

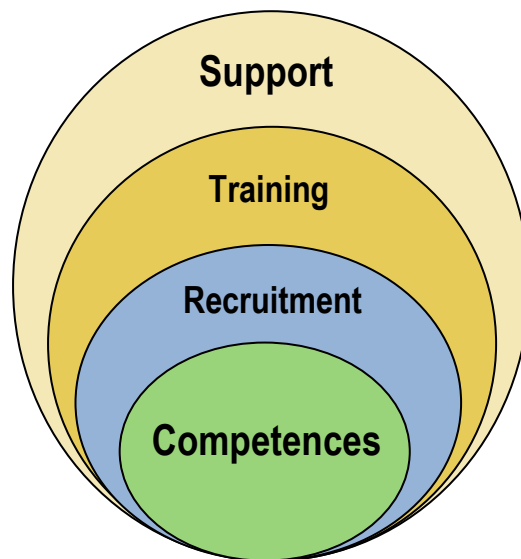
**SPAR**

Curricula for culture volunteers and managers  
in sparsely populated areas



**Erasmus+**

## Mapping essential competencies for Culture Guide Volunteers in sparsely populated areas in East Lancashire, England



**Content****Applied Methodologies****Results of the Questionnaires**

1. Clarify the key competences for current, successful Culture Guides Volunteers operating in sparsely populated areas.
2. Clarify the best way of engaging new Culture Guides volunteers across East Lancashire, particularly concentrating on rural communities.
3. Clarify the best training and capacity building support for Culture Guides
4. Clarify the support needed for volunteers from key stakeholders
5. Assess what learning materials, resources and training Volunteer Managers require to support volunteers working in these locations.

**Results of the Interviews****Conclusion and common results**

## I. Applied Methodologies

This research has been undertaken to determine the necessary competencies required by volunteer Culture Guides investigating and promoting art and culture activities in sparsely populated areas of Pennine Lancashire, England, UK. The research aimed to identify areas of training needed to equip the volunteers to be able to provide local communities with opportunities of accessing and appreciating genres of art and culture participation. The research also identified volunteer progression routes for personal growth, fulfilment and learning.

### Aim and Objectives of the survey

The overall aim was to map the essential conditions for successful culture volunteering in the sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage in sparsely populated areas to provide cross-disciplinary arts and culture opportunities for the local communities with an added value for civic participation, community bonding and local identity.

The objectives were:

- To outline the key competences of currently successful culture volunteers
- To outline good practice on how to engage cultural volunteers in sparsely populated areas
- To outline good practice on how to train culture volunteers in sparsely populated areas
- To outline good support from voluntary culture associations to the culture volunteers, including best practice standards.
- To outline good support from other local stakeholders to culture volunteering

### Key respondents to the survey

**a) Learning providers** (the managers and lead staff of the voluntary arts, culture and heritage associations in the partners' own organisations and related networks)

- Super Slow Way (Creative People and Place programme, funded by the Arts Council in England)
- Canal & River Trust (environmental charity)
- Voluntary Arts England (charity)

The below did not participate in the survey directly through questionnaires but through documentation provided previously. We have included their findings within the paper, given their broad remit around life-long learning and volunteering.

- Amateur arts and craft organisations (guilds, associations, societies – art and craft form related).
- Further Education colleges or learning providers such as Workers Education Association.
- Govt learning networks across England such as the Learning and Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's).
- Lancashire County Council – Arts Service.
- BBC Radio Lancashire / Up for Arts

**b) Learners** (active members who to some degree already are/or can be engaged as volunteer staff in the sector of cross-cultural activities).

- All registered and potential volunteers with Super Slow Way
- New volunteers – The Civic Arts Centre Oswaldtwistle
- BBC Radio Lancashire – new volunteers inspired by radio features and inspirational case studies or personal testimony.

- Volunteers referred to the programme form Volunteer Centres/Bureaux or national online networks such as Do It.

**c) Other stakeholders** (Local NGO organisations from other sectors than culture, the culture department of the municipality, local culture institutions, the local business and commerce associations, the tourist bureau, local media).

