 2000).

This study has been conducted with the aims to:

- assess the current levels of volunteering by people from ethnic minority groups in mainstream organisations
- highlight issues related to recruitment and retention of volunteers from ethnic minority groups
- identify perceived barriers to volunteering by ethnic minority individuals in mainstream organisations
- assess training needs in mainstream organisations to help them promote and support inclusive volunteering
- learn from previous experience of mainstream organisations
- gauge possible proactive approaches to enhance recruitment of volunteers from diverse ethnic groups

An understanding of these will pave the way to fulfilling some of the objectives of the current project.

The research was conducted by requesting completion of questionnaires sent to 21 Volunteer Centres (VCs) across Scotland and 72 volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) (a combination of local and national organisations) that are members of Volunteer Development Scotland. Volunteer Centre (VC) is a term used for agencies that primarily recruit and train volunteers for other volunteer involving organisations. The questionnaires were developed through discussions held with a few managers of VCs and VIOs to gain insight from their experiences and perceptions.

Sixteen VCs and 26 VIOs responded to the questionnaires. This report comprises predominantly the findings of this survey. These findings were presented in two seminars held in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The participants included staff and volunteers from VCs and VIOs. The feedback received from these seminars is also included in the report. It may be noted that the study only includes experiences and perceptions of mainstream organisations and thus provides only their perspective.

3. Making sense of ethnicity

There has been considerable discussion (e.g. Berthoud, 1998; Ballard, 1996, 1998; Peach, 1996; Coleman and Salt, 1996; Piers and Stanton, 2000; Pfeffer, 1998) around the terms ethnicity, ethnic group, race and ethnic identity. Comprehensive and generally acceptable meaning of these terms has not yet emerged.

Ethnic group: Bulmer (1996) defines ethnic group as a collection of people having a common sense of ancestry, shared past, shared cultural values, which symbolically define the group's identity in terms of religion, language, nationality and physical appearance. Berthoud (1998) defines ethnic group as a community whose heritage offers important characteristics shared between its members, and which makes it

distinct from other communities. The use of the term heritage is conveniently neutral and does not specify the mechanisms of transmission. Heritage includes qualities and traditions that could be acquired socially or through lineage.

Ethnicity: This term has been defined from objective and subjective perspectives (Piers and Stanton, 2000; Ballard, 1998; Berthoud, 1998). From the objective perspective, ethnicity of an individual is identifiable by attributes such as surname, country of origin, parental ancestry and language spoken at home. From a subjective perspective it reflects ascription made by people about themselves.

For the purposes of service delivery and monitoring, it is generally regarded as best if individuals are allowed to use their own description of ethnicity (subjective perspective). Self-description was the basis of the 1991 and 2001 Census. *Ethnic identity* i.e. an individual's affiliation with a particular ethnic group can be multidimensional involving identification with a range of different non-competing groups. It may vary with situations and time. For example, a Scottish-Indian-Muslim would identify himself as Indian, Muslim or Scottish depending on the context and situation.

From the above definitions it is apparent that ethnicity is a product of many interlocking influences, including heredity, geography, language, religion, past experiences and history. Ethnic identities are subject to change over time and there will always be uncertainties when individuals ascribe specific ethnic labels to themselves. It has been suggested that a significant section of the minority population see themselves moving from narrow identities to broad hyphenated identities (e.g. Scottish-Indian, Scottish-Muslim) (Modood et al., 1994; Saeed et al, 1999; CRE, 1998). The above definitions also indicate that everyone has an ethnicity and ethnic minorities are simply those groups that are in a minority. It is therefore worth considering if the phrase Black and Ethnic Minorities is appropriate. The phrase appears to imply that the Black group is distinct from the "Ethnic minority" group. This is not borne out by the above definitions. Also such terminology signifies fixed communities and obscures the fluidity and heterogeneity of real life.

4. Ethnic minority groups and the Census

The 1991 Census for Great Britain was the first to include a question on ethnic group. People described themselves as belonging to particular ethnic groups. These were then analysed for 27 ethnic groups, even though boundaries between them were not always clear-cut. The White category obscured certain important distinctions. For example, it has been recognised that the Irish and some other specific groups, and many European refugees are likely to fall within the White category who in some regions are vulnerable and experience disadvantage. The ethnic group question appeared again in 2001 Census with some additional categories such as Irish. The ethnic group question is seen as important in generating data on the social, economic and demographic characteristics of diverse ethnic minority populations, for the use of government and other service providers.

In the 2001 Census a question on religion was also introduced for the first time for England, Wales and for Scotland. This information will complement output from the ethnicity question, especially for groups originating from the Indian sub-continent (White Paper, 1999), many of whom find religion central to their identity (Modood et al. 1994).

In this study the ethnic minority groups specified were consistent with the categories used in the Census. Thus people belong to an ethnic minority group if they are identified as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian, Caribbean, African, Other Black.

5. Why is participation of people from ethnic minority groups important in volunteering?

In the survey questionnaire VCs and VIOs were asked why participation of people from ethnic minority groups was important in volunteering. Almost all (40 out of 42) responding VCs and VIOs see volunteering by ethnic minority individuals in mainstream organisations as important. Some of the views were:

Volunteers from ethnic minority communities should have the same opportunities to volunteer as other members of the [majority] community.

All tax and council taxpayers should be represented in all fields.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of the research population felt that volunteers from diverse communities bring diversity of skills. Almost all (95%) of respondents felt that volunteering should be representative of the diversity within the population of Scotland. A majority of the respondents (70%) also felt that ethnic minority volunteers are essential to meet specific needs such as catering to ethnic minority service users. The VIOs were also asked whether volunteers from diverse communities would make their services accessible to all communities. A majority of responding VIOs (76%) felt it would. During discussions held with some VIOs a number of reasons for enhancing volunteering from ethnic minority groups were suggested:

Mainstream organisations should be sure they provide services to all sections of the society. This [volunteering] could be a starting point to provide approachable services and increase accessibility for all groups. Bringing about change is more important and is less about numbers.

We need more people to volunteer. All agencies need to involve people from diverse ethnic groups in their work force so that everyone gets equality of opportunity. Why is it that there are only white middle class people [in volunteering]? We need to break barriers and provide support to promote volunteering from all sections of the society.

It is apparent from the above results and also from the discussions held with various organisations that inclusive volunteering is considered very important.

Some also emphasised the need to promote race equality as described in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and use it as a driver for change.

6. Current levels of participation of ethnic minority individuals in volunteering

In order to assess the existing levels of participation of the ethnic minority population in volunteering, the research population of VCs and VIOs were asked if they had a system of ethnic monitoring of their staff and in registering volunteers. They were also asked to provide estimates of ethnic minority people on their staff, amongst their volunteers and their users. This data can be subsequently used as a baseline to measure change.

