

"Building a more inclusive Community"



**Co. Longford Community & Voluntary
Forum**

**AUDIT OF
VOLUNTEERING IN
COUNTY LONGFORD**

JANUARY 2008



Comhshool, Oidhrecht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government

CONTENTS

	Page
NOTE FROM LONGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. CONTEXT FOR VOLUNTEERING	6
3. AREA PROFILE OF COUNTY LONGFORD	12
4. METHODOLOGY	16
5. RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS	17
6. FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS	29
7. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOPS	45
8. CASE STUDIES	47
9. INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS	51
10. CONCLUSIONS	55
11. ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60

Appendices

- Appendix A Terms of Reference
- Appendix B Full socio-economic tables
- Appendix C Copies of surveys to community and voluntary groups and volunteers
- Appendix D List of groups which responded to the survey
- Appendix E Full schedule of responses to survey from community and voluntary groups
- Appendix F Full schedule of responses from volunteers
- Appendix G Copy of press advertising
- Appendix H Copy of Powerpoint presentation used at workshops
- Appendix I List of stakeholders contacted

County Longford Community and Voluntary Forum (CLVF) was established in 2003 with a core membership of 30, since its inception 144 groups have affiliated and it is now a key resource for volunteerism in the County. The purpose of the County Longford Community and Voluntary Forum is to facilitate the representation of and participation by community and voluntary groups in matters relating to both Longford County Development Board and Longford County Council. It is also open to other constituent bodies of the Board to work through the Forum in matters relating to their own particular areas of responsibility or interest. The forum commissioned a piece of research to investigate the culture of volunteerism in County Longford titled 'Audit of Volunteering in County Longford' It is also represented on the steering group for the Longford Volunteer Centre hosted by LCRL. The forum's newly elected chairperson Mr. Peter Clyne, along with all members of the steering group of the forum welcome you to read the attached research and hope that you will find it of benefit to your organisation.

The CLVF recognises the significant contribution the voluntary and community sector make to local development and the potential for the forum to co-operate with the social partners in further developments. The forum looks forward to continuing its work with the Longford Volunteer Centre & LCRL in seeing the key recommendations of this research realized.

The CLVF extends its thanks to Mentor Economic Developments Ltd who conducted the Audit.

The Longford Volunteer Centre – The story so far...

Longford Community Resources Ltd, in conjunction with Longford Community and Voluntary Forum and the County Development Board, sought funding from Cohesion Funds to fund volunteering activities including the employment of a volunteer co-ordinator's post in Co. Longford. The project affiliated with Volunteer Centres Ireland in October 2007 and became the Longford Volunteer Centre. The Longford Volunteer Centre is managed by a Steering Group consisting of representatives from the above mentioned groups and the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIMS) of the County Development Board. It has a full-time Volunteer Co-ordinator, Karen Byrne. Longford Community Resources Ltd. currently hosts the centre.

Mission Statement:

The Longford Volunteer Centre acts as a broker between individuals who wish to volunteer and those organisations that involve volunteers. It exists to promote positive, inclusive, well managed volunteering within County Longford and acts as a centre of good practice for both organisations and volunteers.

The Longford Volunteer Centre is a county wide initiative. It is a pilot project and sought through this audit of volunteering to gain an understanding of volunteerism in County Longford. The audit investigated the supports which both individual volunteers and groups recruiting volunteers have identified as needs for themselves. The results of the audit will feed directly into the three-year work plan for the Centre. As such the Longford Volunteer Centre wishes to extend it's thanks to everyone who participated including representatives from community and voluntary groups across the county. Thanks must also be extended to the Longford Community and Voluntary Forum through Longford County Development Board from the Department of Environment and Local Government for financing the audit and Longford Community Resources Ltd who both host and oversee the day to day work of the Longford Volunteer Centre and Mentor Economic Developments Limited who conducted the audit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This audit of volunteering in County Longford is being undertaken in order to gain an understanding of the current profile of volunteering in the county. The findings from the audit will feed into a three year work plan for the Longford Volunteer Centre pending a successful funding application to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
2. Volunteering has been an integral element of the social fabric in Ireland for generations but it is only within the last fifteen years or less that research has been undertaken to identify and profile the nature of volunteering in Ireland. Recent research indicates an upward trend in active volunteering.
3. Volunteer Centres as such came into being in Ireland in 1998 when the Tallaght Centre opened.
4. The Government's White Paper, "Supporting Voluntary Activity" published in 2002 and the establishment of the Task Force on Active Citizenship have been significant developments in supporting volunteering as has been the establishment of Volunteer Centres Ireland.
5. County Longford has a strong community and voluntary sector with over 240 active groups and organisations and many sporting groups. The county's population is increasing (up from 31,068 in 2002 to 34,391 in 2006) and in comparison to the rest of the country, Longford has more people involved in volunteering, a percentage of 17.8 compared to a national average of 16.4 percent.
6. This audit of volunteering in County Longford identifies almost 1,850 volunteers from 74 groups in County Longford. Extrapolating the figures for all 241 groups in the County could mean up to 6,025 people are engaged in voluntary work in County Longford.
7. The total number of hours spent per month by management committee members and volunteers within the groups in County Longford is 4,673 or the equivalent of 33 full time employees. Taking the average industrial weekly wage in 2006 of €537 this represents a total contribution of €3,630,120 per annum through voluntary input to the economy of County Longford.
8. 54 groups in County Longford – or 73% of respondents - need more volunteers to carry out their objectives. The survey identified 362 opportunities for volunteering in County Longford in various skill areas. Again extrapolating the figures across a similar percentage of the total 241 groups identified could potentially mean 1,616 volunteering opportunities in the County.
9. 49% of volunteers in County Longford have been involved in volunteering for ten years or more and 9% have become involved in the last year demonstrating that there still are people willing to volunteer in the County. The vast majority of volunteers

learned about their current volunteering opportunity through word of mouth or personal contacts.

10. People volunteer in County Longford because they have a social conscience, because they are committed to personal causes or interests and because they see volunteering as providing opportunities for personal development.
11. Activities which are most popular with volunteers in County Longford are practical work, fund raising and campaigning and awareness raising.
12. Overall, the majority of the management committee and volunteers responding to the surveys have reported that volunteering is a very positive experience for them and the community they are helping. They have also highlighted the huge time commitments that they give in order to fulfil their voluntary role and the lack of help in doing so. Even with this, the majority would still actively encourage other people to get involved in volunteering as the benefits outweigh any negative aspects.
13. The key issues emerging from the study include:
 - There is inadequate recognition of the work of volunteers in County Longford
 - Many groups in County Longford require additional volunteers
 - Difficulties in securing volunteers to work with young people
 - Fear among some potential volunteers that once in they will not be able to leave
 - Need for support to groups in managing and motivating volunteers
 - Lack of collaborative working among groups and absence of central administrative support in County Longford
 - Need for more publicity for the Longford Volunteer Centre
14. The report concludes with a series of recommendations which are based largely on the research feedback from the community and voluntary sector and volunteers themselves in County Longford though they have also been informed by examples of best practice from elsewhere.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Co. Longford Community and Voluntary Forum is part of a national initiative under the reform of Local Government and Local Development. The purpose of the county Longford Community and Voluntary Forum is to act as a mechanism for nomination and to facilitate the representation of and participation by community and voluntary groups on the Longford County Development Board, Longford County Council Strategic Policy Committee, Longford Community Resources Ltd, Longford County Childcare Committee, the Midland Regional Drugs Task Force and other bodies as appropriate.

Longford Community Resources Limited is the joint Partnership and LEADER Company for the County. It has responsibility for the delivery of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the LEADER Programme within the County. It is also involved in the management of County Longford Youth Services, the Rural Social Scheme which supports workers in 36 community centres across the county and it hosts the Longford Volunteer Centre.

The Longford Social Inclusion Measures Group is an initiative of the Longford County Development Board and aims to co-ordinate programmes dealing with social inclusion activities at the local level in County Longford.

- 1.2** The three organisations made a joint bid to the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to secure funding for the establishment of the Longford Volunteer Project and were successful in securing funding of €50,000 for a pilot project to support volunteering in the county. A Volunteer Co-ordinator, Karen Byrne, commenced in August 2007 and it was agreed, on the recommendation of the co-ordinator, to affiliate with Volunteer Centres, Ireland.
- 1.3** The centre was established in October 2007 and is managed by a full time co-ordinator, Karen Byrne, who reports to a steering group made up of representatives of the three organisations detailed above. The overall aims of the project are outlined in the greeting from the Volunteer Centre above.
- 1.4** The Longford Volunteer Working Group held its first meeting in September 2007. A full list of members of the working group is set out below:

Josephine Stoker, Longford Community and Voluntary Forum
Monica O'Malley, Longford Community Resources Limited
David Minton, Longford County Development Board
Tess Murphy, Longford Social Inclusion Measures Group

- 1.5** The project is being funded through Longford Community and Voluntary Forum and from the Department of the Environment and Local Government through Longford County Development Board. Specifically, this research aimed to identify:

- The number of volunteers in County Longford and the time commitment they make to volunteering
- The supports provided to the volunteers and the supports they need
- The recruitment processes for volunteers
- The level of demand for volunteers in the County including target roles and the number of hours for each role
- The supports needed to assist groups/organisations with volunteering in the County
- The mechanisms which are or should be in place to recognise volunteers
- The extent to which groups have volunteer Policies and Procedures in place
- Reasons for volunteers ceasing their involvement with particular volunteering activity or organisation
- Training needs common to groups, e.g. health and Safety
- Numbers of groups requiring access to a Garda vetting facility from the Volunteer Centre.

A full copy of the Terms of Reference for the Study is enclosed as **APPENDIX A**.

1.6 Following a tendering process, the Steering Group commissioned Mentor Economic Developments Ltd. to carry out this study. Mentor would like to thank the Steering Group and Karen Byrne, the Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator, for their support and co-operation during the audit and both Mentor and the Steering Group wish to thank all those volunteers, committee members and stakeholders who participated in the study.



Group pictured at the UN International Volunteer Day in County Longford on 5th December 2007
Left to right: Monica O'Malley, Manager, Longford Community Resources Limited, Joe Doherty, Scouting Ireland, Karen Byrne, Co-ordinator, Longford Volunteer Centre, Dr Yvonne McKenna, Volunteer Centres Ireland

2. CONTEXT FOR VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer: person who freely contributes time and skills with the aim of benefiting people in the community

Volunteering: the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family and the environment or other causes without payment, except for the re-imburement of out-of-pocket expenses.

Volunteer centre or bureau: independent voluntary organisation concerned with the promotion, support and development of volunteer participation in a local area.

