

# Valuing and developing volunteering

Recruit, support and sustain  
volunteering in a changing landscape

Festival Makers Conference 2023  
Stuart Garland | Volunteer Ireland  
University of Galway, Friday 12 May 2023





# Stuart Garland

Learning & Capacity Building Manager

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# Earn while you learn

## Earn Professional Development Units (PDU)

You can earn 3 PDUs towards your Certified Volunteer Administrator (CVA) Award by attending this learning opportunity. Visit [www.cvacert.org](http://www.cvacert.org) for details.



# Learning Objectives

The aim of this session is to help you explore the topic of managing volunteers at events and emergencies



1

Outline the Event Volunteering Cycle

2

Understand the role of volunteers as stakeholders

3

Explore good practice and understand the challenges

4

Identify and minimise the associated risks

5

Support volunteers to ensure they engaged in their roles

# About me



Worked in private and in the not for profit sector. Primary role was as a Youth Worker



Volunteered in a youth work setting for 28 years, at local regional and national levels



7 years unpaid & 11 years paid experience as a Volunteer Manager. Managed Event Volunteers for 8 years



Qualifications in HRM, Event Management, Health & Safety, Volunteer Management & Leadership



Supporting capacity building in organisations in Ireland and across Europe for over 14 years



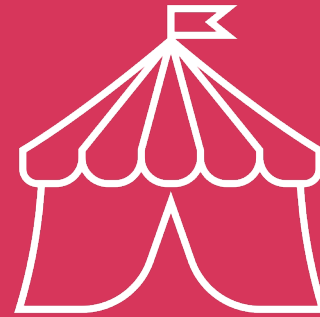
# Introduce yourself



Hi my  
name is ...



I am  
from ...



My event or  
festival is ...

# About Volunteer Ireland

We work with a range of stakeholders to make volunteering accessible, inclusive and of high quality

We build capacity in organisations and companies to create meaningful volunteering experiences

We celebrate volunteering and communicate its impact to Government and the wider public

We advocate for volunteering so that its value is recognised

We support the network of Volunteer Centres and work closely with them to ensure volunteering thrives at local and national level

# About Volunteer Centres

Volunteer Centres  
are the hearts of  
communities  
across Ireland

Volunteer Centres  
work to promote  
and celebrate  
volunteering

They help  
organisations in  
need of  
Volunteers to find  
suitable people to  
fill those roles

They provide  
support and advice  
to Volunteers and  
Organisations and are  
dedicated to  
facilitating and  
enhancing  
volunteering

# Community Volunteers



# Successful Volunteer engagement

Planning  
and  
resource  
allocation

Volunteer  
role  
development

Recruitment  
process

Interviewing  
and  
screening

Orientation  
and  
training

Clear  
relationship  
between  
Volunteers  
& staff

Day to day  
management

Clear  
Volunteer  
Policy

Volunteer  
Recognition

Positive  
Volunteer  
Culture

Diversity  
within  
volunteer  
base

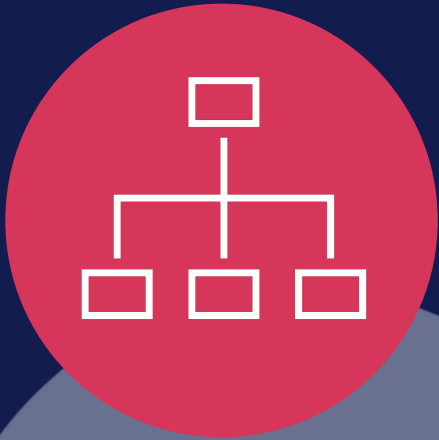
Volunteer  
feedback  
and action

The world is  
changing and so is  
volunteering  
We can't continue to  
place volunteers in  
unsuitable roles