6.1 Ethnic monitoring

Only 50% of the responding VIOs have a system of ethnic monitoring for their volunteers as against 94% for VCs (Figure 1). At present only 81% of VCs and 73% of VIOs have a system of ethnic monitoring for their paid work force (Figure 2). With the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 coming into force from 2 April 2001 all VCs and VIOs may need to have ethnic monitoring in place, since many of them receive funding from public authorities or provide services for them.

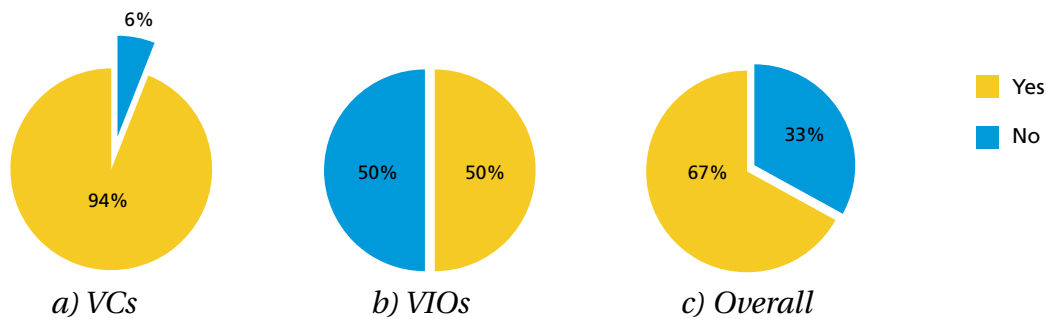


Figure 1 Ethnic monitoring for registered volunteers

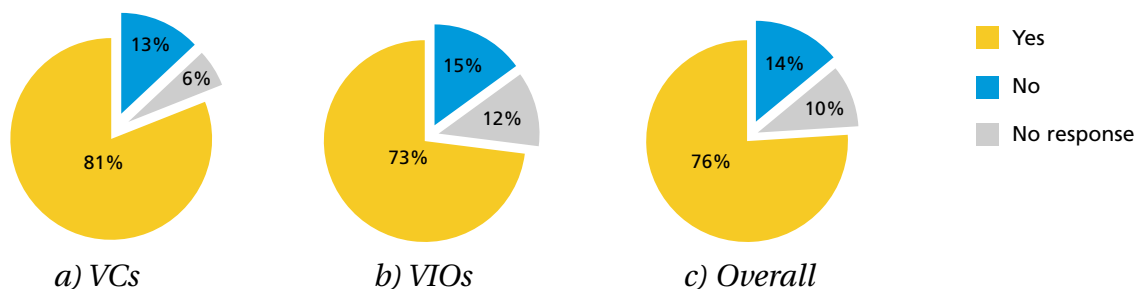


Figure 2 Ethnic monitoring for paid work-force

6.2 Ethnic minority representation in staff, volunteers and users

In the absence of ethnic monitoring, the data provided by organisations on ethnic minority representation can only be approximate. All VCs and VIOs were asked to provide estimates of ethnic minority people they had had in their staff in the past three years (1999-2001). The percentage responses (or blank responses) are shown in Figure 3. Almost one-third of the organisations did not respond to this question. If it is assumed that no response perhaps indicates a negative response, 13% VCs and 23% VIOs have had one or more ethnic minority staff member in their paid workforce in the past three years.

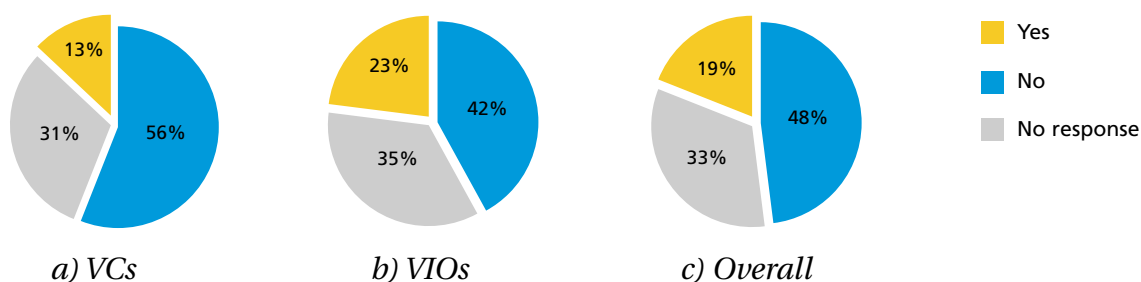


Figure 3 Ethnic minority representation in staff

When queried about the estimates of ethnic minority volunteers in the past three years 81% VCs and 43% VIOs had had at least one ethnic minority volunteer in the past three years (Figure 4). Overall more than half the organisations have had at least some experience with ethnic minority volunteers.

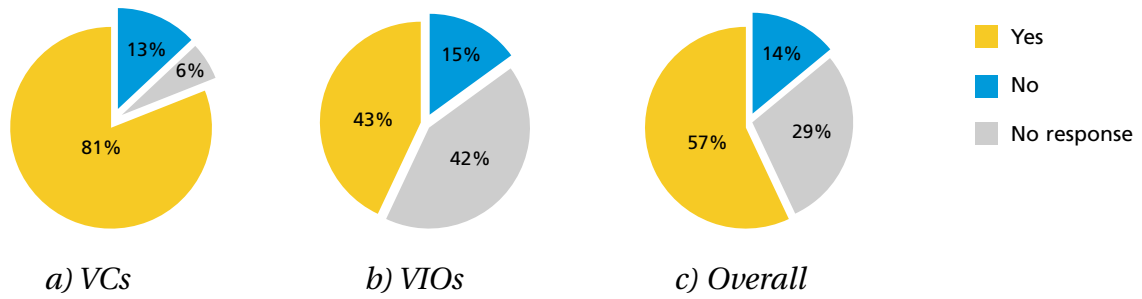


Figure 4 Ethnic minority representation in volunteers

The VIOs were also asked to provide estimates of users from ethnic minority groups. About 35% of the responding VIOs had provided services for ethnic minority users in the past three years (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Ethnic minority representation in users

The actual ethnic minority representation in VCs and VIOs is given in Table 1. It should be noted that these figures have been worked out using estimates from the organisations that had this data available and were willing to provide it. If it is assumed that the organisations that did not provide staff/volunteer/user numbers have no ethnic minority representation, then these percentages would clearly be overestimates.

According to the 1991 Census, the ethnic minority population in Scotland is 1.25%. Most of the figures in Table 1 are significantly above the national population percentage. Therefore the commonly held perception that ethnic minorities are poorly represented amongst the staff, volunteers and users does not appear to be true. Perhaps the reason for this misconception is that many organisations have no ethnic minority representation while a few have ethnic minorities well represented. For example out of the 11 responding VCs, 2 have had ethnic minority staff in the past three years while 9 do not.

Table 1 also shows that VIOs have much lower ethnic minority representation as compared to VCs. For the VIOs, if one makes a distinction between large organisations (more than 20 staff) and small organisations then it can be seen that ethnic minorities are better represented in smaller organisations. Perhaps the small organisations are seen to be more welcoming as compared to larger organisations.