Source: Volunteering Ireland

- 2.1** The Community and Voluntary sector has a long and valued tradition of meeting social needs in Ireland where the sector not only complements and supplements State provision, but is the dominant provider in particular areas. The Church-based education system and voluntary hospitals predate the foundation of the State. Many services have been initiated and run by religious organisations. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is one of the largest voluntary organisations and celebrated their 160th anniversary in Ireland in 2004. They have 1,000 local branches across the country, including a number of very active branches in County Longford, comprising approximately 10,000 members.
- 2.2** However, little research was undertaken into volunteering until the early 90s when the National College of Ireland (NCI) undertook some surveys which showed a decline in volunteering from 39% to 33% among the adult population. The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) commissioned research in 2002 but this is not comparable with the NCI studies so no comparisons could be drawn. However, the Taskforce on Active Citizenship commissioned a survey in 2006 which was comparable with the NESF study and in the comparison it is clear that regular volunteering increased from 17.1% in 2002 to 23.1% in 2006.
- 2.3** County Longford has a very diverse community and voluntary sector. There are an estimated 241 community and voluntary groups in the County ranging in size from very local, single issue groups to quite sophisticated groups employing staff and addressing a variety of needs. The sports sector is also strong in areas such as GAA, soccer and rugby. All of these organisations provide opportunities for volunteering and literally could not survive without the commitment of volunteers.
- 2.4** In 1997, the Irish voluntary sector established a relationship with the state unique in Western Europe when it became an approved social partner, alongside the traditional social partners of employers, farmers and trade unions. Working through the Community Platform, which brings together 25 national voluntary organisations, the sector is now involved in negotiating the national agreements which regulate a wide

spread of national policy, including social policy. Voluntary organisations are also represented on the National Economic and Social Forum and on the National and Economic Council – the two main advisory policy-making bodies. The government has established a Community Foundation, with related bodies focusing on children’s rights and corporate social responsibility.

2.5 The Republic’s first volunteer resource centre opened in 1998 in South County Dublin and it was called the ‘Tallaght Volunteer Bureau’. Volunteer Centres Ireland began in 2000 when some of the earliest Volunteer Centres in Ireland, namely Tallaght, Volunteering Ireland, Fingal and Lucan, came together to discuss common issues that affected all the volunteer centres. In 2001, it was decided to formalise this grouping and Volunteer Centres Ireland was born.

2.6 The Government published the White Paper ‘Supporting Voluntary Activity’ in 2000, acknowledging the importance of the voluntary sector and its contribution to social development, to the economy and to employment. The government was particularly keen to encourage new volunteers to come forward and to foster a culture of support for volunteering in schools and third level institutions.

2.6.1 The key principles underlying the vision of the White Paper include:

- Active Citizenship
- Resource allocation and promotion of equal opportunity
- Helping people to participate in issues which affect them
- Respect for individual freedom in the pursuit of social goals
- Promoting and strengthening dialogue

2.6.2 This paper defined the proper relationship between the Government and the voluntary sector. In the paper the government:

- Affirmed the value of the sector
- Accepted its independence
- Recognised its role in advocacy
- Stressed its importance in combating exclusion
- Gave commitments to consult properly with the sector and to set up new systems to govern funding relationships
- Laid down what it expected by way of accountability in return
- Set up an implementation committee.

- 2.7** The government recognised the importance of support for volunteering by appointing a committee to promote 2001 as the United Nations ‘International Year of the Volunteer’.
- 2.8** Funding for the voluntary sector in Ireland has improved but rights and justice organisations are relatively poorly resourced. The tax regime is now more generous. State and trust funding grew between 1993 and 2000 but corporate funding is low by international standards. (Source: The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust March 2002.)
- 2.9** The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has lead responsibility for developing the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector. This involves providing the secretariat to the Implementation and Advisory group, established to oversee implementation of the White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity. The Department’s annual report, 2005, outlines that, within the general context of the White Paper, a number of measures were pursued and these included:
- Grants for community and voluntary service totalled €5.5 million to 553 groups in 2005
 - 32 community groups received €1.9 million for their member groups
 - €0.5 million was provided to 19 groups for training and development in 2005
 - €4,837,000 was approved for improved co-ordination of local community development schemes
 - Almost €1.5 million was approved to CDBs in 2005 to support initiatives developing volunteering and €2.8 million was allocated by the Department towards the costs of supporting volunteering initiatives in 2005.
 - €21.3 million was allocated to the Community Development programme in 2005

Therefore, in 2005 alone, at least €35.5 million of state funding was supplied to the Community and Voluntary sector to support voluntary activity.

- 2.10** The Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs produced a report in January 2005 on Volunteers and Volunteering in Ireland.

This committee considered a report by DKM Economic Consultants which looked at the economic benefits of volunteering and the social impact of volunteering and reviewed and summarised the evidence received by the committee on policy, infrastructure, recognition, costs, recruitment and retention of volunteers, resources and funding and social benefits of volunteering.

The Joint Committee made a number of recommendations around volunteering policy, volunteering infrastructure and funding.

2.11 A research study on Youth Volunteering in Ireland was commissioned by The National Children’s Advisory Council in 2006 and concluded:

- It is relatively difficult for young people to locate information on youth volunteering opportunities on the internet
- Young people do not have a clear understanding of volunteering
- The image of volunteering is not very popular; it is “not cool”
- Young people do see benefits from volunteering and motivating factors include sense of personal satisfaction, sense of social responsibility and the opportunity to have fun.
- One of the main barriers to participation is negative peer opinion while others are low self-confidence, lack of awareness of opportunities, financial constraints and parental attitudes.
- Volunteering should be marketed towards groups of young people as opposed to individuals and rewards could be linked to further opportunities to socialise
- Having a family background in volunteering is an important motivator.

Based on the research conclusions the report made the following recommendations:

- Need for a youth volunteering education and awareness programme
- Need to provide enhanced and more accessible information on youth volunteering
- Need for further research on international youth volunteering opportunities
- Need for a national youth volunteering framework

It should be noted that schools are being offered support in the areas of rights and responsibilities, community development and participation through the Civic, Social and Political Education Support Service which has a new website www.cspe.ie. Many schools in Longford are actively engaged in this process. Some schools have won awards in this activity.

2.12 A report produced by the Taskforce on Active Citizenship in March 2007 sets out a vision for active citizenship, details why active citizenship matters and summarises their findings from a consultation process before continuing to pose a challenge to individuals, organisations, businesses and the media to enhance active citizenship through a partnership approach and concluding with a series of recommendations.

A summary of the findings from the consultation reveals:

- There is strong interest in active citizenship with a strong commitment to the deepening and widening of active citizenship and civic participation and a clear willingness to participate in measures to achieve this. Most people thought volunteering is declining but only one half of over 1,000 submissions saying it had become more difficult to recruit new volunteers
- There is no clear evidence that people are less involved than before and in fact a survey commissioned by the Taskforce found that there had been an increase over the past four years in the numbers of people saying they do unpaid and regular volunteering outside the home or were actively involved in the community in the previous twelve months
- However, for every adult involved in their community there are two who are not
- Volunteering has been changing with a greater emphasis on responsibilities and skills and there is a sense of unease about how wider changes in the economy and society will impact on voluntary activity and our sense of community in the years ahead
- The unique contribution of many different types of voluntary and community activity needs to be better acknowledged and supported
- Planning of the built environment and issues around local facilities are real barriers to more effective engagement
- Community, voluntary and public authorities activities need to be better co-ordinated
- Education and capacity building are the keys to active citizenship achieving its full potential.

The Taskforce then poses challenges to individuals to spend at least 1 per cent of their time on some form of community service or activity outside the home and to join an activity or group working to improve the quality of life in their community. Groups and organisations are challenged to consider how new people could be encouraged to become involved, how volunteers are thanked and recognised and how new forms of time limited commitment might be developed. Individual businesses are challenged to identify and pursue opportunities for engagement with the community and the media are challenged to raise awareness and encourage active citizenship.



A young volunteer in a Youth Club in Moyne and Drumlish

Finally, the report makes a number of recommendations for government, local authorities and schools and colleges.

Conclusion:

Volunteering has a long and proud tradition in Ireland generally and in County Longford. Government has recently moved to set up a framework in which volunteering can be recognised and supported across the country and is making some resources available within that framework. The emergence of the Task Force on Active Citizenship has created a new focus on and provided a new impetus to volunteering.



Members of the Steering Committee of the County Longford Community and Voluntary Forum.
Back row: Josephine Stroker, Parvez Butt. Front row: John Channon, Connie Gerety, Nini Murray

3. AREA PROFILE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

County Longford is located within the central plain of Ireland, approximately mid way between the east and west coasts. Centrally situated in the Midlands Region of the island, which also incorporates Counties Laois, Offaly and Westmeath, Longford is a primarily low-lying area of 1,091km² (421 square miles) approximately two-thirds of which is farmland. Longford has frontage to 2 major river systems, the Shannon and the Erne. Longford is the second smallest county in Ireland. Neighbouring Counties Cavan to the north, Westmeath to the east/south-east and Leitrim and Roscommon to the west/south-west border the county. Located 120km from Dublin, on the main route to the Northwest region, the County is one of the smaller counties in Ireland and consists of five main towns; Granard, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Lanesborough, and the largest, Longford Town.

KEY FEATURES

This is a summary of the key findings from the statistics set out in this chapter.

- The population in Longford is currently 34,391 and has increased by 10.7% to between 2002 and 2006.
- Longford has more people under the age of 14 than the country as a whole – 21.7% for Longford compared to 20.38% for the whole country
- Longford has slightly less people at work (53.95%) compared to the state as a whole (57.18%) and one third more people unemployed (5.96% compared to 4.45%)
- Longford has proportionately more people employed in the following sectors than the rest of the state: agriculture, manufacturing, construction and public administration.
- There are slightly more people living with a disability in Longford (9.6%) than in the state as a whole (9.3%)
- There has been a large influx of new communities into County Longford both from other EU countries and non EU which is rapidly changing the profile of the County
- In comparison to the rest of the Republic, Longford has more people involved in volunteering, a percentage of 17.8 compared to a national average of 16.4 percent.