# A model for volunteering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

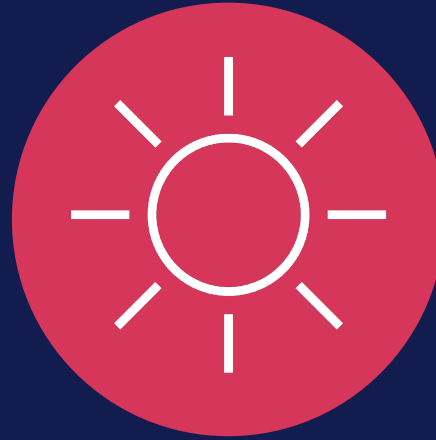
## The five components



**Structure**



**Site**



**Intensity**



**Aspiration**



**Category**

# A model for volunteering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century



## The 5 categories of volunteering



**Mutual aid**



**Service volunteering**



**Campaigning**



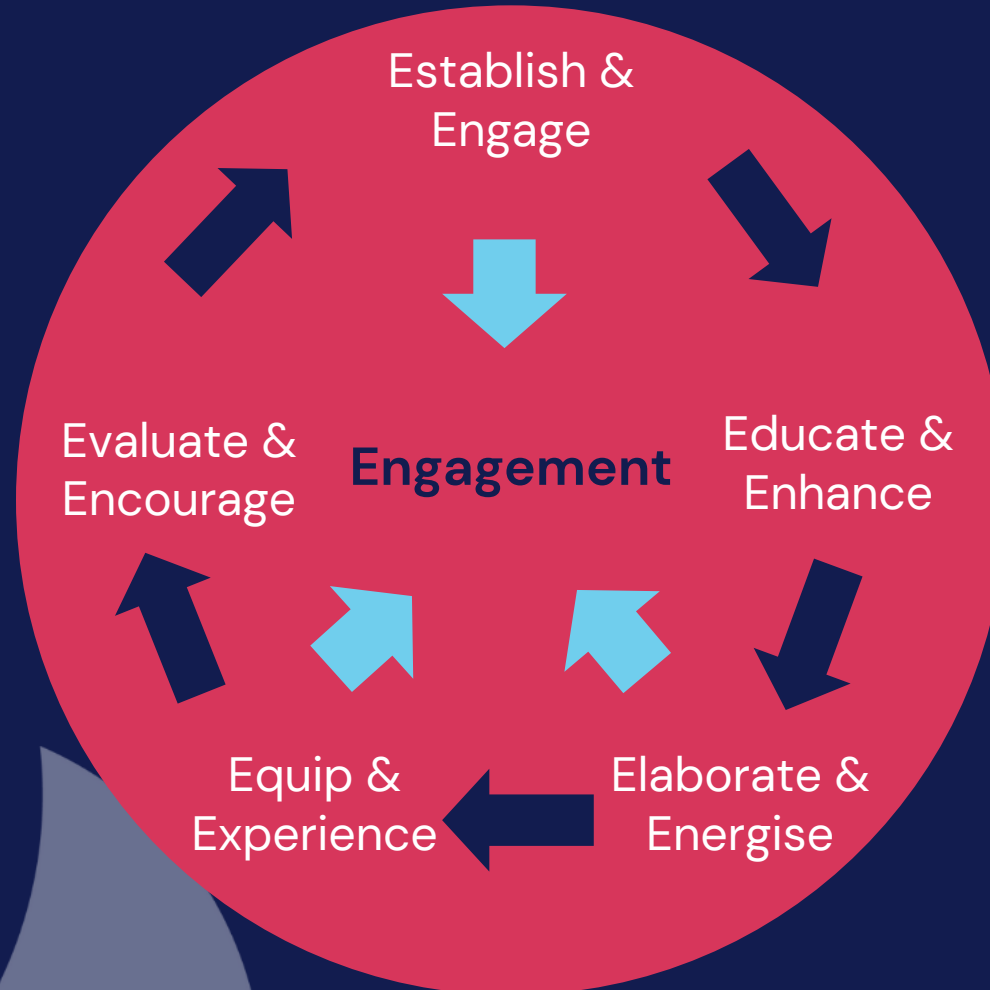
**Participation**



**Volunteering as leisure**



# Event Volunteering Cycle



# Building flexible roles for volunteers

**Traditional**

12+  
months

**Project /  
skills based**

4-12 weeks

◀◀ **Virtual / remote** ▶▶

**Event  
based**

Day or weekend,  
annual

**Pro bono,  
on demand**

Short  
engagement

# Designing roles for a new world

1

Identify  
primary  
areas of  
current work

2

Brainstorm  
tasks to be  
completed

3

What  
is the  
frequency  
and timing?