Table: 1 Ethnic minority representation in VCs and VIOs (%)

Organisations	Staff	Volunteers	Users
VCs	2.75	3.78	-
All VIOs	2.00	1.64	1.90
Small VIOs	4.25	1.01	2.11
Large VIOs	1.81	0.62	0.24

Recently a study was conducted on ethnic minority volunteering in South-West England (Kamat, 2001). The overall and ethnic minority populations of the South-West are comparable to Scotland. According to 1991 Census the South-West had an approximate population of 4.5 million with an ethnic minority population of about 62,000 (1991 Census). Similar numbers for Scotland are approximately 5 million and 62,000 (1991 Census). Thus the percentage of ethnic minorities in South-West is about 1.4% as against 1.25% in Scotland. The above study found that the ethnic minority staff percentage in mainstream organisations was approximately 2%. This figure of 2% compares well with Table 1 staff percentages (VIOs). Kamat also found that almost 63% mainstream organisations had had ethnic minority volunteers. This percentage again is similar to that obtained in this study (57%, see Figure 4c). Although these percentages show similarity in numbers, it should be realised that the ethnic mix of Scotland is very different from that of the South-West. Therefore measures to promote involvement of ethnic minority groups on the whole would be distinct from other regions.

Similarly another study conducted by Volunteer Development Agency, Northern Ireland (Leong, 2001) also revealed a picture similar to that of the present study. It noted that 9 out of 21 mainstream organisations (43%) had had some experience of working with black and ethnic minority volunteers, which is the same as the percentage found in the current study (see Figure 4b). Volunteer Bureaux in Northern Ireland (similar to Volunteer Centres in Scotland) show a greater involvement of volunteers from ethnic minority communities as compared to mainstream VIOs, which is again similar to the finding of this study. The Northern Ireland study reported 75% of responding Volunteer Bureaux had ethnic minority volunteers registered with them, which compares well with the figure of 81% in this study (Figure 4a). Ethnic minority representation of registered volunteers within Volunteer Bureaux was 3.13% in the above study, which again compares well to the findings of the current study (3.78%, see Table 1).

Volunteering is well established and is a thriving tradition in Scotland. Questions on voluntary activity were first added to the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) in 1999 and were expanded in 2000. According to the published findings from SHS data (Evidence from SHS, 2001), 23% of white people volunteer, as do 24% of Indian and Pakistani people and 18% of people from other minority ethnic communities. The same findings also suggest that 27% of adults volunteer. It is however not clear how all percentages provided on the basis of ethnicity (23%, 24% and 18%) are lower than the overall percentage (27%). This data perhaps includes both formal and informal volunteering. It clearly also includes ethnic minority people volunteering in ethnic minority organisations. The high rate of volunteering by ethnic minority groups with ethnic minority organisations has been documented in other studies (Bhasin, 1997).

6.3 Ethnic minority volunteers recruited

The VCs and VIOs were asked to identify the ethnic minority groups they had the experience of recruiting and retaining as volunteers. The analysis of responses indicates that more organisations have been able to recruit and retain volunteers from Pakistani, Indian and Chinese groups (Figure 6). This is not surprising considering that amongst the ethnic minority groups, Pakistani, Chinese and Indian populations are the largest in Scotland. The Parekh Report (2000) estimates that in 1998 the approximate populations of Pakistani, Chinese and Indian groups were 24,000, 13,000 and 12,000 respectively (constituting 0.5%, 0.3% and 0.2% of the total population). More accurate recent data will become available once the results of 2001 Census are published. It is encouraging to note that organisations have recruited volunteers even from smaller groups such as Other Asian, African and Caribbean that constitute a smaller percentage.

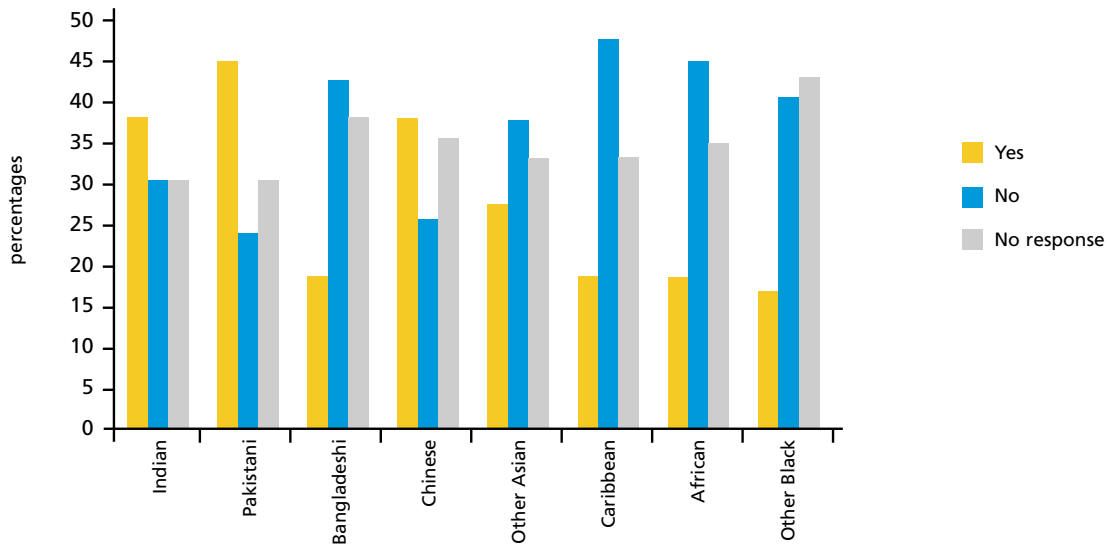


Figure 6 Percentage of organisations that have at least occasionally recruited and retained ethnic minority volunteers

7. Awareness and understanding of ethnic minority groups

The questions on the awareness of organisations of their local ethnic minority population and their cultures were aimed to gauge their information needs which could possibly be addressed through specific training programmes.

7.1 Knowledge of ethnic minority population in local areas

On being asked whether they were aware of the ethnic minority populations in their respective local areas, only 26% of VCs responded to being fully aware of the local ethnic minority communities. About 47% felt that they knew approximately and could benefit from more information and 27% felt that they did not know enough. Similarly a low percentage of responding VIOs were aware of the local ethnic minority population (19%). About 54% knew approximately and 27% did not know. The combined (VCs and VIOs) response to this question is shown in Figure 7. It is apparent that only about a quarter of the responding organisations are fully aware of their local ethnic makeup. It should be pointed out that since the 1991 Census, which was the first census to ask the ethnicity question, there may have been some change in the ethnic makeup of different regions.