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn and Darwen Volunteer Centre
- Voluntary Arts England
- Burnley Library
- Cultural Centres, including local museums and galleries
- Third sector organisations: Age Concern, RVS, Shelter, BCTV, Groundwork Trust.
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- ACRE – Action with Communities in Rural England.

## II: The questionnaire

### Background Information

This information can help us to valuate, if factors such as nationality, gender, age, social background and education implies clear differences in the answers on the subsequent questions about culture volunteering in sparsely populated areas

A	My nationality	United Kingdom	Denmark	Hungary	Poland	Portugal	Other
	I live in... (tick one box)	100%					

B	My status in this survey	Learner: A current or future culture volunteer	Learning provider: Active in a NGO-culture association <sup>1</sup> as manager, board, teacher etc.	Stakeholder 1: Other NGO-as-sociations outside the culture sector	Stakeholder 2: The municipality or local culture institutions	Stakeholder 3: Private business, local media, etc.	Stakeholder 4: (Other type: please explain!)
	I answer this survey as a representative from ... (tick one box)	39%	35%	11%	15%		

C	Gender	Male	Female
	I am .. (tick one box)	33%	67%

D	Age	18 – 29 years	30 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 59 years	60 – 69 years	70 – 99 years
	My age is .. (tick one box)	17%	30%	26%	21%	5%	1%

E	Educational background	Primary School	Gymnasium	Technical vocational education	Short higher education (1 – 2 years)	Middle higher education (3 – 4 years)	Longer Higher education (5+ years)	Other
	My highest education is . (tick one box)	-	-	14%		35%	50%	1%

F	Occupation	Private sector	Public sector	Civil society (Associations or institutions)	Full time student	Out of work (retirement etc)	Other
	My occupation is... (Tick one box)	15%	15%			20%	*50%

- Other includes 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations and self-employment

<sup>1</sup> Amateur art or volunteers within art and heritage (=Active Participation in Cultural Activities)

## 1. Clarify key competence for currently successful culture volunteers

Here we wish to outline the key competences, which a good culture volunteer need to have to be a good culture volunteer in sparsely populated areas.

<b>Assess statements of key competences</b>		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about key competences important or relevant for being a successful culture volunteers in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).							
1.1	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the influence of cultural activities in sparsely populated areas.			50%	50%		
1.2	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the local civil society activities as part of the overall activities in the municipality.			50%	29%	21%	
1.3	The volunteer needs to know good practice on how culture volunteering in sparsely populated areas can promote civic participation, community bonding and local identity.			31%	31%	38%	
1.4	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the cross-cultural sector of amateur arts, voluntary culture and heritage and their activities in the actual municipality.		10%	14%	22%	54%	
1.5	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the other sectors of voluntary work in the municipality, such as the social, humanitarian, welfare, and sport associations.			33%	28%	39%	
1.6	The volunteer needs to have enhanced social and communication skills to engage and involve different social groups in the local municipalities.			22%	25%	53%	
1.7	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills in planning and managing cross-culture activities and events in the local community.		15%	10%	21%	54%	
1.8	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of working with social media and internet communication?		9%	64%	27%		
1.9	The volunteer needs to have good skills in finding extra money by fund-raising, seeking sponsors, etc.		26%	21%	24%	29%	
1.10	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of other local stakeholders that may support and/or be part of the cross-culture activities in the local communities.		15%	34%	14%	37%	

Feedback from the interviews and discussions with respondents –

1.2 /1.4– it was believed that no one could know everything that was happening in an area so it was more important that everyone knew something and shared information with other volunteers. The strength would be in team work

1.7 Volunteers believed they would be supported in event planning and management by the programme Co-ordinator

1.8 It was believed that it was not necessary that all volunteers had knowledge of social media and the internet as volunteers with those skills would take responsibility for this area of the programme and some volunteers were not particularly interested in social media or the internet

1.9 It was thought that volunteers would be supported in fundraising raising activities by the programme Co-ordinator, although training on and knowledge of fundraising and supporting new initiatives was thought to be beneficial