4

How  
complex  
is the  
task?

5

Design  
new  
roles

6

Create  
new role  
descriptions



# The role of our TEAM



T

**Together** we are a united **Team**,  
Make your mark,  
enjoy your  
volunteering and  
be engaged with  
the public and  
your fellow **Team  
Members**



E

You are the **Eyes**  
and **Ears** of the  
event. Be alert  
to people's  
needs,  
demonstrate a  
genuine can-do  
attitude and  
keep aware



A

Have your focus  
on the **attendee**  
and how you can  
support them, be  
**approachable**,  
welcome everyone  
and let your  
positive **attitude**  
shine through



M

Provide a  
consistent, high  
quality level of  
service to  
everyone so you  
can **manage**  
yourself in a way  
that inspires and  
**motivates** others.

# The Big Picture



- Flexibility is the key, **58%** looking for episodic volunteering
- Only **41%** thanked as a volunteer, only **14%** asked for feedback on experience, only 14% were able to talk about their motivations to their Volunteer Manager
- Motivations: **53%** had a desire to help in their local community, **51%** volunteered based on flexibility to volunteer at times that suited

# Lessons Learnt



**A 2021 survey conducted as part of the research found that volunteering had a significant impact on those who gave back during the pandemic:**

- **72.6%** of volunteers indicated that their feeling of making a useful contribution to the community increased
- **50.8%** of volunteers who indicated that their mental health and well-being increased
- **57.4%** of volunteers indicated that their sense of belonging to the community increased
- **95.6%** of volunteers agreed with the statement that 'without volunteers, many people would be left without help and/or services'
- **95%** of volunteers agreed with the statement that 'volunteers provide valuable services that would not otherwise be available'

# Lessons Learnt



## Recommendations for Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs)

- Communication is the key
- Adaptability and Flexibility
- Support and Training
- Advertising and Promotion

# Event volunteer engagement levels



A smiling woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue t-shirt, is the central figure. She is looking off to the side with a joyful expression. The background is a lush garden with various flowers, including large white hydrangeas and purple blossoms. In the distance, other people are walking along a path, including a man in a white cap and a woman in a blue shirt. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

1

# Engage and Establish



**Volunteer  
Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann

Community  
Volunteer

**Your niceness will let  
you recruit a  
volunteer the first  
time, but only your  
competence will let  
you keep them.**