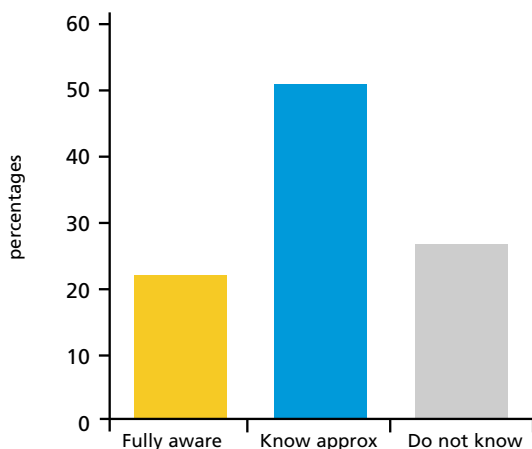


Figure 7 Knowledge of local ethnic minority populations

7.2 Knowledge of ethnic minority cultures

VCs and VIOs were asked which ethnic minority cultures they felt they were informed about. The response to the question (Figure 8) suggests that extremely low percentages of the responding organisations are either very well informed or well informed about different ethnic minority cultures. Many organisations did not respond to this question for some ethnic groups. A majority of the organisations feel that they know a little about Indian, Pakistani and Chinese cultures but not about others. A greater knowledge of different cultural traditions could help organisations gain confidence in interacting with individual volunteers and service users from different communities.

It should be mentioned that every community consists of individuals and no individual or set of individuals can be assumed to be totally representative of a particular community or its culture. The identity of an individual emanates from his or her historical background, upbringing, family customs, economic situation and social norms. The development of values and the sense of belonging to a group is a constant process of evolution. The present multicultural society contains a wide range of family norms, cultural traditions and kinship patterns. Therefore, while the knowledge of different cultures is important, individuals should be acknowledged as individuals and not through the stereotypical image of a community or a culture.

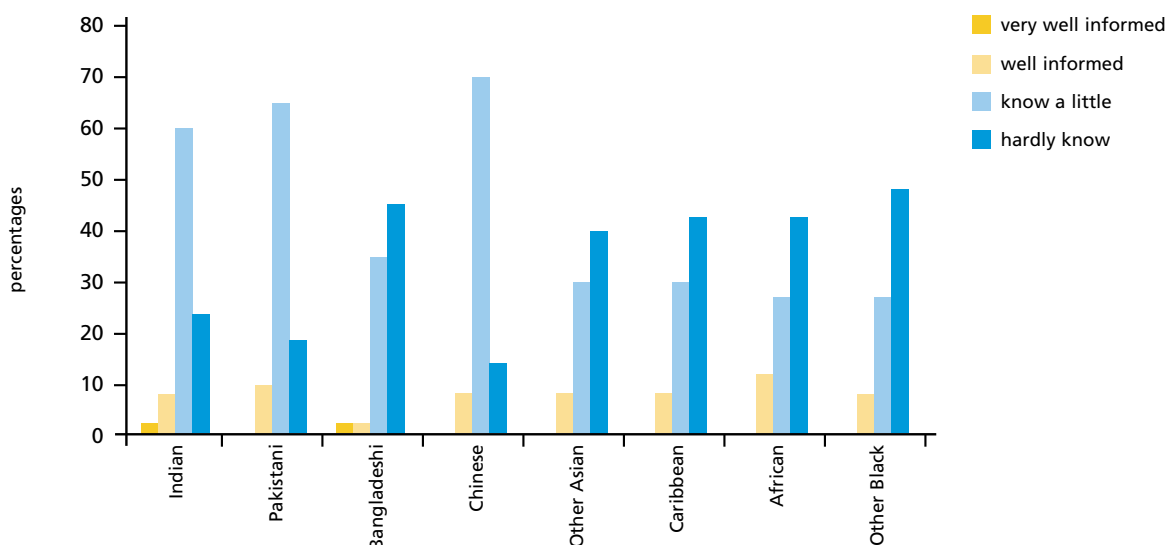


Figure 8 Awareness of ethnic minority cultures

8. Motivations to volunteering and volunteer profiles

The organisations were asked to provide typical profiles of their volunteers and indicate possible motivation to volunteering. Some VCs and VIOs provided information about the profiles and motivations of the ethnic minority volunteers. Many others provided the profile and motivation of their volunteers from all communities. Since there are no records on aspects such as education, socio-economic status and profession, the response comprises of perceptions and experiences. The organisations felt that the people volunteering for them came from varied educational and social backgrounds. The responses indicate that the general profile of ethnic minority volunteers may not be too different from those of the White group.

The responses suggest that the majority of ethnic minority volunteers were well educated, some of them trained professionals. Many were from the resident and transitory overseas student population looking for work experience. Some volunteered to pursue their interests. Overseas students also had learning English and meeting

people as an additional motivation to volunteering. Some were secondary school and tertiary college students looking for placement and work experience. These also included refugees looking for work experience. Volunteer profiles also appear to be a function of the kind of voluntary activity a particular organisation is involved in. Thus in many cases the profile and motivation of volunteers in a particular organisation can be similar. The views of the participants at the dissemination seminars corresponded to the above findings of the study.

The responses suggest that there is considerable diversity in people's motivation to volunteer. Some choose to volunteer because of its potential relevance to their present or future employment and development of skills, while others may be motivated by psychological needs, such as personal growth and the need to feel they are doing something useful.

9. Barriers to ethnic minority volunteering

The VCs and VIOs were asked to share their perceptions of the barriers that work against people from ethnic minority groups engaging with volunteering in their organisations. A range of barriers was listed in the responses. These can be divided into the following categories.

9.1 Volunteering - a white middle class activity

Research has shown that people use the services of a voluntary organisation when they culturally identify with it (Pankaj, 2001; Netto et al., 2001). This would perhaps also be true for people wanting to volunteer. One of the important identification indicators is the presence of workers and volunteers from different ethnic groups in an organisation. Thus diversity serves as a virtuous circle and leads to greater diversity. Some of these sentiments were reflected in the responses of VCs and VIOs:

Volunteering in a mainstream agency usually means entering an overwhelmingly white environment/culture.

The overwhelmingly white profile of our organisation seems to put off people from ethnic minority communities from volunteering.

The discussion groups at the seminars felt that the volunteering activity should emphasise creating a welcoming, empowering and enabling atmosphere within the organisations for all volunteers. The research findings on the experiences of ethnic minority volunteers by Bhasin (1997) also suggests that volunteers feeling part of the group is an important criterion for a positive volunteering experience.

9.2 Lack of information on methods to enhance volunteering

The responding organisations identified several barriers that, they feel, hinder volunteering by the members of ethnic minority groups. They recognise the need to promote their projects, but are unsure which promotional tools or techniques would be more efficient, how and where they could contact and reach out to ethnic minority groups and build links, if the printed materials really needed to be translated in different languages and whether the publicity they are undertaking is reaching its target. They are looking for "information resources" with which they can undertake initiatives to enhance ethnic minority volunteering.

[We need] to look at ways and standards that work; to champion policies which work particularly well and bring benefits for both individuals and organisations.

Some of the ongoing proactive programmes are discussed later in this report.