1.10 Capacity building support, fundraising and training was felt to be the role of the managing agent.

**Open questions:****Mention 1 – 3 competences you find important to have to be a successful culture volunteer in sparsely populated areas?**

Other competences that were noted in interviews and group discussions:

- Communication skills were of paramount importance, particularly how to communicate effectively (written, spoken word) and moreover, how to use the right approach and tone to communicate with different people from diverse socio economic backgrounds.
- Soft skills: How individuals can improve their own confidence/self-esteem which will give them the necessary interpersonal skills to engage more effectively with hard to reach communities and communities of interest.
- Research skills – how to find out what they need to know about the local area so they can provide appropriate advice/guidance. Being linked to online networks and informal networks was felt as important as building trust with local communities, as well as developing relationships with community activists, community workers, faith networks and local politicians and councillors.
- Impact measurement – for volunteers to recognise the methods and tools for doing this, which would aid them in assessing outputs and outcomes.
- Feedback – for volunteers to recognise the importance of, gathering feedback from primary and secondary sources e.g. desk research, focus groups, sampling, formal questionnaires, interviews, filmed material – video diaries, quotes, photographs.
- Evaluation – for volunteers to recognise the need for evaluation and how they can use collated findings to better plan activities. Included in the mix would be e.g. qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, formal and informal research (anecdotes) including personal testimony.
- Networking – activities that help volunteers to form useful and supportive alliances to multi-sector networks e.g. same networks, health and wellbeing, learning etc.
- Knowledge of the cross-culture of the sectors of communities – knowledge of different cultures, their customs and faiths.
- Open-mindedness and willingness to learn new things, to have a positive attitude to encourage and motivate others to be willing to give new things a try.
- Recognising the benefits of participating in art and cultural activities and the personal benefits this can have for an individual's health and wellbeing. At the same time, the barriers that stop or prohibit people participating should also be recognised and appropriate solutions found.
- Travelling and training in different areas – given that services are dispersed and some communities quite isolated (transport is a key issue). Volunteers need to be willing and able to travel
- Managing trips with groups of people – culture guides need to be able to take responsibility for small groups of people on experiential visits to art and culture events.
- That risk assessments need to be carried out to assess all aspects of a visit or attendance at an event, including providing detailed information on accessibility, cost, timing, transport, subsistence and what support services (do we need specialist help for individuals who have a disability?) are needed to enable cultural visits to take place.
- That volunteers have suitable support processes in place e.g. standards, handbook, reviews, exit strategy, guidelines, volunteer expense forms, awareness of their rights and responsibilities and those of their partner organisations, health & safety, grievance procedures.





## 2. Clarify best ways of outreach and engaging of new culture volunteers

Here we wish to outline good practice for outreach and delivery by culture associations to recruit and engage culture new volunteers in sparsely populated areas.

<b>Assess statements about outreach and recruitment of volunteers</b>		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about outreach and recruitment of volunteers important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).							
2.1	The culture organisations need to provide elaborated presentation materials, where the possible tasks as culture volunteer are presented.		7%	44%		44%	5%
2.2	The culture organisations should emphasise that the volunteer tasks are important for the local community and the common good (using an idealistic appeal)			31%	30%	39%	
2.3	The culture organisations should emphasise that the volunteer tasks will strengthen the social network of the volunteer (using a social appeal)			31%	31%	38%	
2.4	The culture organisations should emphasise that the tasks as volunteer brings personal competence development and an improved CV by offering extra training courses, mentoring, etc (the personal career appeal)			22%	38%	40%	
2.5	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is by more traditional announcement means in the local news media and at notice boards in shops, libraries and community centres.			12%	23%	65%	
2.6	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is by using the new social media, where key persons from the culture associations use their own social media network.			12%	37%	51%	
2.7	The best way to recruit culture volunteers is to let the key persons in the local voluntary culture associations use their own contact lists and personal network.			37%	14%	49%	
2.8	No, the best way is to involve other local NGO's in the recruitment, because then we get contacts to new groups which may have an interest to be engaged in the culture work.			36%	14%	50%	
2.9	The culture organisations that try to engage new volunteers should mention a <b>personal contact</b> , which interested volunteers can call by phone or mail.			21%	32%	47%	
2.10	The culture organisations that try to engage new volunteers should use an online enrolment site at their organisation's website as the first step.	5%	7%	15%	38%		11%

### Notes

2.1 There existed some ambiguity with respondents about this question and what is being asked e.g. is this about producing elaborate presentation materials or the confidence to deliver presentations (delivery skills).