**Steve McCurley**

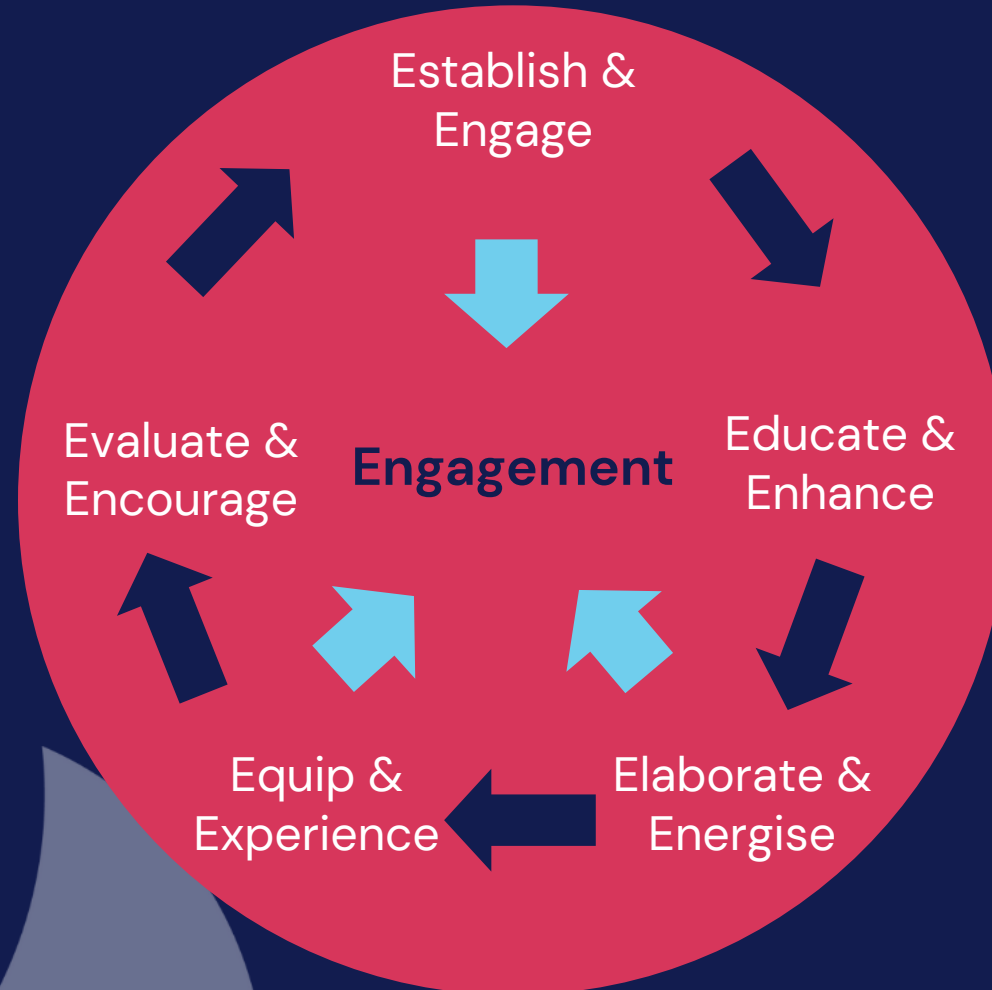


# Questions, answers & comments

## I'd love to hear from you



# Event Volunteering Cycle



# Establish & Engage

1

- What are the role(s) for volunteers?
- What are the actual numbers needed plus contingency?
- Who will manage volunteers on the day?
- How many team leaders will you need?
- How long will it take to recruit volunteers?
- What screening tools will you use?

## Our Stakeholders & Partners:

- Who are your stakeholders?
- What needs to be communicated on behalf of stakeholders?
- What is the role of volunteers in relation to stakeholders?



# Educate and Enhance

1

- How, where and when will you advertise the volunteer roles?
- What other events might you be competing with?
- How many volunteer shifts do you need to fill?
- How will you ensure diversity within your volunteer programme?

# Educate and Enhance

1

- How will you use online tools to optimise two-way communication
- Are there other networks you could engage volunteers from?
- How you will you create a positive volunteer culture?
- What will you do if you don't recruit enough volunteers?

# Task before ask



# Your event's Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

You need to have clear answer to these questions before you start to recruit potential volunteers



1

What does the Volunteer want?

2

What does your festival do well?

3

What do other festivals do well?

# Your organisation's Unique Selling Proposition

1

## What does the Volunteer want?

- A flexible offer from the organisation
- Diversity in the volunteer base
- Clear, transparent and efficient recruitment process
- Orientation and training
- Inclusion in decision making
- To be recognised and valued
- Opportunities to give and get feedback



# Your organisation's Unique Selling Proposition

2

## What does your festival do well?

- Tell potential volunteers what's on offer
- Ask them what they have to give, what they get in return
- Tell them what makes you unique
- How flexible your offer is or isn't
- Opportunities for progression
- Time for the volunteer to explore their motivation
- Recognition