9.3 Lack of integrated networks

Some organisations saw the absence of networks with ethnic minority organisations and other mainstream organisations (that have better links with ethnic minority groups and individuals) as barriers. A typical response was:

Agencies and more so individual workers need to build positive relationships with current ethnic minority users of their services. This can lead to participation by these users, encouraging new users, greater involvement/inclusion and thus working towards creating suitable volunteering opportunities for users.

Some organisations are actively engaged in developing such networks. This is discussed in more detail later in this report.

9.4 Perceptions about ethnic minorities, racism and prejudice

Some organisations mentioned the existence of racism and prejudice within the work force and service users as a barrier responsible for low retention of ethnic minority volunteers.

I worked with an organisation that did recruit volunteers from ethnic minority groups. To retain these volunteers was difficult due to acute racism. Many of the volunteers were made to feel that it was their fault for being different.

... they would not consider advertising for volunteers in certain newspapers as this would attract the 'wrong sort of people'.

Some clients refuse to be matched with 'non whites'.

There is lack of understanding on the part of mainstream voluntary organisations – institutionalised racism.

A disabled ethnic minority volunteer was not well accepted within a local charity shop – traditionally operated by older white people.

While some organisations looked at the possible barriers introspectively, most others perceived that barriers existed within the ethnic minority groups. A number of issues related to ethnic minorities were mentioned. Some of them are perhaps relevant while others are mere perceptions.

They prefer to volunteer for their own communities.

Many people send money overseas, they are too busy to volunteer.

Have met volunteers beset with money and family issues, these have competed for their time.

Poverty and its associated barriers, e.g. low expectations/depression/ young parenting/narrowness of opinion etc.

Time priorities, expectations placed on them, [lack of] freedom to go out and mix [with other groups], language, religious taboos, formal process (e.g. police check) are too daunting.

Rest of their family/friends [lack] understanding of volunteering; do not understand what volunteering could mean for their own development/future.

Drugs are not seen as happening in ethnic minority cultures. Young people from ethnic minority groups who have been interested in volunteering [to help drug addicts] have been prevented from joining by parents who dislike it.

They are already expected often to help their own extended family a lot and don't see why they should have to go through all this just to help strangers.

Similar stereotypical views were also expressed by some participants at the dissemination seminars.

Volunteers from ethnic minority groups need provision for child care.

We need to provide transport to enhance volunteering from ethnic minority groups.

Interestingly a few organisations mentioned the need for dedicated workers and additional funding to enhance ethnic minority volunteering. This appears to suggest that ethnic minority volunteering is seen to be distinct from the normal working of the organisation.

9.5 Formal procedures

According to some organisations prospective volunteers are sometimes deterred by formal procedures and the need for disclosures for volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Some of the views expressed were:

We have had a very positive experience with a refugee doctor. He has brought a different dimension and has become a popular member of the team. The difficulty for him has been making a regular commitment as he has been involved in sitting English exams. We would happily do this again and have been able to help him with work placements in hospitals. Problem - unable to SCRO check as referees were not English speaking.

Moving from initial interest to next stage of process puts them off. We have to police check, screen and train our volunteers and several who were interested just faded away once this was explained.

9.6 Language

From the responses received, lack of English speaking abilities (i.e. language) is a major barrier to volunteering by ethnic minority groups. This response is not unexpected. Often language is perceived as a major barrier by mainstream organisations. It has been recognised that language is not as major a problem as it is often made out to be (Pankaj 2001). In fact provisions other than language support may play a far more important role in increasing accessibility. Research conducted on the use of health services by minority ethnic patients also shows that often emphasis on linguistic barriers as the predominant constraint on service use may prevent acknowledgement of other limitations (Bowes and Domokos, 1996).

While most organisations perceive lack of knowledge of English as a barrier, there are those who see that bilingual skills of ethnic minorities can be exploited to the advantage of organisations.

We have had some really good experience with volunteers from ethnic minority groups over the years. The key has always been good communication skills. Very occasionally I have been asked to provide volunteers with particular language skills and I do that through local contacts.

9.7 Lack of understanding of ethnic minority cultures

Most organisations recognise their poor understanding of ethnic minority cultures as a barrier to recruiting and retaining ethnic minority volunteers.

Potentially there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures by staff. There is a need to be aware of including all in Equal Opportunities Policies.

We need better understanding of issues affecting ethnic minorities in local areas.

We need training for all staff on how to recruit and retain [volunteers] from minority and excluded groups - promote links with other services to overcome language and cultural barriers.

There is a lack of understanding of cultural and religious values.

The seminar participants emphasised the importance of understanding different ethnic minority cultures. Greater awareness developed through training programmes would help in incorporating sensitivity towards diverse cultural values.

9.8 Lack of understanding of volunteering

Many organisations felt that ethnic minority groups are poorly informed about various aspects of volunteering and the opportunities it could lead to.

They are not aware of the 'gateway aspects' of volunteering.

[There is a] lack of understanding of opportunities [and] differences in approach to caring.

[There is a] lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the benefits of volunteering i.e. gaining new skills, employment prospects raised etc.

We need to find out what different cultures actually understand of the concept of volunteering and not assume our model will fit. We need to validate and value voluntary work already being done [by ethnic minority groups] though not called that [volunteering].

The participants of the seminars also suggested that the term “volunteering” is alien to many cultures that may prefer to use terms such as “helping out”. Many organisations are unaware of the level of “taking care” or “helping out” activities being undertaken by people from ethnic minority groups who may not recognise it as volunteering. In fact some of them may even term it as “a duty”. It was emphasised during discussions that organisations may like to use other terms in addition to the term “volunteering”.

10. Proactive approaches in recruiting volunteers

Many of the responding organisations have been working towards promoting services and volunteering opportunities for all ethnic groups. All VCs and VIOs were asked which actions they had undertaken to enhance volunteer recruitment. These included advertising methods, establishing links with ethnic minority organisations and providing information in different languages. The following subsections discuss some of these ongoing proactive approaches.

10.1 Advertising tools

VCS and VIOs were asked about the effectiveness of different advertising tools for recruiting volunteers from all ethnic groups (including the White group) and their perception (or experience) of the methods that would be more effective in recruiting volunteers from ethnic minority groups. A list of possible options was provided in the questionnaire. Figure 9 provides the summary of their response for all ethnic groups and Figure 10 for ethnic minority groups. Some organisations did not provide a response for some of the options.

