

Research Partnerships – volunteering and academia working together

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Overview

- Introductions
- Practitioner-academic relationship – what do we want?
- Ways of doing this - examples
- How to make this work?
- Idea development

Introductions

- Who are we?
 - Applied research
 - Teaching
 - Student project supervisors
 - Field visits



UK Sports Volunteering Research network

- Meets twice a year
- Exchange research between academics and practitioners
- Disseminates research about sports volunteers;



The Practitioner-Academic stakeholders – what do each want? Understand your partner

Volunteer Directors/Managers	Academics	Students
Good quality research job	Papers in journals	Access to research data and organisations
Academically credible	Department income	Marketable experience
Output – clear and engaging	Enhance research rich learning for students	Satisfy own interests
On time		

Ways of doing this & pro's and con's

- Networking
- Academic led/contract research – pay them /research council funded
- Student research/PhD research/class room based problem solving
- CPD
- Academics strategic involvement

Networking

- Does the information you need already exist?
Find the 'right' person to ask
- Where/How? Joining networks, directories of research
 - **Voluntary Sector Studies Network** email list & discussion board, AVM, NNVA membership

Networking

- Conferences and workshops
- Sub-sector specific e.g. **SVRN**
- Check people's interests on Uni web sites, e.g.
- <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/staff/nichols/index>
- <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/f/lindsay-findlay-king/>

Academic led e.g.

- e.g. How do volunteers in sports clubs cope with clubmark accreditation?
- University grant, feedback to Sport England.

Impacts of obtaining clubmark on sport club formality and volunteers - 2015

- Clubmark is the Sports England badge of quality for sports clubs
- + role descriptions help new volunteers / helps recruit juniors / ‘benchmark’ of good practice
- - time and effort to get it, and renew it.



Academic Contract research

- Sport England – motivations of sport volunteers 2016
- National Trust – Why volunteers are hard to ‘manage’, with Leicester University.



National Trust Contract research

- Research report - <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/research-documents/business-and-law/hrm/crowe/managing-a-volunteer-workforce-report-june-2016-final.pdf>
- Taster of findings - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPfdlXPZpE>
- Academic paper output - Ward, J. & Greene, A. (2018) Too Much of a Good Thing? The Emotional Challenges of Managing Affectively Committed Volunteers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. 0, 0 pp. 1-23.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0899764018783276>

Articles

Too Much of a Good Thing? The Emotional Challenges of Managing Affectively Committed Volunteers

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
1–23

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Academic Research council funded

Can support research and dissemination

Example – ESRC Social Science Festival Event
2014 – Transfer of public leisure facilities to
volunteers.

Day conference – 40 practitioners and
academics

Student research

- **Group projects** e.g. Girlguiding UK volunteering experience, recruitment, retention (regional-national)
- **Dissertations/applied projects** e.g. Newham Volunteers
- **Work placements** e.g. the Great Run Company, LTA Regional Tennis Development

Student PhD research

- Sponsored or match funded (collaborative)

Example Scottish Charity Regulator and
University of Stirling

ESRC Collaborative studentship: Scottish Charity Regulator and University of Stirling Project:

Risk and resilience in Scottish charities

- It helped Scottish Charity Regulator develop an approach to risk in a regulatory environment, and how charities experience risk. risk-based prioritisation of concerns.
- OSCR now has a better understanding of how data can help it develop policy.

Setting it up – why it worked

- OSCR and Uni researcher knew each other before - Common understanding of what both sides wanted/needed from the collaboration.
- Whole application process very quick 4 Feb – 11 Feb.
- Student started later that year (whole project 2013-2017, incl scholarship and internship).
- OSCR contributed around £2k per year for three years + some T&S (mainly train tickets to Dundee).
- Picking the right PhD student – together
- ESRC funding justified the time + resources for such in-depth analysis.

Ideas in the classroom

- Guest speakers on courses – leading to student presentations
- Assessment case studies – for student problem solving/ research/presentations



Academic CPD

- Delivering research insights or evidence based practice/solutions

e.g. AVM workshops, commissioned work-based degrees

Academics – strategic involvement

- Inviting academics to apply for Board positions

e.g. Northumberland Sport County Sport Partnership – workforce champion

[Play Sport](#)

[Getting Active](#)

[Coaching & Volunteering](#)

[Clubs](#)

[Funding](#)

[PE & School Sport](#)

The Board

[Home](#) - [About Us](#) - **The Board**

Although a hosted organisation (through the Northumberland County Council) our independent Board has responsibility for ensuring Northumberland Sport delivers against all grant conditions and targets and has a robust approach to governance and accountability.