# Your organisation's Unique Selling Proposition

3

## What do other Festivals do well?

- The support of a volunteer coordinator
- A good call to action
- Choices and opportunities
- A warm (and ongoing) welcome
- Information and two way communication
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Recognition for all volunteers
- Diversity and inclusion in volunteers



# Your Unique Selling Proposition



**Winning Zone** – clear point of difference that meets the needs, make it even bigger



**Who cares?** – many times competitors battle in which the volunteer has no interest

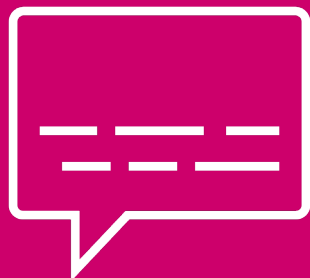


**Risky** – Competitive battle ground, use emotion, innovation, superior execution



**Losing Zone** – Your Competitor meets the volunteer better than you, you'll be killed

# A positive volunteer culture



Communication



Engagement



Participation

2

## Educate and Enhance



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Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann

# Educate and Enhance

2

- What is the skillset of your volunteers?
- What additional skills do they need to perform their role?
- What information do they need to carry out their role?
- How and where will you up skill volunteers?
- Could communication a barrier?

## Three potential volunteers

- How would you prepare, resource and equip this potential volunteer?
- What might be the challenges of engaging this volunteer?
- What, additional supports might they need?











3

## Elaborate and Energise



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Obair Dheonach Éireann

# Elaborate & Energise

3

- How often will you communicate with them and keep their interest alive?
- What other information will you provide?
- Will you provide additional training for your Team Leaders?
- How will you keep volunteers motivated before and between events?

# Elaborate & Energise

3

- Will you transport them to the site?
- Will you provide a hot meal to kick start your programme?
- Will you have a briefing session / fun ice breaker?
- How will you ensure that volunteers mix on the day and ensure no one gets left out?

# Case Study

We'll now show you a short video and encourage you to reflect on the content.

If your internet connection is weak we suggest that during the video you turn off your camera which may improve your viewing experience.





# Questions, answers & comments

## I'd love to hear from you





4

# Equip and Experience



**Volunteer  
Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann

# Equip & Experience

4

- Food, name tags / lanyards, water bottles, vouchers, two-way radios, hats, sun tan lotion, raincoats, umbrellas, hi-viz jackets, ID tags
- Where will your Volunteer Hub be located?
- Where and when can breaks be taken?
- How do you deal with challenges / down time?

# Case Study

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# Questions, answers & comments

## I'd love to hear from you





5

## Evaluate and Encourage



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They are not  
your volunteers  
You are their  
organisation



# Evaluate & Encourage

5

- Will you carry out a daily De-brief?
- Will there be a situation / event debrief?
- Will you carry out exit interviews with volunteers who don't return
- What's the most effective way to get volunteers feedback?

# Evaluate & Encourage

5

- Will you act on that feedback and let them know what if any changes will be made?
- Will you give volunteers a certificate?
- What other freebies can you give volunteers?
- Will you record their hours and offer references?

# Evaluate & Encourage

5

- Communicate their worth
- Offer social programme
- Offer social media page / community
- Photo gallery / video