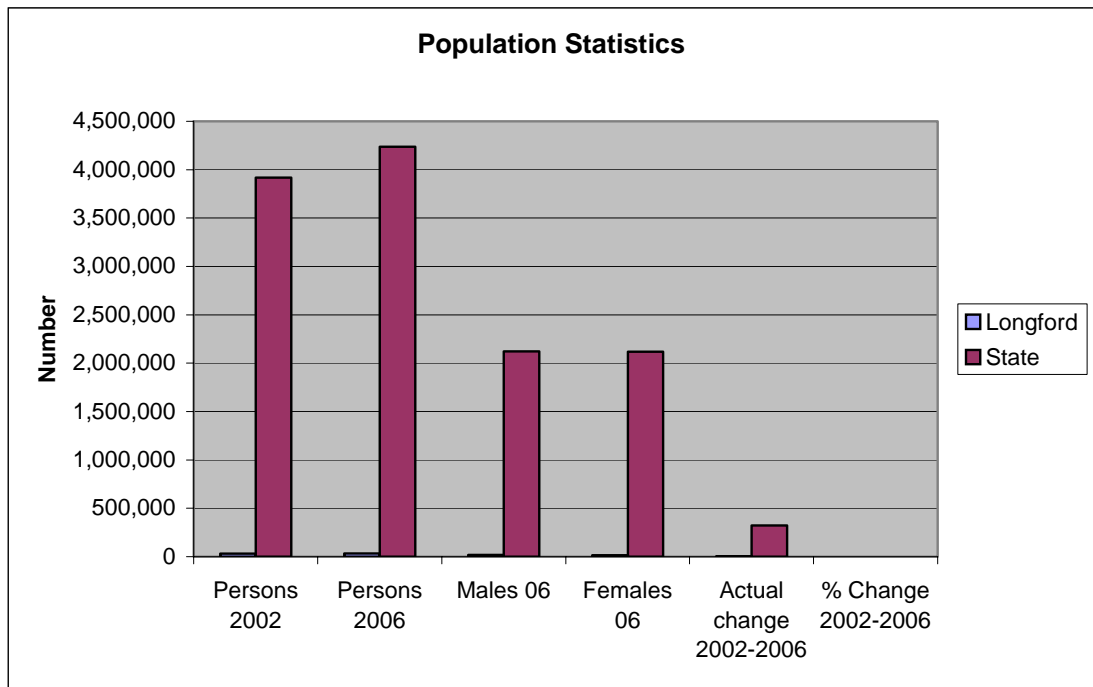
3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Unless otherwise stated, figures have been sourced from the Central Statistics Office (www.cso.ie). The full tables are enclosed as **APPENDIX B** but for ease of use only the graphical interpretations are used in this section.

3.2.1 Overall Population Profile

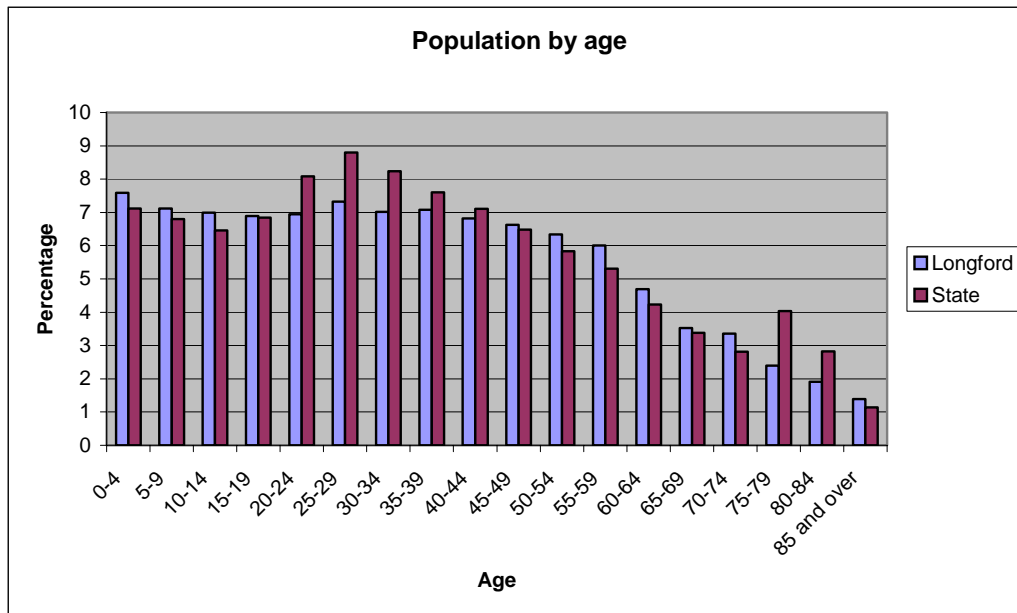
The population in Longford is currently 34,391 and has increased by 10.7% to between 2002 and 2006. Of the total population, 51% is male and 49% is female. Longford's population has risen by 30% higher than the national average over the years 2002-2006.

Table 1 2002 population statistics in comparison to 2006:



The breakdown of population by age shows that Longford has more people under the age of 14 than the country as a whole – 21.7% for Longford compared to 20.38% for the whole country. At the other end of the spectrum Longford has less people over 65 (12.58%) compared to the country as a whole (14.18%). Longford has a total dependency population of 34.28% which puts considerable strain on service provision in areas such as education and health care. The age profile for those aged less than 30 years was 43% which is slightly less than the national average of 44%. Table 2 overleaf shows a breakdown of population for 2006 by age:

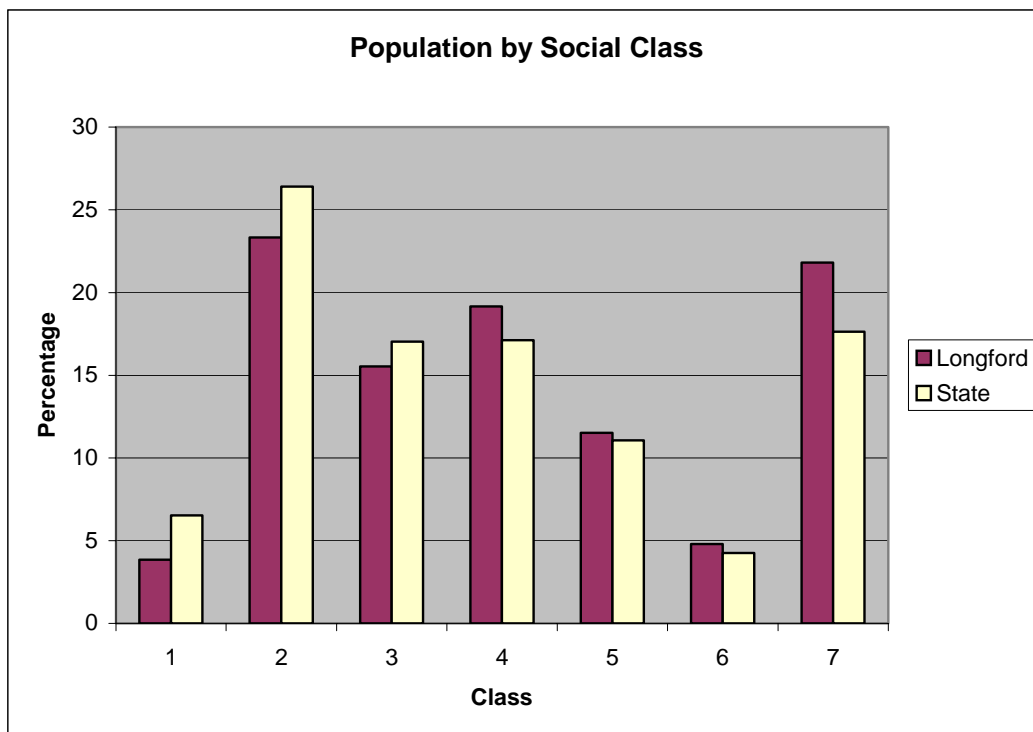
Table 2: Population by age



3.2.2 Social Class

Longford has significantly less people in classes 1 and 2 than the state as a whole but significantly more in class 7 as can be seen from Table 3 below.

Table 3: Social class



3.3 VOLUNTEERING

Table 4 below shows the number of persons in County Longford engaged in volunteering classified by type of voluntary work.

Table 4: Numbers engaged in volunteering

Total	Longford	%	State	%
	26,928		3,375,399	
Helping or voluntary work with a social or charitable organisation	1,666	6.2	192,752	5.7
Helping or voluntary work with a religious group or church	1,310	4.9	143,133	4.2
Helping or voluntary work with a sporting organisation	1,785	6.6	180,465	5.3
Helping or voluntary work with a political or cultural organisation	452	1.7	46,944	1.4
Any other voluntary activity	1,041	3.9	140,461	4.2
Total persons involved in one or more voluntary activity	4,805	17.8	553,255	16.4
Persons not involved in voluntary work (including not stated)	22,123	82.2	2,822,144	83.6

In comparison to the rest of the Republic, County Longford has more people involved in volunteering, a percentage of 17.8 compared to a national average of 16.4 percent.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 The research methodology used in the study was both quantitative and qualitative and included surveys, focus groups, case studies and interviews with key stakeholders. Details of the methods used are set out below:

- Postal surveys were mailed to all 241 organisations. Two surveys were mailed: one for the Management Committee and the other for the individual volunteers. Copies of the surveys are enclosed in **APPENDIX C**.

The mailing produced a low response rate initially from community and voluntary groups. A second mailing was made to community and voluntary organisations to encourage a greater response rate and this generated a further level of responses. Telephone calls were then carried out to a representative selection of 75 community and voluntary groups and surveys were completed during these calls and this generated a further number of completed surveys bringing the final total of responses from the community and voluntary group sector to 74, a response rate of 31%.

- The mailings also generated a low level of response from volunteers but Mentor staff attended the UN International Volunteer Day in Longford on 5th December and collected a further 50 completed forms from volunteers on that day. This brought the total number of responses from volunteers to 104.
- Six consultative workshops were held in Longford Town, Granard, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Ballinamuck, and Lanesboro.
- A publicity campaign, including news releases to the local press, distribution of posters and a live radio interview were organised.
- Relevant reports and publications were consulted and analysed. These included:

Bray Volunteer Bureau Feasibility Study Report, 2002

Government White Paper on “Supporting Voluntary Activity”

Annual Report, Department of Community and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2005

Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs report on volunteering, 2005

Research report on youth volunteering commissioned by the National Children’s Advisory Council in 2006

Taskforce on Active Citizenship, report 2007

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

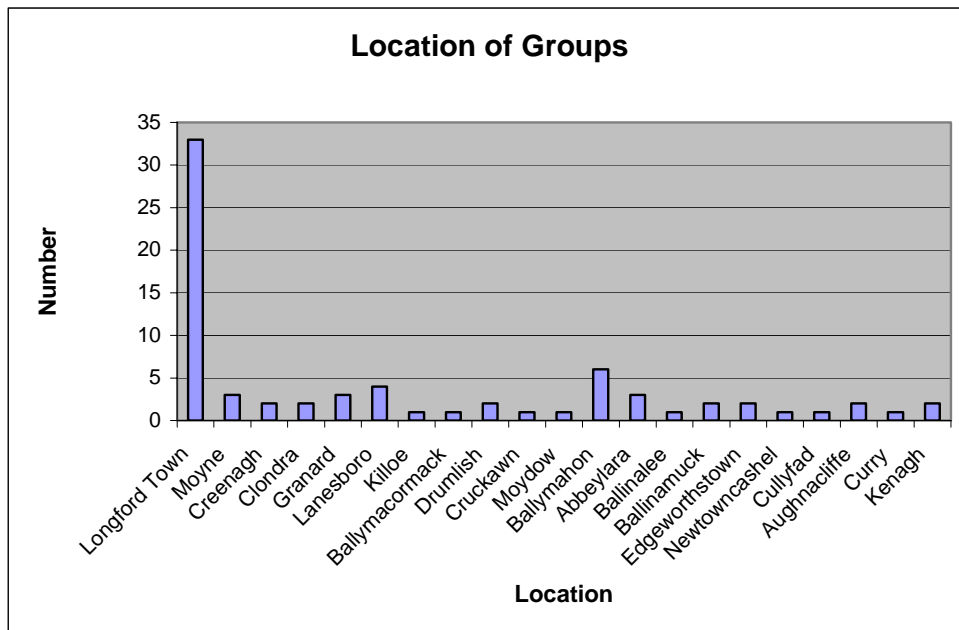
5.1 COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUP SURVEY

The survey was designed for analysis through the SPSS programme. From the 241 surveys mailed to groups in the County a total final response was obtained from 74 community and voluntary groups. This was a response rate of just over 31% which is statistically significant and certainly allows comparisons to be made and conclusions drawn.