Figure 9 (a and b) highlights that ‘word of mouth’ is the most successful method of recruitment for all volunteers according to both VCs and VIOs. Other studies conducted in Dundee (Hopkins and Lynn, 2000) and in Northern Ireland (Leong, 2001) also suggest

that most people volunteer after informally learning about possible opportunities from others. It is interesting to note that effectiveness of the role of VCs as a source to recruiting volunteers is seen as effective and ineffective by almost equal percentages of responding VIOs. These findings are similar to the unpublished findings of the omnibus survey conducted by VDS (2002), which suggests a lower percentage of prospective volunteers use Volunteer Centres as a source for finding out more about volunteering opportunities. The findings of the Northern Ireland study (Leong, 2001) are also similar. An interesting difference in the perception/experience of the VCs and VIOs can be seen in the effectiveness of the use of Volunteers Week. Figure 9(a) shows that about 70% VCs feel it is effective, whereas only about 40% of VIOs think it produces effective results. Similarly another difference in experience is in the use of electronic and print media. VCs see both of these more favourably than do VIOs. Figure 9(b) suggests that most VIOs have never used electronic media. The other difference is also evident in the use of the internet by VCs and VIOs for recruiting purposes. A third of the responding VIOs had never used the internet for this purpose, while only a third suggest that it is effective as against about 57% of responding VCs who think the internet is useful. Perhaps the recent IT facilities acquired by the VCs have had a significant impact. Governmental policies and increasing use of home computers and the internet suggests that the internet will play an increasingly important role in this regard in future.

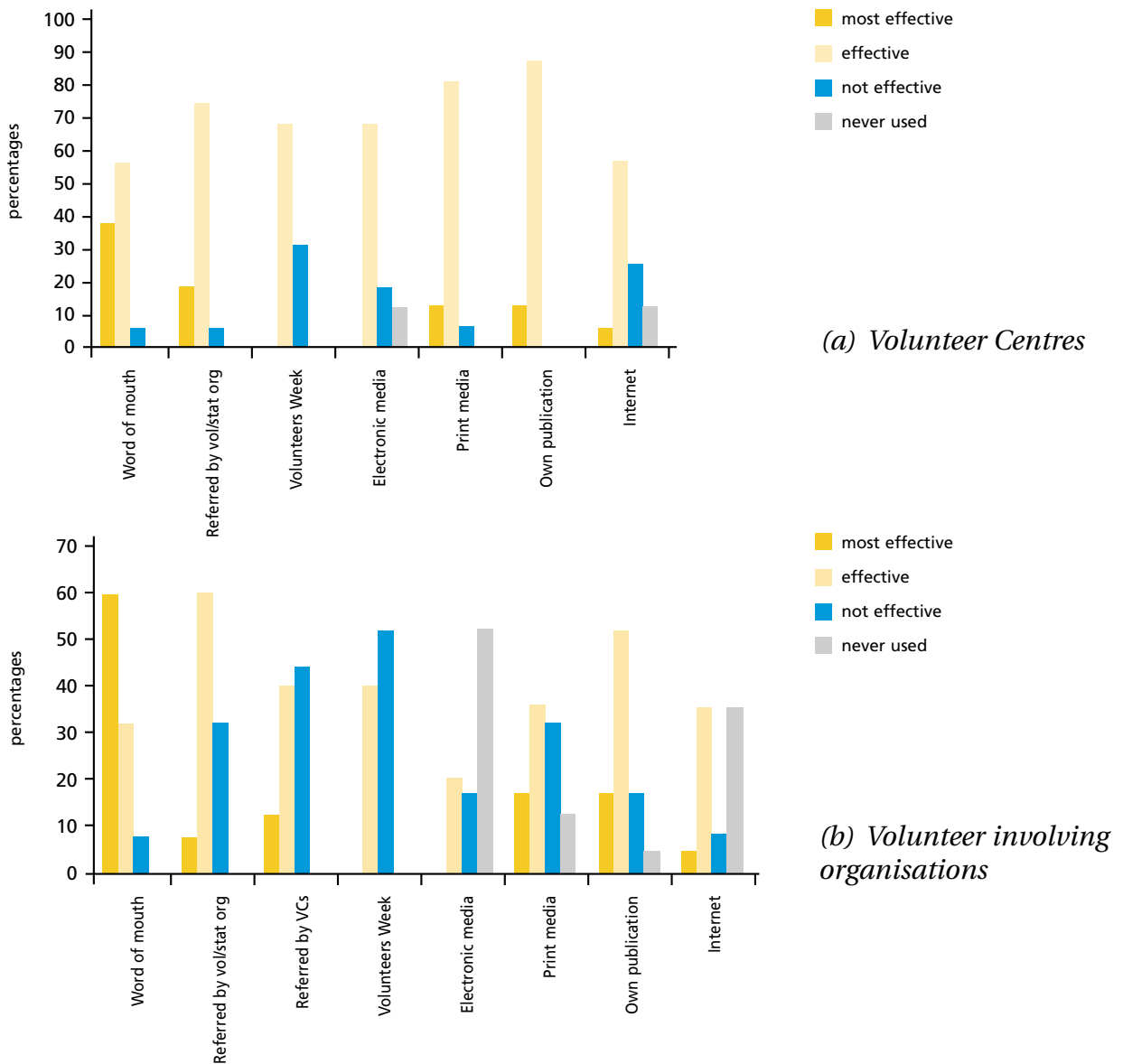


Figure 9 Breakdown of effectiveness of advertising tools

On being asked what could be the successful methods for recruiting ethnic minority volunteers, the respondents registered their perceptions as shown in Figure 10.