# Case Study

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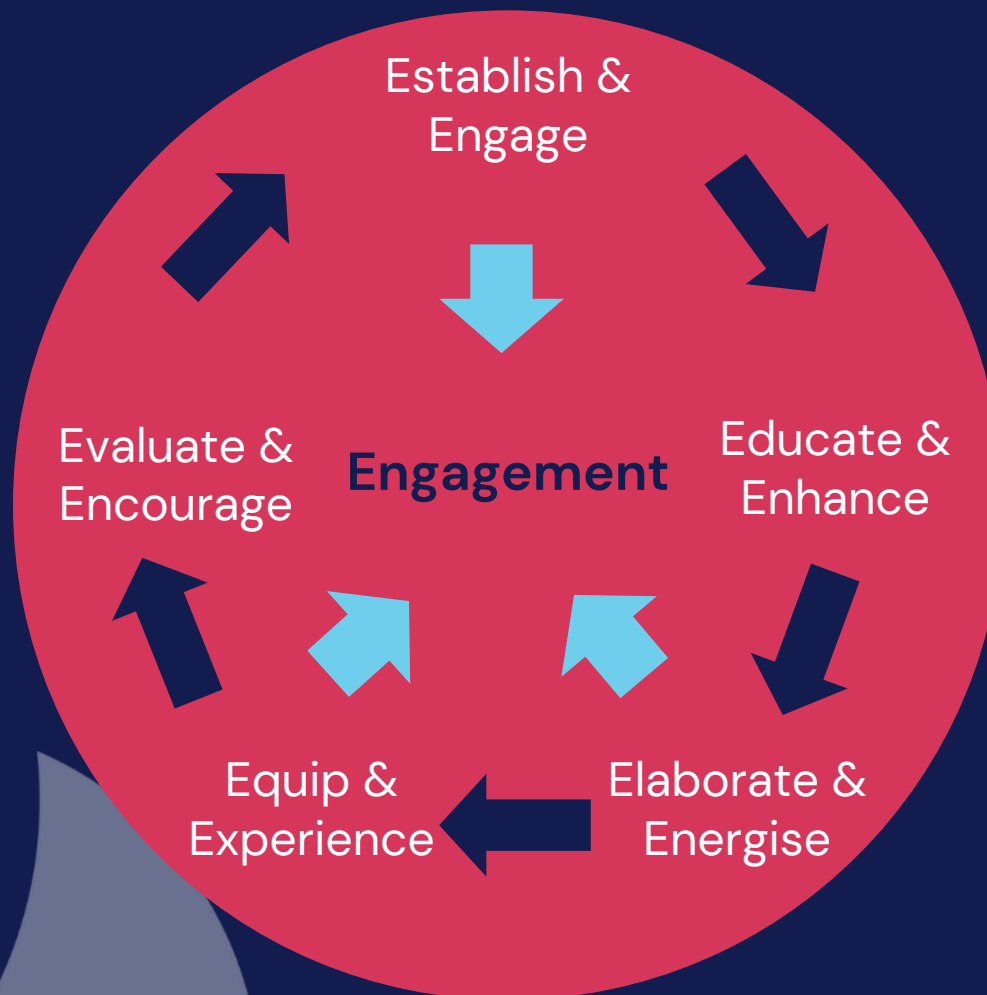


# Questions, answers & comments

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# Event & Emergency Volunteering Cycle



# 10 ways to improve the volunteer experience at events and festivals

Provide  
Adequate  
training

Be  
organised

Make the  
first day a  
good one

Connect  
tasks to  
the cause

Recognise  
all  
contributions

Communicate  
Communicate  
Communicate

Ask for  
feedback

Provide  
mentorship

Offer social  
experiences

Be  
professional

# Volunteer Managers' Coffee Break

An opportunity to network with  
your peers in the field of  
volunteer engagement



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

11:00 to 12:00  
every second Friday

Friday 5 May  
Friday 19 May  
Friday 2 June  
Friday 16 June  
Friday 30 June  
Friday 14 July  
Friday 28 July  
Friday 8 September  
Friday 22 September

[volunteer.ie/training-events-calendar](https://volunteer.ie/training-events-calendar)



**Volunteer  
Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann



**Centre for  
European  
Volunteering**



Join our online conversation

# Exploring the volunteering landscape across Europe



11am–12pm



19 May 2023



**In conversation with**  
Lejla Šehić Relić, President of  
the Centre for European  
Volunteering

**Register Now**



Join our online discussion

# Research Presentation: Training Needs of Volunteer Managers



11am–12pm



30 June 2023



**Research presentation:**

Assessing the training needs of  
Volunteer Managers with  
Penelope Maguire of Pobal

**Register Now**

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