5.2 The section below outlines the responses obtained from the management committees of the 74 groups. A list of those groups which responded are enclosed as **APPENDIX D** and a detailed set of results is contained in **APPENDIX E**.

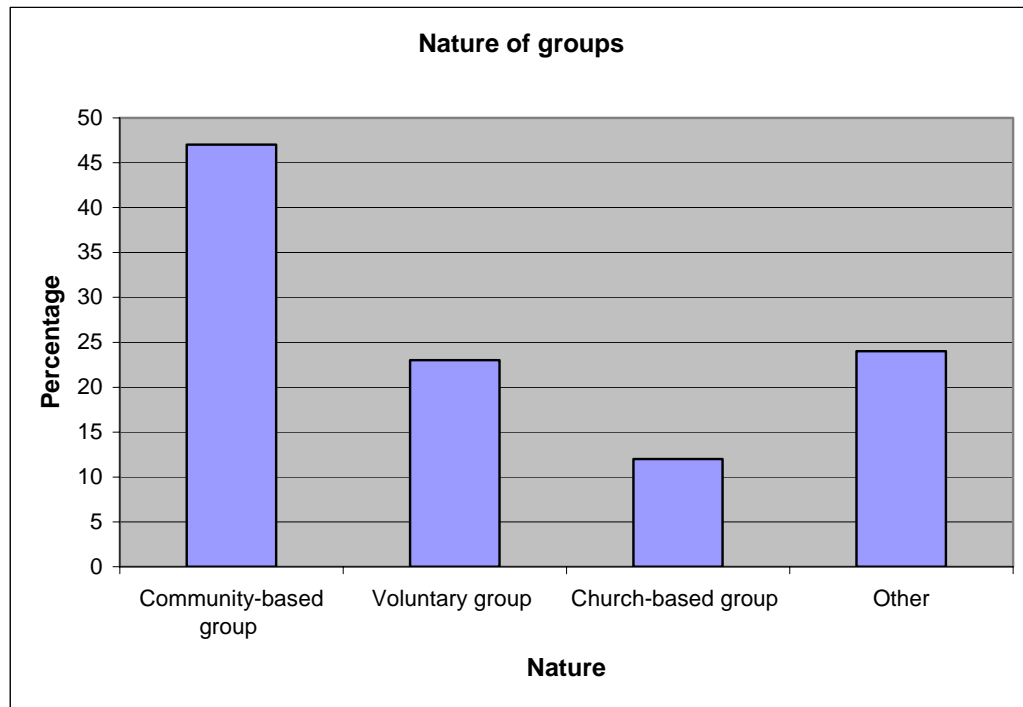
5.2.1 The majority of respondents are from Longford Town as might be expected but there was a reasonable spread of responses from across the county. The responses by geographical location are set out below in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Location of groups



5.2.2 Question one asked the groups to indicate which of the sectors below BEST describes the nature of their group. Table 6 below shows the largest response was from community based groups followed closely by voluntary groups and then church-based groups.

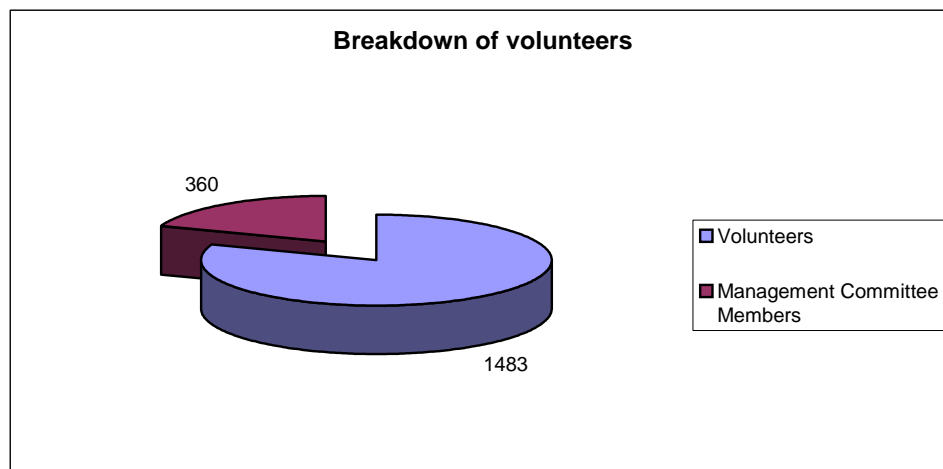
Table 6: Nature of groups



NB: Some respondents gave more than one response to this question.

Question two asked the 74 groups to break down the volunteers in their group into volunteers and management committee members. There are almost 1,850 people involved in voluntary activity in 74 groups. The results are shown in Table 7 below

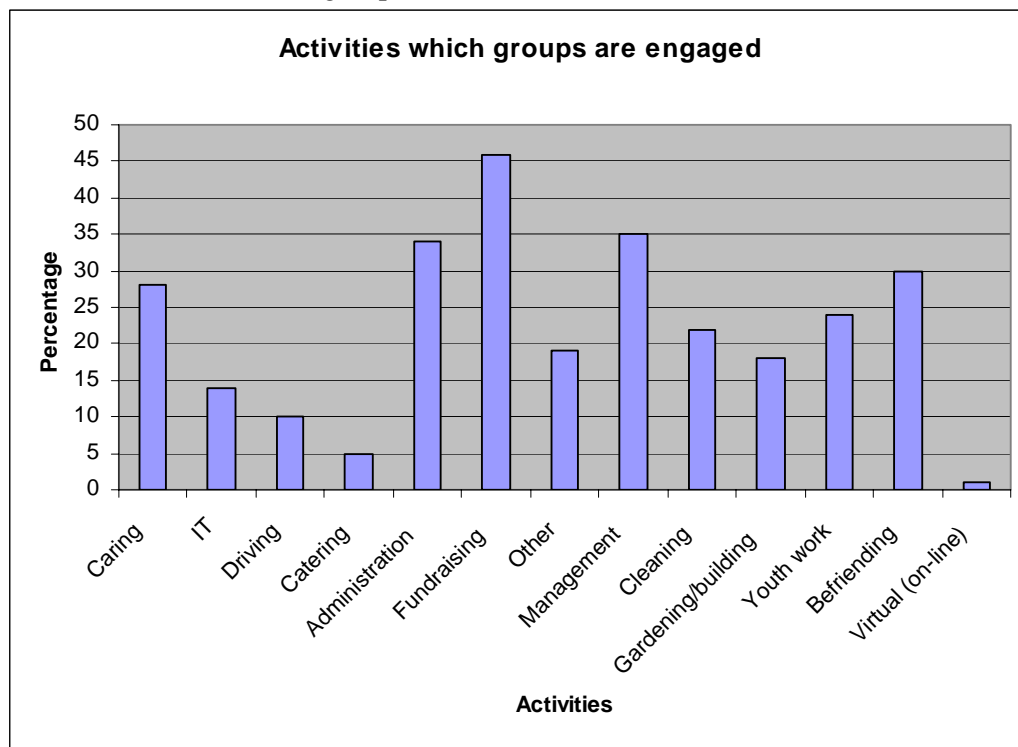
Table 7: Breakdown of volunteers



Extrapolating these figures across the 241 identified groups in the county would indicate there are almost 6,025 people involved as volunteers which is a very impressive proportion of the whole population though it should be noted that at least some of these are involved in more than one organisation. However, the 2006 census revealed that 4,805 people in Longford claimed to be involved in some form of voluntary activity.

5.2.3 Question three asked respondents to tick from a list the type of activities in which their group is engaged. Groups engage in a very wide variety of activities but the most popular activities are Fundraising, Management and Administration. Table 8 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