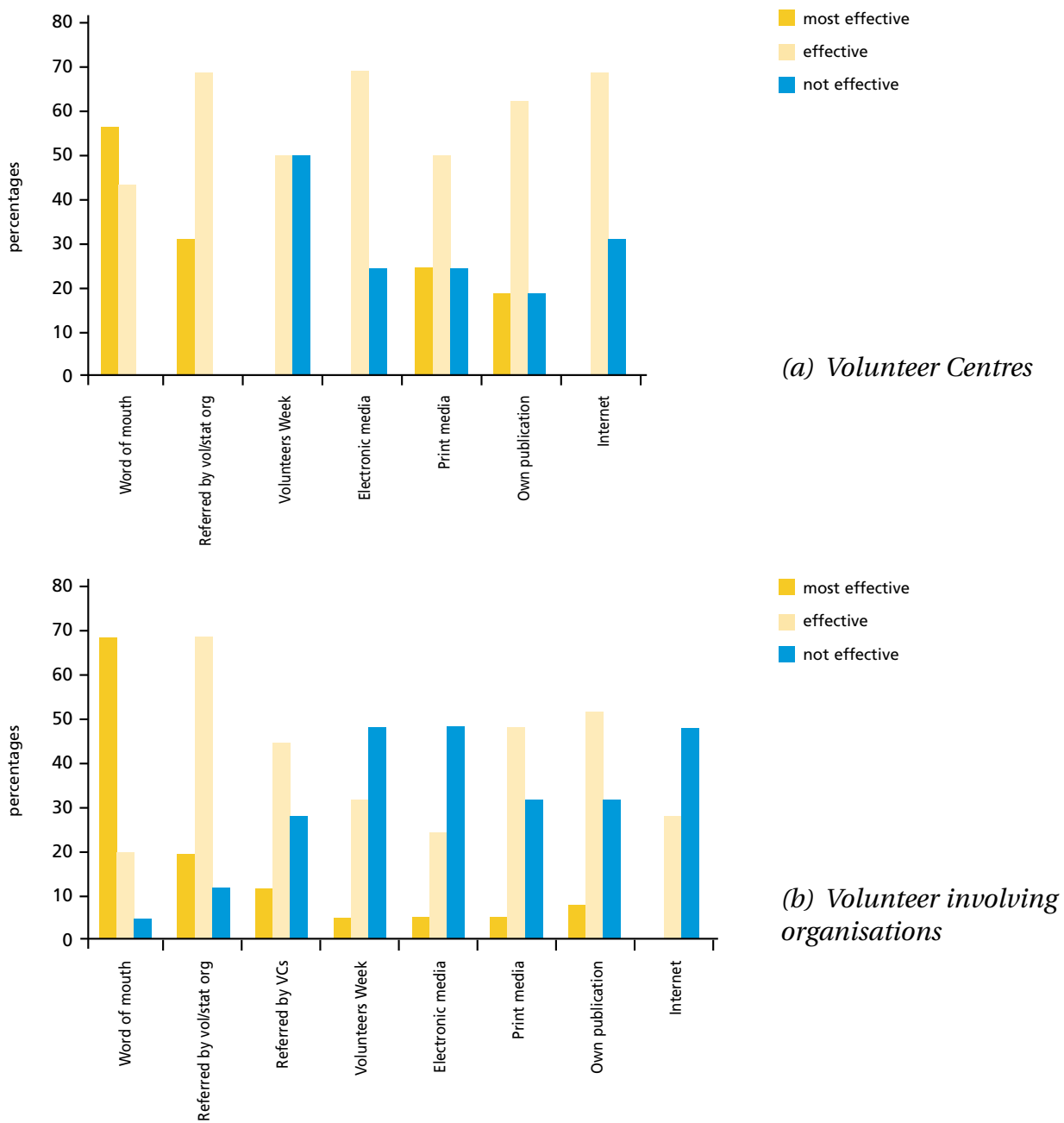


Figure 10 Breakdown of effectiveness of advertising tools for ethnic minority volunteers

Most of the respondents felt that 'word of mouth' is again the most successful way of recruiting ethnic minority volunteers. Most VIOs again appear to be unconvinced about the effectiveness of Volunteers Week. Perhaps Volunteer Development Scotland needs to make VIOs aware of Volunteers Week as a useful resource in promoting the benefits of volunteering. Some organisations felt that the use of print media may require additional resources for translation in different languages. The responses seem to suggest a greater emphasis being placed on the need for translating publicity material in different languages.

In general the advertising tools for ethnic minority groups are not seen to be significantly different from those for the majority White ethnic group.

The participants at the two dissemination seminars suggested that advertising could be made more persuasive. Advertisements should target aspirations of volunteers and highlight the benefits that can accrue for them. Research suggests that prospective volunteers respond more favourably to the functionally matched messages (Clary et al., 1994) that exert a persuasive influence on them. Positive role models could inspire individuals to volunteer for a cause.

10.2 Establishing links with ethnic minority groups

Many organisations are working towards developing specific strategies for recruiting ethnic minority volunteers. These include developing links with local minority ethnic organisations, networks and forums. Most responding VCs (68%) and VIOs (67%) say that they have undertaken some of these steps. Responses from VCs, particularly those located in cities, indicate that they have been more successful in making links with a number of organisations. These include:

- regular contacts with local Race Equality Councils
- contacts with ethnic minority organisations, some of which provide services specific to a particular ethnic group
- contacts with Refugee Councils
- contacts with thematic Social Inclusion Partnerships in their respective areas.
- sending regular publicity mailing to ethnic minority organisations
- making presentations to local ethnic minority groups
- contacts with local religious and cultural committees

Some VIOs have also taken some of the above actions.

10.3 Provision of information in different languages

The percentage of VCs and VIOs that provide information in different languages is shown in Figure 11. Only 13% of responding VCs and 35% of VIOs provide information in more than one language. Some organisations only provide such information on request. One VC (within Glasgow) has established a pool of volunteer interpreters to provide initial support to registering volunteers if needed.

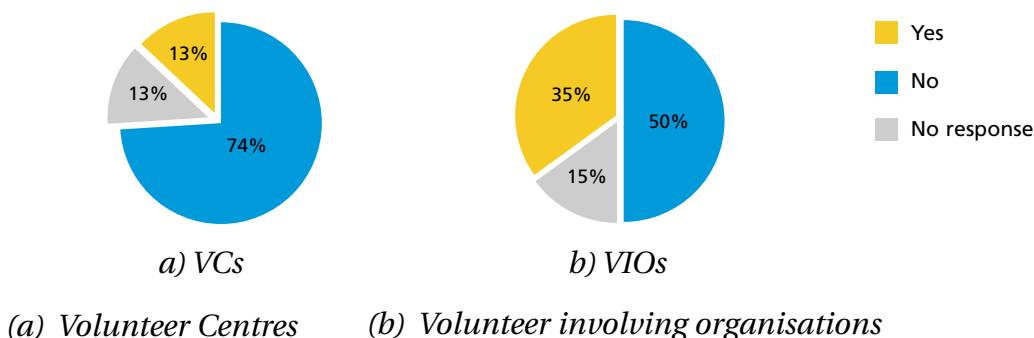


Figure 11 Percentages of organisations that provide information in different languages.

Some organisations have made use of the publications of ethnic minority organisations to disseminate information. It is also felt that advertising in different languages is needed.

11. Recommendations

The study shows that there is scope for enhancing volunteering by ethnic minority groups in mainstream organisations. Although a number of organisations have initiated proactive approaches, there remain a number of issues that still need to be addressed. Specific recommendations that emanate from this study are as follows.

Recommendation 1 - Need for further research

This study included only the organisational perspective of mainstream organisations. It did not include views of volunteers from ethnic majority or minority groups. For example, at present little is known about motivation(s) for volunteering in Scotland. Volunteering needs to be measured using appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods.

The perspectives of the ethnic minorities (prospective volunteers and organisations) towards volunteering need to be considered. It is quite possible, for example, that some of the barriers listed in this study are not seen as such by the ethnic minority groups. At the same time there may be other impediments that are at present unrecognised. Research may also reveal the aspirations of these groups that may be fulfilled through voluntary activities.

It should be pointed out that research on volunteering will not only help in determining the current status of volunteering, it will actively assist in promoting it. It is now recognised (Independent Sector, 2001) that measuring volunteering helps in: showing government and potential stakeholders its importance; encouraging citizens to volunteer by demonstrating the social and personal benefits it can bring; educating media, private and public sectors; demonstrating links between statutory and community services; and providing information that organisations can use to improve their volunteer programmes. VDS could take the lead role in this regard.

Recommendation 2 - Networking

Better networking needs to be built up with ethnic minority organisations and amongst mainstream organisations. Networking with the former is essential to obtain referrals and initial support.

These networks would also provide a forum to disseminate information about good practices and opportunities and also for exchange of ideas and experiences.