2.9 It is not the policy of partners or considered to be good working practice in general, for volunteers to give their personal contact details.

2.10 Locally volunteers are not generally recruited on websites or by electronic means across the patch. It is far more likely that they would be recruited directly in person or by word of mouth or by attending taster events or activities.

### Open questions:

#### Mention 1 – 3 competences you find important to be a successful culture volunteer in sparsely populated areas?

2a The following points were noted as being the most appropriate way to conduct outreach activities in rural or sparsely populated areas.

- Good communication and interpersonal skills – it is essential to have good, clear writing and verbal skills and be aware of the most appropriate way of communicating with community groups to foster a sense of trust, acceptance and commitment.
- Knowledge of the local press and its readership – knowing what local publications exist and how to access them e.g. free press, circulars, newsletters, social media groups, editorial & free advertising.
- Using social media and various platforms to build virtual online ‘volunteer’ communities to showcase opportunities and inspire others.
- Methods in place to engage with local service groups, clubs, centres, priority groups – knowing how to make the first approach with the most effective results and sustaining these links overtime.
- Working as part of a team – to utilise people’s individual talents and support each other in the community, managing risk and health and safety and levering in new skills and talents to plug gaps in provision.
- Disseminating information – how to cascade information in the most effective and efficient way and updating announcements.
- Press releases – how to write a positive, engaging and motivating press release – one that tells a story.
- Being aware of national quality assurance guidelines e.g. Investors in Volunteers, Compact Code of Good Practice, Equality Bill, VA’s Volunteering in the Arts Toolkit and learning materials, local authority strategies on involving volunteers.
- Being cognisant of safeguarding issues, including processes for vetting and barring (police checks) and recognised policies and standards for working with vulnerable adults and young people.
- Being fully aware of what motivates people to volunteer and what stops them e.g. image, opportunities, funding, time, confidence.
- Mapping and scoping current barriers that exist for those on welfare benefits who want to volunteer but feel that they can’t because of the pressure to find and secure work e.g. pressure from Job Centre staff, targets, new initiatives, civil servants not understanding the benefits of volunteering.
- Recognising issues around service substitution and job substitution.
- Identifying training support that is already in existence e.g. pro bono.
- Showcasing achievements and celebrating the benefits of volunteering e.g. International Volunteer Day.

### 3. Clarify best training programme for culture volunteers

Here we wish to outline good training programmes for culture volunteers that wish to or already work as volunteers in sparsely populated areas.

<b>Assess statements about training programmes for culture volunteers</b>		Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about the training programmes for volunteers important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).							
3.1	The volunteers must learn to recognise and assess their key competence profile as culture volunteer (their strength and weaknesses)		9%	17%	29%	45%	
3.2	The volunteers must learn to articulate their possible needs and priorities for extra training events to gain the needed extra competences.			8%	40%	52%	
3.3	The volunteers must understand / have a clear well-argued opinion on the main challenges for our sparsely areas to counter the trend for movement to the bigger cities.		5%	25%	34%	36%	
3.4	The volunteers must understand / have a clear well-argued opinion on why the voluntary culture associations and their volunteers can make a difference.		7%	30%	31%	32%	
3.5	The volunteers must have knowledge of the positive relations between improved culture activities and promotion of civic participation, community bonding and local identity		5%	19%	35%	41%	
3.6	The volunteers must know the main activities of the voluntary culture associations and their interactions with other main stakeholders in the local communities.			49%		51%	
3.7	The volunteer needs to have knowledge of the other sectors of voluntary work in the municipality, such as the social, humanitarian, welfare, and sport associations.		6%	8%	43%	45%	
3.8	The volunteer needs to have good skills in finding extra money by fund-raising, seeking sponsors, etc.		29%	30%		41%	
3.9	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills in working with social media and internet communication?		31%	25%	22%	22%	
3.10	The volunteer needs to have enhanced skills as project leaders in planning and managing cross-culture activities and events.		25%	24%	24%	27%	