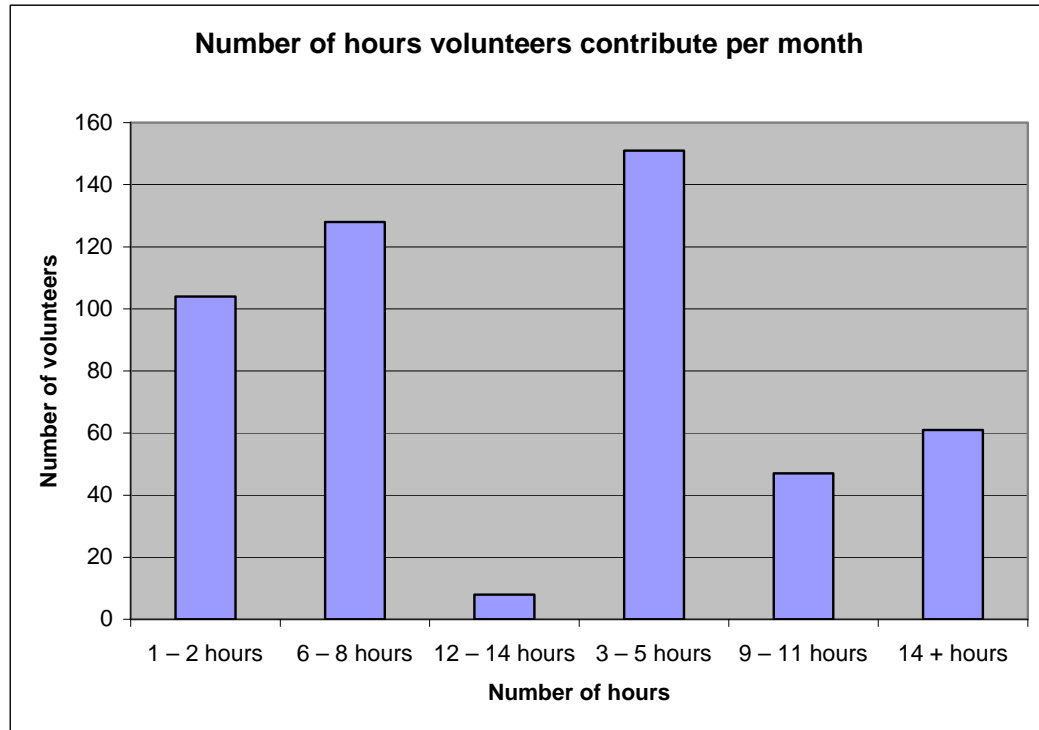
Table 8: Activities within groups



NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

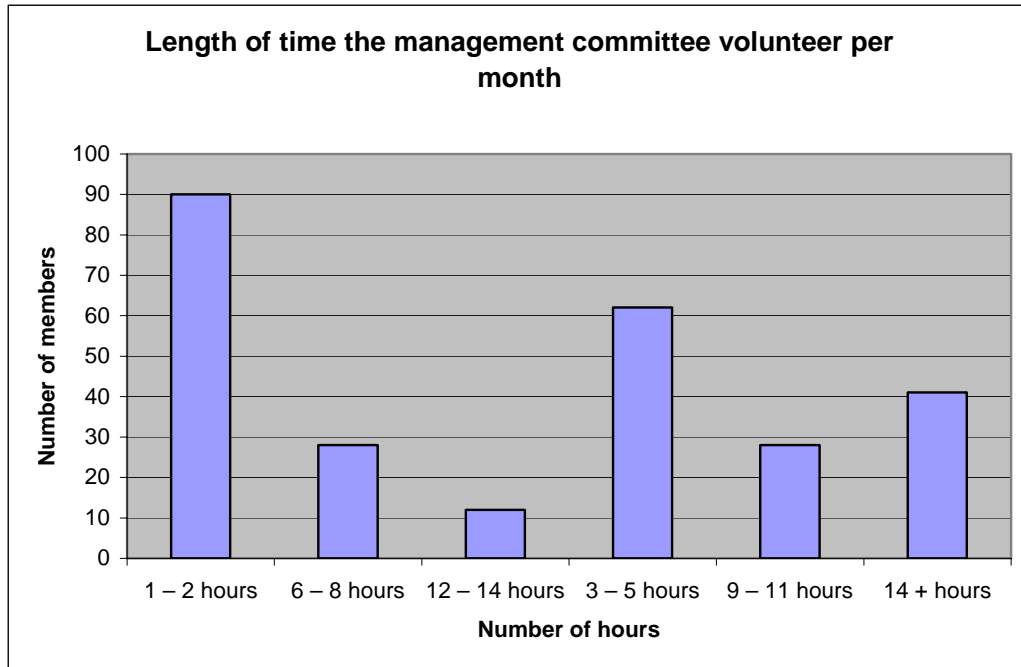
5.2.5 Question four asked the groups to provide the number of hours on average each volunteer (excluding their Management Committee) in their group contributed per month. An analysis of this table reveals that the total number of hours spent per month by volunteers within the groups is 3,084 or the equivalent of 22 full time employees. Taking the average weekly industrial wage in 2006 this represents an investment of at least €614,328. Table 9 below highlights the responses made:

Table 9: Hours contributed by volunteers



5.2.6 Question five asked the groups to state how many hours per month the members of their Management Committee contribute. Table 10 below highlights the responses made and an analysis of this table reveals that the total number of hours spent per month by management committee members within the respondent groups is 1,589 or the equivalent of 11 full time employees.

Table 10: Hours contributed by management committee members

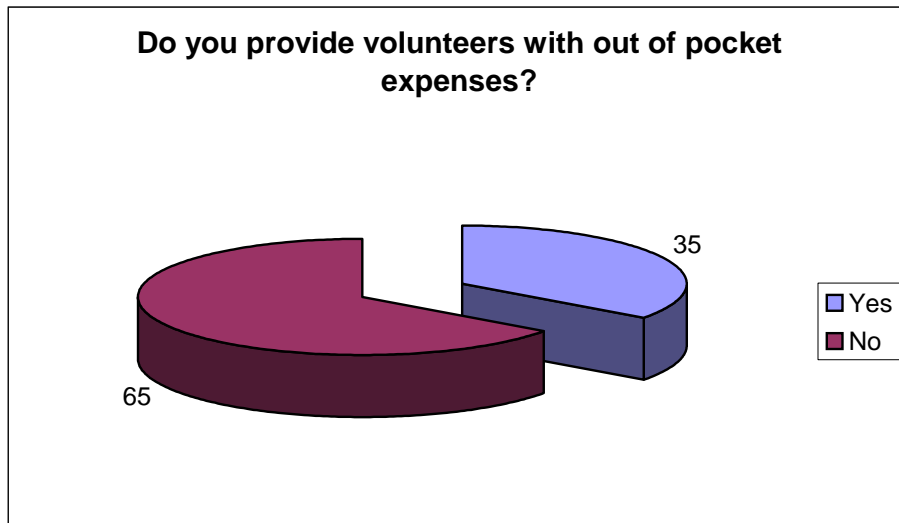


If 31% of groups can demonstrate a commitment of 4673 hours per month - the equivalent of 33 full time jobs - then it is reasonable to assume that a total of 15,207 hours or some 130 full time job equivalents are provided through volunteering in the 241 groups identified within the county. Again, taking the average industrial weekly wage in 2006 of €537 this represents a total contribution of €6,630,120 per annum to the economy of County Longford.

5.2.7 Question six asked respondents to indicate what training, induction or support, if any, they provide their volunteers. There was little uniformity in the responses made and so a full list is shown in **APPENDIX E**. Broadly, supports included training in a variety of skills, some of them specifically related to the volunteering opportunity and induction, which again was almost universally directly related to individual organisations

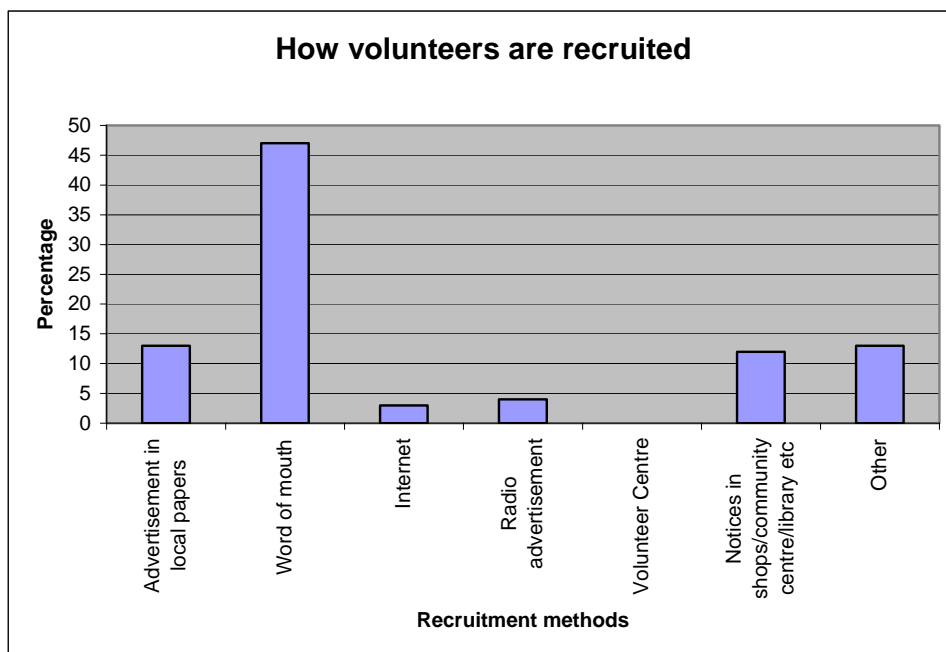
5.2.8 Question seven asked respondents ‘Do you provide volunteers with out of pocket expenses? 35% (26) said yes while the remaining 65% (48) said no. The results are shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Out of pocket expenses



5.2.9 Question eight asked respondents to indicate how volunteers were recruited and selected in their group. The table shows that community and voluntary groups rely heavily on recruiting volunteers by word of mouth as 64% indicated through this survey. Table 12 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

Table 12: Recruitment methods



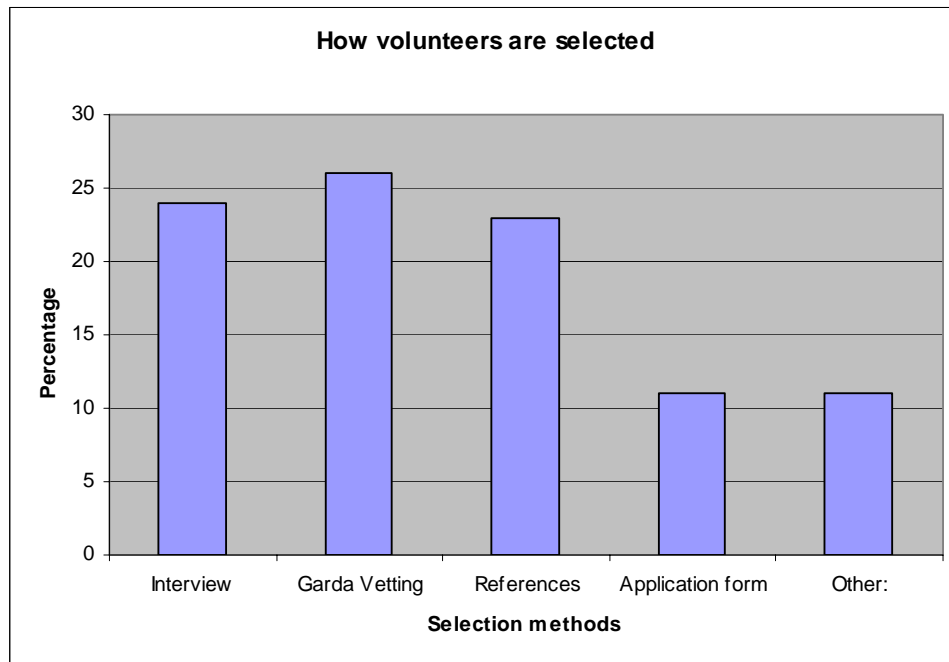
NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.



A group of volunteers interested in environmental activities in Cullyfad, County Longford

Table 13 below reveals that the community and voluntary groups responding to the survey do not use applications forms widely as part of their selection process but rely on interviewing and taking up references while Garda vetting is quite often used.