VDS could initiate networking activities by creating and providing an appropriate database of organisations and activities and could also organise some joint meetings amongst organisations that can cooperate for mutual benefit. Subsequent follow up and maintenance of networks would obviously be the responsibilities of the organisations involved.

Recommendation 3 - Training

The study indicated that there was a need for organisations to be better informed about the makeup of the local ethnic minority groups and the associated cultures (and religions). Knowledge about various ethnic minority cultures would boost their confidence when dealing with ethnic minority volunteers and users. Therefore training related to cultural and religious awareness and equal opportunity issues is essential for everybody involved. Such training should include reflection on personal beliefs, understanding and prejudices. It should also emphasise that all individuals are different

and not stereotypical images of any group. Training should emphasise sensitivity to individual values. Training of managers could include understanding of possible support needs of some volunteers. VDS recently piloted training activity in this regard which can be further developed.

Recommendation 4 - Ethnic monitoring and recruitment of ethnic minority staff

All organisations should adopt ethnic monitoring in recruiting their staff and volunteers. This may become essential in view of the recent Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It is essential to promote recruitment of staff from ethnic minority communities. This will help volunteers and users identify with these organisations.

Recommendation 5 - Proactive dissemination of information

Audio-visual material should be designed to explain volunteering and its benefits. Such material should aim to attract volunteers from all groups.

All opportunities to advertise at low or no cost should be utilised. These could include short articles for the newsletters of various voluntary organisations, particularly those working with ethnic minority communities. It appears that the internet will play an increasingly important role. Organisations need to gear up on this low cost medium.

Presentations on volunteering emphasising its benefits may be delivered at the premises of various ethnic minority organisations. Many organisations may be happy to organise such seminars.

Recommendation 6 - Inclusive policies for a multi-ethnic Scotland

Policies to promote and support participation by ethnic minorities in volunteering need to be developed. The Parekh Report (2000) has drawn out recommendations for a multi-ethnic Britain. The report emphasises that equality and diversity issues are an obligation for everyone, including those responsible for developing strategy, managers of departments, front-line staff, members of Boards of Directors or Trustees. Organisations need to promote equality and diversity issues into all policy development, its implementation, evaluation and review process with a clear directive from the top.

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Publications of Volunteer Development Scotland

General

KYP - VDS Newsletter, published 10 times per year, on subscription.

National Minimum Wage (1999) - Guidance for the voluntary sector.

VDS Annual Report

Insuring Volunteers (2001) - Covers the reasons why organisations should insure their volunteers, what the appropriate kinds of insurance are and how to obtain the cover needed.

Recruiting volunteers from outside the UK (2001) - This information leaflet aims to clarify the position for organisations and agencies who may be considering involving refugees, asylum seekers and others arriving in Scotland from outside the UK, as volunteers.

Volunteers & Welfare Benefits (Revised 2002) - Guidance leaflet on the regulations governing volunteering and the range of welfare benefits and promotes the value of volunteering for people claiming benefit.

Local Authority Policy for Volunteering (1997) - Specifically relevant to Local Authorities who are engaging volunteers. It presents a set of notes on procedures for drawing up a policy and outlines the aims of a policy for volunteering. It also includes a model policy for volunteering.

Guidelines on Volunteers' Expenses (1998) - Outlines the benefits of reimbursing expenses to volunteers, describes the different types of volunteers' expenses and gives suggestions on how to set up a reimbursement system.

The Inflatable Log (2001) - Published on 5th December 2001, this special Scottish edition of 'Voluntary Action', the journal from the Institute for Volunteering Research, brings together papers delivered at Scotland's first Symposium on Volunteering in August 2001.

Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS).

CRBS Leaflet (2001)

Black and Minority Ethnic Volunteering Project

Leaflet 1. 'Volunteering: A positive experience.' Aimed at BME organisations and community groups. (2001)

Leaflet 2. 'Changing the face of volunteering.' Building diversity for mainstream organisations. (2001)

Employer Supported Volunteering

Leaflet 1. Employer Supported Volunteering, Time Well Spent

Leaflet 2. Let your staff be your competitive edge: model policy for employers.

Leaflet 3. ESV Partners in Volunteering Awards 2002.

Information Pack for Employers

Information Pack for Voluntary Organisations

Training and Development

Getting Recognised, Giving Credit (2002) - Guidance on recognition and accreditation for volunteers in Scotland

Volunteers with Special Needs

Volunteering from Home, Telephone schemes and other opportunities for home based people (1999) - Published by Age Concern Scotland in 1999. This publication explores the possibilities of home-based volunteering, as a means of engaging with diverse groups of people whose circumstances confine them to their own homes.

'A virtuous circle' Volunteering with extra support needs (2001) - A study undertaken by VB Scotland and the Scottish Council Foundation on how Volunteer Centres work with 'volunteers with extra support needs'. (Free Download from VDS Website)

Volunteering in Health

Volunteering in Health, leaflet (2002) - Overview of the work of the Volunteering in Health Unit at VDS.

Volunteers/Voluntary Services Managers in the NHS - A survey report from June 2001 to study the role played by VSM's in the NHS

Volunteering in Primary Care (2001) - This CD-ROM shows volunteers working in a range of initiatives such as prescription delivery, supervised play and patient befriending schemes. CD-ROM

Volunteering Opportunities

A Rich Slice of Time (2000) - A 'how to do it' guide to volunteering and community action. Includes a directory of volunteering contacts.

Good Practice Guides

Engaging Volunteers, A Good Practice Guide (2002) –This provides guidance on how to recruit, select, support and manage volunteers. It includes useful checklists, sample forms and promotes and supports the rights of volunteers.

Framework for Volunteering: Policy and Procedures on Volunteers in Voluntary Organisations (2002) - This provides advice and information on how to draft a policy and procedures on volunteers. It lays out in clear steps how to build up ownership of a volunteers policy and gives sample policies, which can easily be adapted to suit the needs of all organisations.

Protecting Children: A Code of Good Practice for Voluntary Organisations in Scotland working with children and young people (1995) - It offers practical ways to minimise the possibility of unsuitable persons obtaining access to children in a way which puts them at risk and includes updates on the process of access to criminal justice record checks.

Scottish Volunteer Centre Network

Volunteer Bureaux /Councils for Voluntary Service (1999) - Explains the roles and functions of each organisation to clarify the distinctive contributions both make to local people and local organisations.

Young People Volunteering: Building the future project

Involving Young Volunteers (1999) - A set of six leaflets providing information and advice for organisations seeking to engage with young volunteers. Includes the following areas: Recognising, rewarding, recruiting, supporting, training, empowering and an executive summary of the research project.

Planning a positive impact (1999) - A training and action planning resource pack for staff who want to involve young volunteers (aged 16-24) in their organisation.

Volunteering: user-friendly for youth? (1999) - Report of an 18 month research project “Building the Future”.

Volunteers Management

SAVM leaflet

Further information on any of the above is available by contacting:

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