#### **Open questions:**

**Mention 1 – 3 competences you find important to be a successful culture volunteer in sparsely populated areas?**

3a	<p>Desired training and learning opportunities to provide extra competencies to Culture Guides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working effectively as part of a team</li> <li>○ Good communication and interpersonal skills</li> <li>○ Good working practices and risk management</li> <li>○ How to use voluntary experiences in CV's to strengthen job applications.</li> <li>○ Gaining volunteer work placements for personal development and growth.</li> <li>○ Recognising one's own strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>○ Identify training to improve one's one knowledge base</li> <li>○ Enterprise skills – fund raising, bid writing, and creating a constituted group</li> <li>○ Marketing and promotion</li> <li>○ Media training and social media training</li> </ul>
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#### 4. Clarify needed support from key stakeholders to the volunteers

Here we wish to clarify the needs for different forms of support to the volunteers from the local voluntary culture associations.

<b>Assess statements of key competences</b>		Very low degree	Low degree	Some degree	High degree	Very high degree	Don't know
Indicate to what degree you find the statements about the needed support important or relevant for promoting culture volunteering in sparsely populated communities? (Tick one box for each statement).							
4.1	The volunteer needs support to complete fund-raising to get support to cost demanding activities.		5%		60%	35%	
4.2	The volunteers need help to secure the book-keeping, payments and accountants of the activities.		6%	11%	64%	19%	
4.3	The volunteer needs support to solve some more practical tasks as rent of venues, making PR-materials, distribution materials, etc.		5%	5%	59%	31%	
4.4	The (new) volunteer needs some personal sparring or mentoring from more experienced culture volunteers or managers or consultants from voluntary associations.		5%	10%	75%	10%	
4.5	The volunteer needs help to contact local authorities and get the wanted agreements or support from the municipality	4%		6%	81%	9%	
4.6	The volunteer needs help to contact local culture institutions and to get the wanted agreements about support or collaboration about specific activities.		5%	21%	57%	17%	
4.7	The volunteer needs help to contact the local business and commerce associations, the tourist bureau, or local media and get the wanted support or collaboration.	5%		15%	38%	42%	
4.8	The volunteer needs help to get contacts with similar initiatives in other municipalities to exchange experiences and learn from each other.		5%		65%	31%	
4.9	The volunteer needs help to find and contact the appropriate nationwide experts, speakers and advisers in the field.		4%		54%	42%	
4.10	The volunteer needs help to secure an efficient promotion and dissemination of the results to other stakeholders outside the municipality and to the wider national audiences.		5%	15%	44%	36%	

#### Open questions:

**Mention 1 – 3 competences you find important to be a successful culture volunteer in sparsely populated areas?**

4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Offer training and workshops around promotional or communication skills: media training, communication skills, interpersonal skills, presentation skills, risk assessments. These could incentivise interested parties to participate.</li> <li>○ Organise trips to visit different places to experience different genres of art and culture and meet different people who are involved in the same kind of projects (social aspect of volunteering – meeting new people and having fun experiences).</li> <li>○ Help the group with enterprise &amp; fundraising skills to be able to raise their own funds in order to be able to undertake more activities.</li> <li>○ Create a constituted group to be able to bid for funding</li> <li>○ Do team building exercises to help the group bond and function better together</li> <li>○ Support Culture Guides individual personal development</li> <li>○ Help to develop working relationships with other art and culture groups, clubs, organisations</li> <li>○ Explore possible concessions to help the programme afford activities</li> <li>○ Build a network of volunteers who befriend and support new recruits.</li> </ul>
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	Have a network or calendar of social events to celebrate the work of volunteers To recognise the contribution of volunteers in a formal way e.g. events, training, accreditation, awards.
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## Comments to the questionnaire

If you have comments or critics of the questionnaire, or want to explain your answers, you are welcome to write them below

### General comments:

The questionnaire was thought to be quite complex and difficult to complete. Not all the question areas had relevant answers. e.g. educational background question and occupation didn't include 3<sup>rd</sup> sector option.