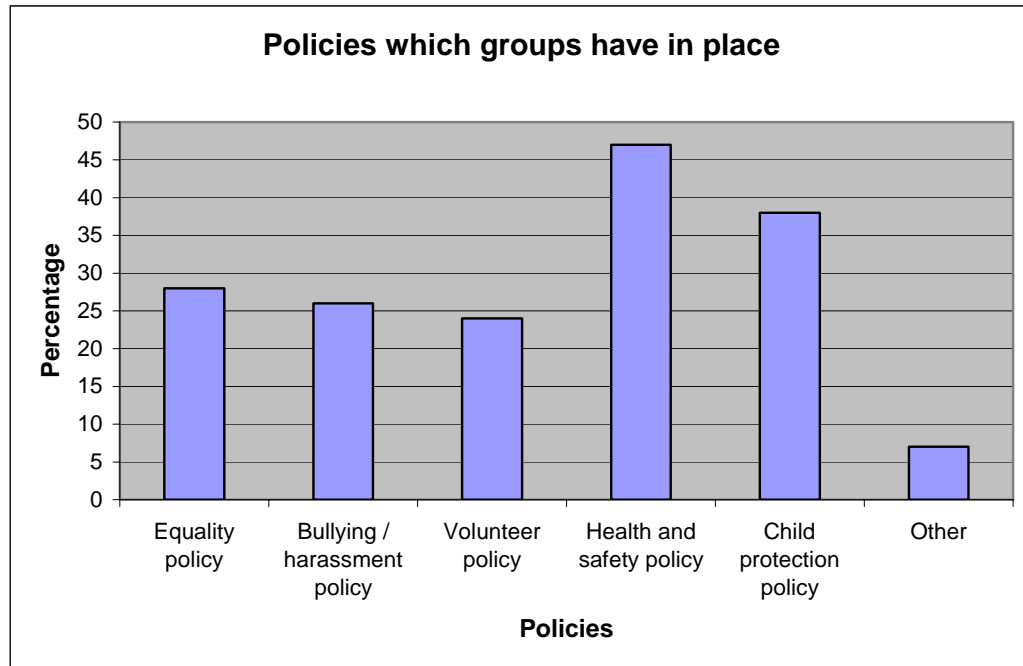
Table 13: Use of application forms



NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

5.2.10 Question nine asked respondents to tick to indicate which policies their group have in place. 47% of the groups surveyed have a health and safety policy in place and child protection policies were mentioned by 38%. Each of the other policies were in place in the groups at approximately the same level. Table 14 highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

Table 14: Policies in place

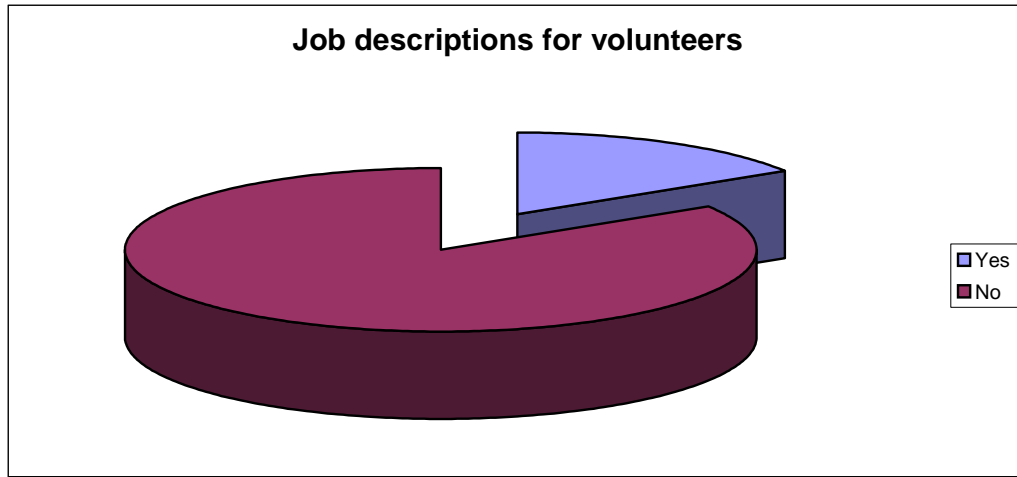


NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

5.2.11 Question ten asked respondents ‘Has your group enough volunteers to enable it to carry out its work?’ 27% (20) said yes while the remaining 73% (54) said no. This response would indicate that many groups are over-relying on small numbers of volunteers.

5.2.12 Question eleven asked ‘Does your group have job descriptions for volunteer opportunities?’ 16% (12) said yes while the remaining 84% (62) said no. The use of job descriptions in volunteering is not widespread as can be seen from Table 15 below.

Table 15: use of job descriptions



5.2.13 Question twelve presented respondents with a list and asked them to indicate how many more volunteers, if any, they would need in each skill area. There is clearly a very considerable need for volunteers in the county with befriending skills. The most frequently mentioned activity area is befriending with a need for 125 volunteers; other popular areas are fundraising and management. Table 16 below highlights the number of responses made:

Table 16: Volunteers needed by skill area

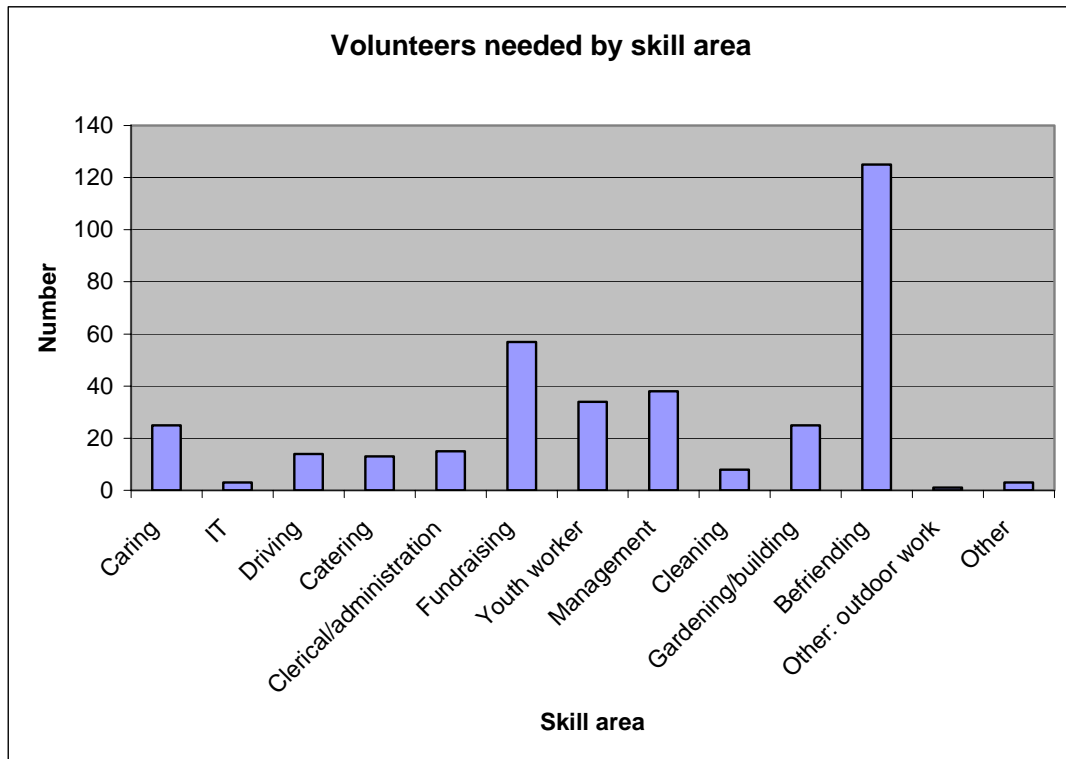
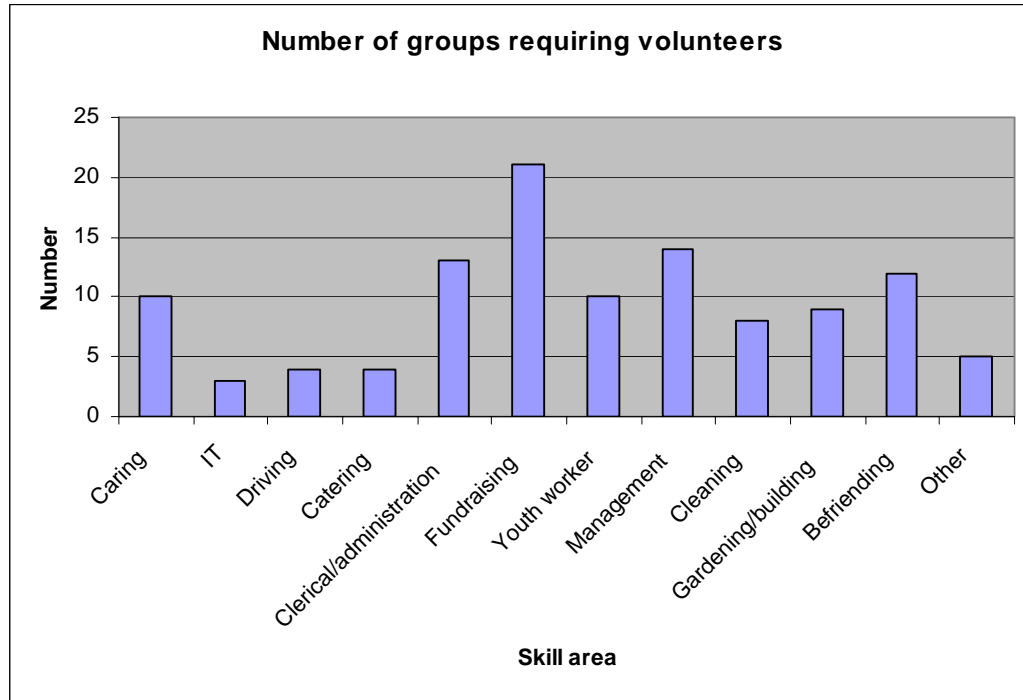


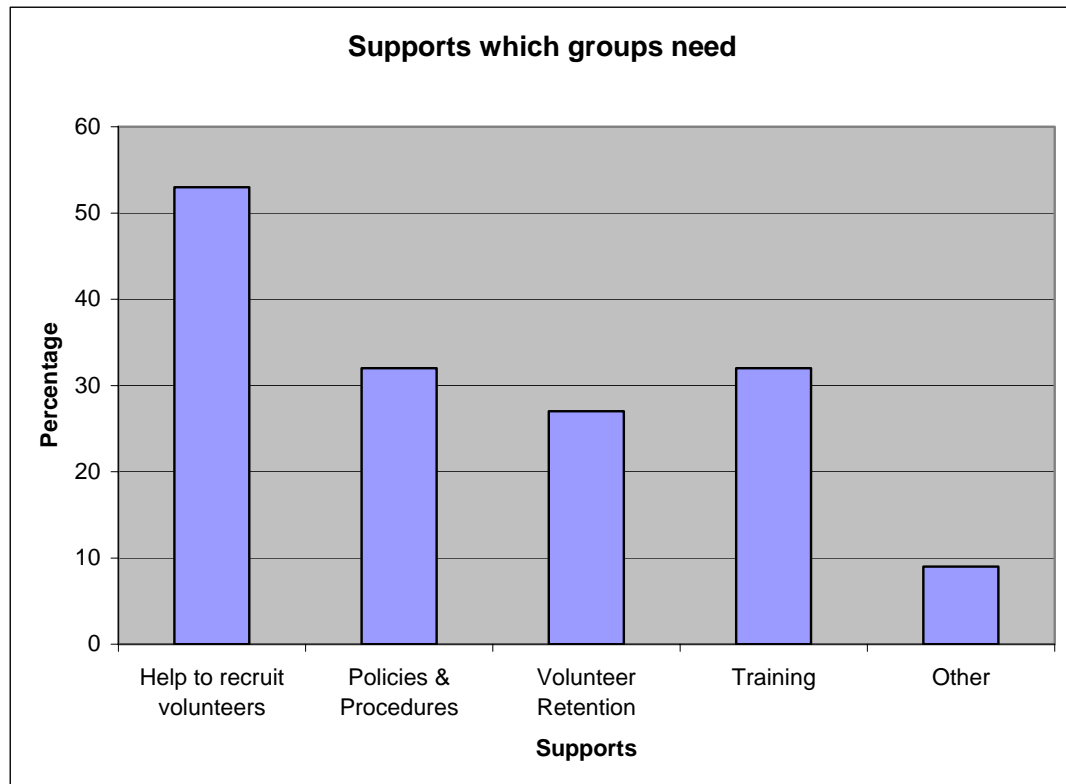
Table 17 below demonstrates the numbers of groups requiring volunteers in each skill area.