Our Board

Our Board is chaired by Patrick Price, senior manager responsible for Community Health Services in Northumbria Healthcare Trust and is made up of 5 other independent members.

To find out more about each of our Board Members please visit our [Meet the Board section](#).



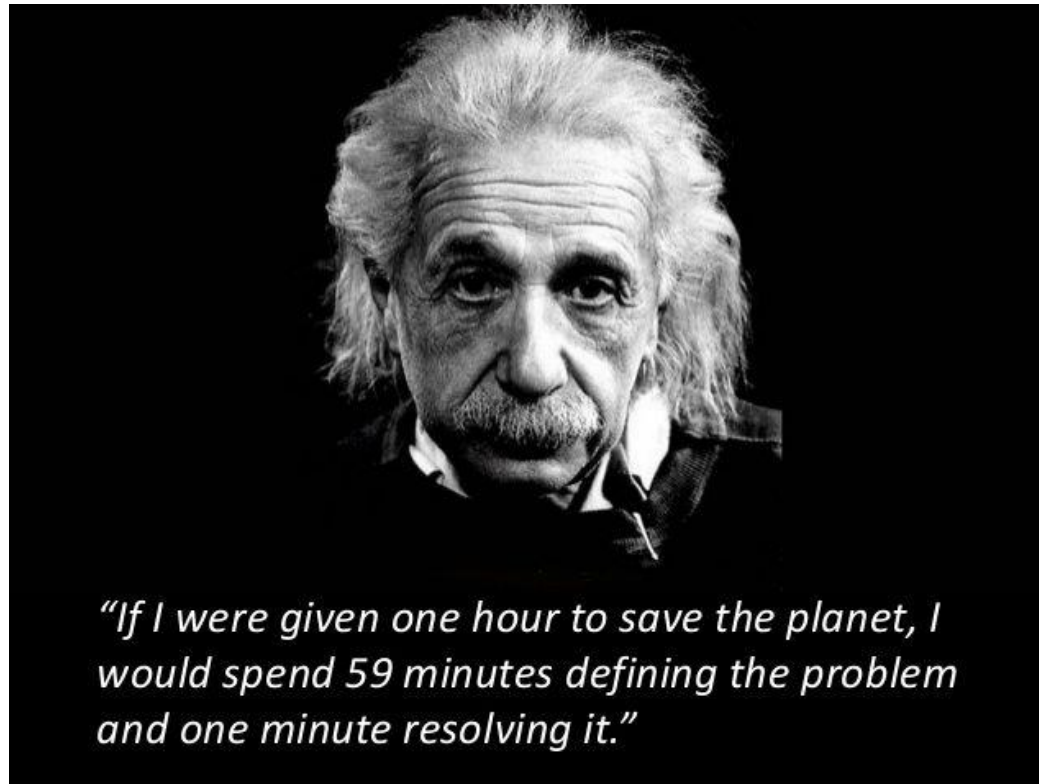
Ways of doing this – a reminder

- Networking
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How to make this work?

- Identifying the 'right' academics –
- Via broker sites – conference web sites – conferences
- Work out what they, and you, want
- Grow a relationship - initial conversations, develop working together
- Needs/Challenges (link to 'Building Bridge's event)

Identifying the right problems!



Over to you...idea development

Introductions	Reflection on past projects	Research plan
Please introduce yourself to the group	Lessons learnt?	What do you need to research/find information on?
What is your experience of working with academia?	An example of a project that worked well – why and how?	How will you make contact and develop it?
	An example of a project that didn't go so well – why and how?	

Concluding thoughts

- Identify one take home learning point
- Identify one next step

Further guidance on collaboration

Collaborating with academics guide

Practical guidance and resources for setting up links

<http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/340/>

Ten top tips for working together

Practitioner perspective – following a 1 year collaboration project

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/dec/10/working-with-academics-it-gets-easier-honestly>

Useful links in the sector

Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN)

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

<http://www.vssn.org.uk/members/discussion-list/>

<http://www.vssn.org.uk/events/>

NCVO

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

twitter @NCVOVolunteers, or join their email list by emailing shaun.delaney@ncvo.org.uk.

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/institute-for-volunteering-research>

SVRN

<https://sports-volunteer-research-network.org.uk>

<https://sports-volunteer-research-network.org.uk/dwqa-questions/>

Third Sector Research Centre

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tsrc/publications/index.aspx>

<https://volunteermanagers.org.uk/2018/06/13/building-bridges-bringing-together-volunteer-managers-and-voluntary-sector-researchers/>



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