### 1. Comments to the questions about key competences of culture volunteers

Some of the key competencies for Culture Guides that were not mentioned were thought to be – Interpersonal skills, risk management, communication skills, research skills, media skills, team building, mentoring, befriending, coaching, leadership, equality & diversity, multi-cultural awareness, disability awareness, event management, social media safety, confidentiality, data protection and boundaries, health and safety, risk awareness. It was also thought to be very important that volunteers are aware of feedback, evaluation and impact measurement – given their role in gathering relevant data.

### 2. Comments to questions about ways of reach-out and recruitment of culture volunteers

Some of the competences involved in working in the community and recruiting other Culture Guides that were not mentioned were:

- Safe working practices in the community, being aware of lone-working procedures and team working practices
- Managing one's own personal values and beliefs – how to be impartial, positive and non-judgemental to encourage and motivate others.
- Adopting an inclusive and accepting attitude.
- Interpersonal skills – how to approach and communicate appropriately with people from different backgrounds and cultures, including refugees, migrants, travellers.
- Working effectively in a team to support each other, utilising individual skills, talents and contacts
- Engaging in diverse cultural activities – being prepared to step outside one's comfort zone to be involved in new and different activities which may be part of another culture, without embarrassment.
- Widening participation - engaging effectively with community groups, clubs, centres – linking to groups already active in these areas who can support you with this approach.
- How to build trust and be accepting of the a group's rules, activities, ethos.
- How to share information professionally and safely using data protection, confidentiality, personal safety, lone working policies and procedures.

### 3. Comments to questions about best training offerings for culture volunteers

- Team working – how to be a good team member, each person playing their role and contributing to the team,
- Event management – the processes in planning, delivering, facilitating and evaluating community events safely
- Communication skills – NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming)
- Appreciation of fundraising and bid writing – knowing the necessary structures and processes to be able to be or to form a constituted group and being able to bid for funding
- Personal Development – how to appreciate and utilise peer to peer learning skills.
- Enterprise opportunities – how to market what you do
- Safe working practices, including Health and Safety and Risk Management

### 4. Comments to questions about needed support from the local culture associations to the culture volunteers

- Signposting – how to refer and match participants to local opportunities.
- Fundraising and bid writing – knowing how to write bids, raise bids and form constituted groups to be able to share information with community groups
- Partnership working - how to work appropriately with other people and organisations, which organisations to work with, how to contact them and what information to share with them
- Corporate Social Responsibility – understanding how businesses can provide support or funding or encourage their staff to volunteer.
- Mentoring – to mentor and coach volunteers through initial stages, offering support and guidance.
- Leadership – benchmarking the project against other similar initiatives and developing leadership support mechanisms for 'key volunteers'

### 5. Comments to questions about needed support from other local stakeholders

- Levering-in training or learning support ... either paid for or pro bono
- Identifying relevant volunteer strategies or charters.
- Mapping and scoping volunteering opportunities.
- Accessing buildings, resources, kit, equipment, transport.
- Lobbying and advocating for better support
- Giving sparsely populated areas a voice – challenging public opinion.

## Reporting on Interviews – Comparison

### Interviews with Volunteers

Interviews with respondents who were volunteers tended to generate more of the lower degrees of responses, although volunteers were very positive and enthusiastic in interviews and group discussions.

### Interviews with Professionals

Interviews with respondents who were professionals tended to generate more of the high and very high degrees of responses.

### Results and common results

Responses were not different from other major research studies carried out about volunteering, although key points noted about sparsely populated areas indicated that there are problems with rural isolation, transport issues and supply/demand of volunteer opportunities and placement providers (in that you have to go outside the area to find challenging volunteering opportunities).