Table 17: Groups requiring volunteers



Question thirteen asked respondents to indicate what supports, if any, their group needs from the Volunteer Centre. It should be pointed out that at this stage the Centre is just being established and it may be difficult for groups to indicate the supports they would require as they are in all probability not actually aware of the supports which could be offered. It is clear that the assistance most required is help to recruit volunteers but there is significant level of need for other supports. Table 18 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made.

Table 18: Need for supports



NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

5.2.15 Question fourteen asked respondents if they would need assistance with Garda vetting. 26% (19) said yes while the remaining 74% (55) said no. Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to make further comments in relation to their group's experience of volunteering. The following is a short list representing a selection of comments which were made.

Recruitment issues:

Recruiting volunteers is by far the area of assistance which attracted most comments and in summary these can be set out as:

- Generally it is difficult to attract new volunteers
- People are unwilling to make the necessary commitment as they are so busy and they see some people getting paid while others do the work for no recompense; the absence of training and of clearly defined roles are issues which can be off-putting
- It is particularly hard to recruit younger people and men as volunteers
- May be an issue about extent to which the benefits of volunteering are promoted as people often do not see what they can gain from it. Often groups are seen as a closed shop which puts people off.

Other comments:

- Any help would be a bonus
- Communities are becoming more diverse so vetting will become relevant to us
- It would be great to have a volunteer centre in Longford which would be accessible to all based in Longford Town with some form of satellite service in the North and South of the county
- Too few doing too much.

Conclusions:

- There are almost 1,850 people involved in voluntary activity in 74 groups.
- Most popular activities are Fundraising, Management and Administration
- The total number of hours spent per month by management committee members and volunteers within the groups is 4,673 or the equivalent of 33 full time employees
- Taking the average industrial weekly wage in 2006 of €537 this represents a total contribution of €3,630,120 per annum to the economy of County Longford.
- Two thirds of groups do not pay out of pocket expenses
- Two thirds of groups recruit by word of mouth and there is a low level of use of application forms; just under a quarter conduct interviews or take up references and only 20% have job descriptions for volunteering
- Three quarters of groups do not have enough volunteers

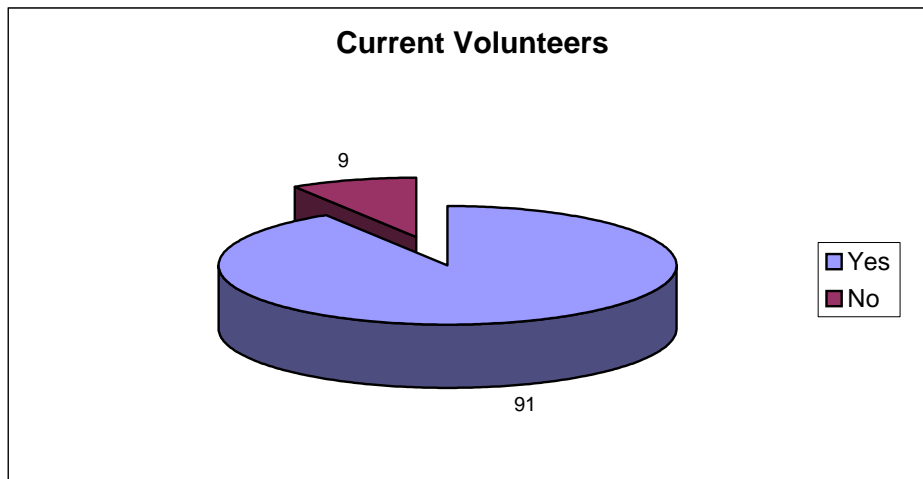
6. FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

- 6.1 Community and voluntary groups were asked to distribute a questionnaire specifically designed for their volunteers and the form was also distributed at the consultative workshops and at the UN International Volunteer Day in Longford Town on 5th December 2007. A copy of the form is enclosed as **APPENDIX C**.

A total of 104 completed forms were returned as a result of all methods and the analysis of the forms is set out below. A more detailed set of results can be viewed in **APPENDIX F**.

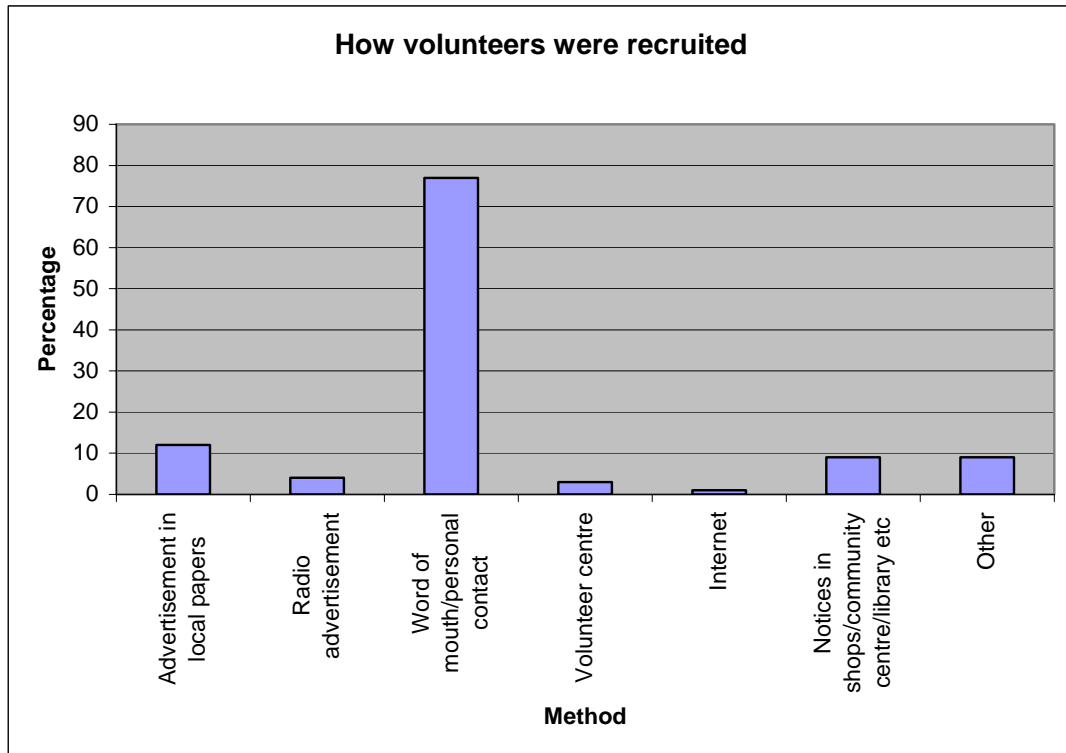
- 6.2 Question one asked respondents ‘Are you currently a volunteer?’ 91% (95) said yes and the remaining 9% (9) said no.

Table 19: Current volunteering status



6.3 Question two asked respondents to indicate on a table how they learned about their current volunteering opportunity. Very obviously, word of mouth is by far the most common method through which volunteers heard about the opportunity to volunteer. Table 20 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

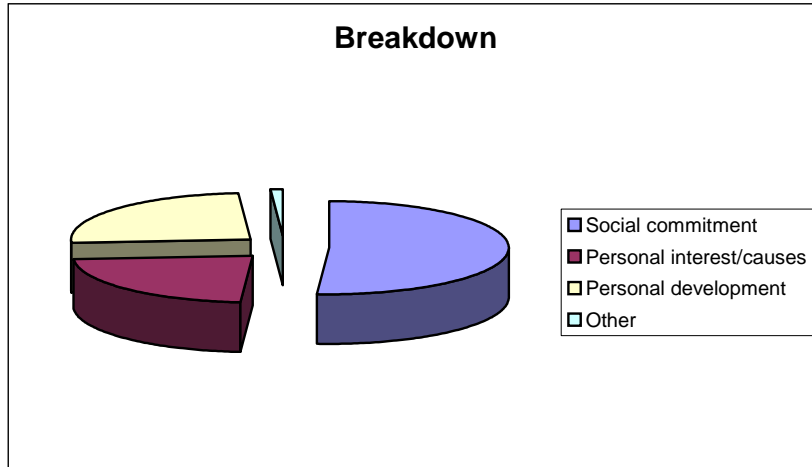
Table 20: Recruitment processes



NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

6.4 Question three asked ‘Why do you volunteer?’ Responses were grouped under several headings for ease of interpretation and the following chart illustrates the breakdown.

Table 21: Reasons for volunteering



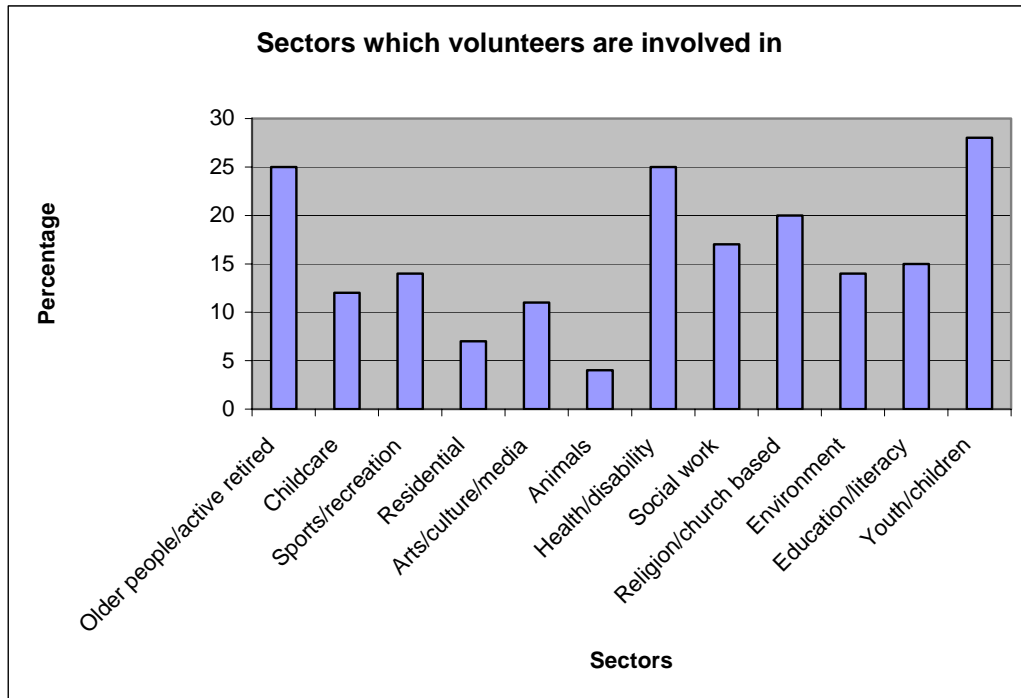
It is clear that the majority of volunteers are motivated by their social conscience or social awareness. Specific comments made centred mostly around the desire to give something back to the community (mentioned by 15 people) and the desire to help those in need (mentioned by 9 people).

At the same time quite a number are motivated by the potential benefits they stand to gain from volunteering and here the most frequently quoted reasons were enjoyment (mentioned by 6 people) and personal satisfaction (mentioned by 3 people). There were lots of other individual comments; people mentioned the desire to maintain their independence, the opportunity to learn new skills, the chance to mix with others and get out and about and keep in touch with people. One person even indicated how volunteering helped on their day time job.

Others are motivated by their particular interest in the area in which they volunteer such as family history/genealogy, temperance and children.

6.5 Question four presented respondents with a list of sectors and asked them to tick to indicate the sector(s) in which they volunteer. Respondents represent a wide variety of sectors but the most popular are youth and children, older people and health/disability. Table 22 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

Table 22: Sectors in which volunteers are involved



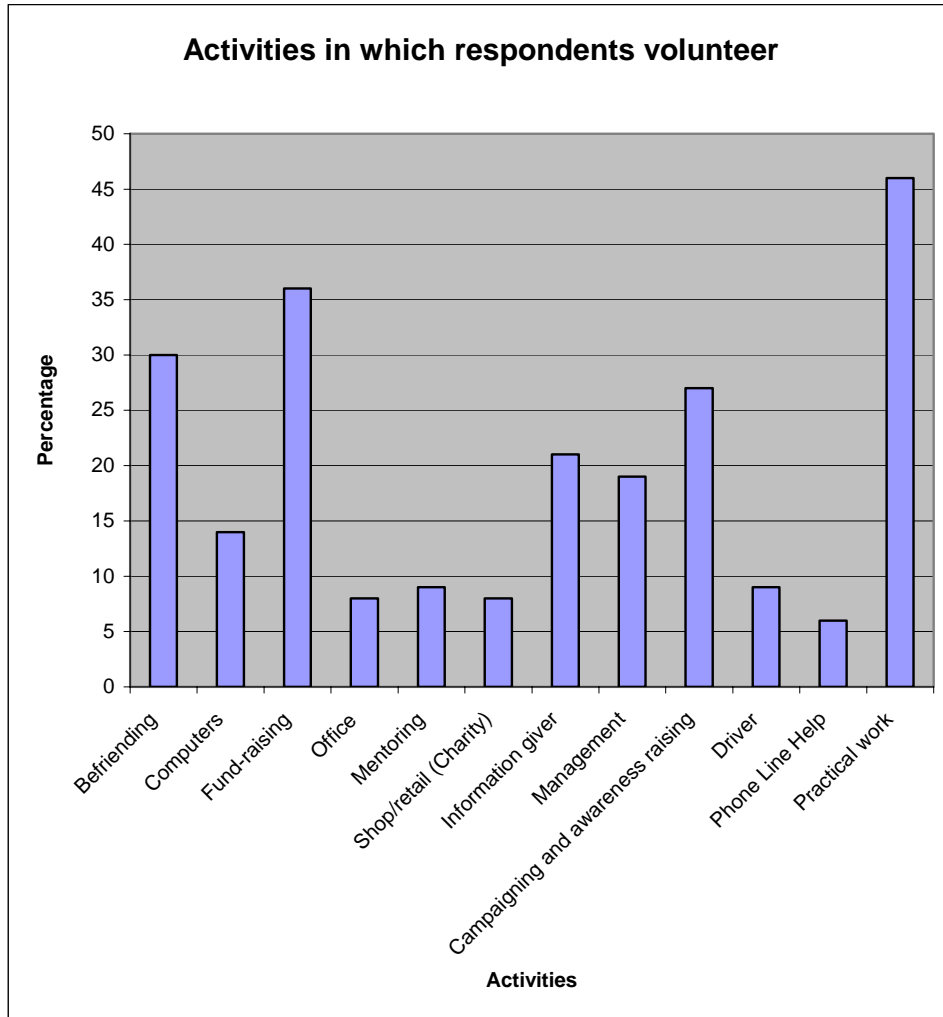
NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.



Pictured at a Volunteer Centres Ireland “Give It A Swirl” volunteer recruitment event

6.6 Question five presented respondents with a list of activities and asked them to tick to indicate which activity/activities in which they volunteer. The most popular activities include practical work, fundraising, campaigning and awareness raising, information giving and management. Table 23 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made.

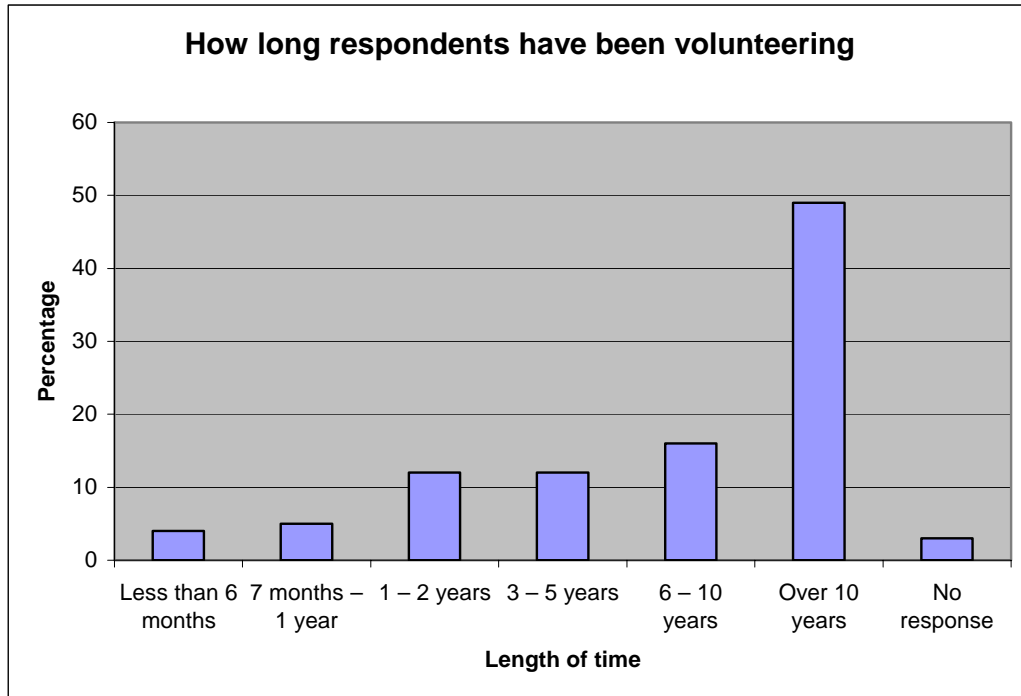
Table 23: Volunteering activities



NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

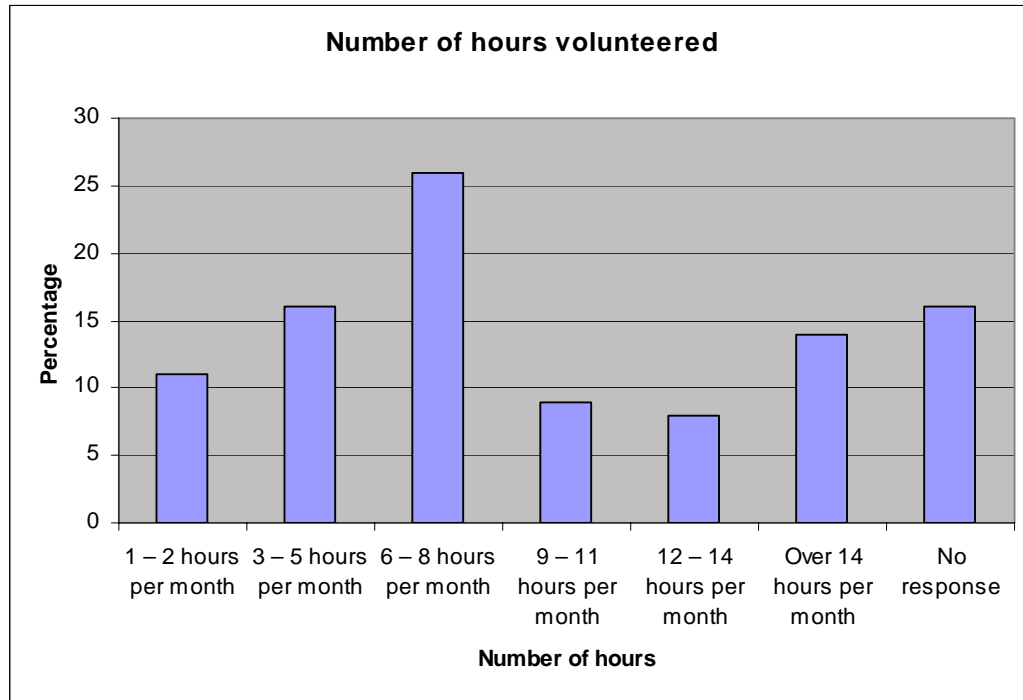
6.7 Question six asked respondents to indicate how long they have been volunteering. A very impressive percentage of volunteers, 49%, have been volunteering for over 10 years. At the other end of the scale just under 10% have been involved in volunteering for less than a year. An interpretation of these figures could be that volunteers tend to stay for long periods but the activity is not attracting adequate numbers. Table 24 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made.

Table 24: Length of time volunteering



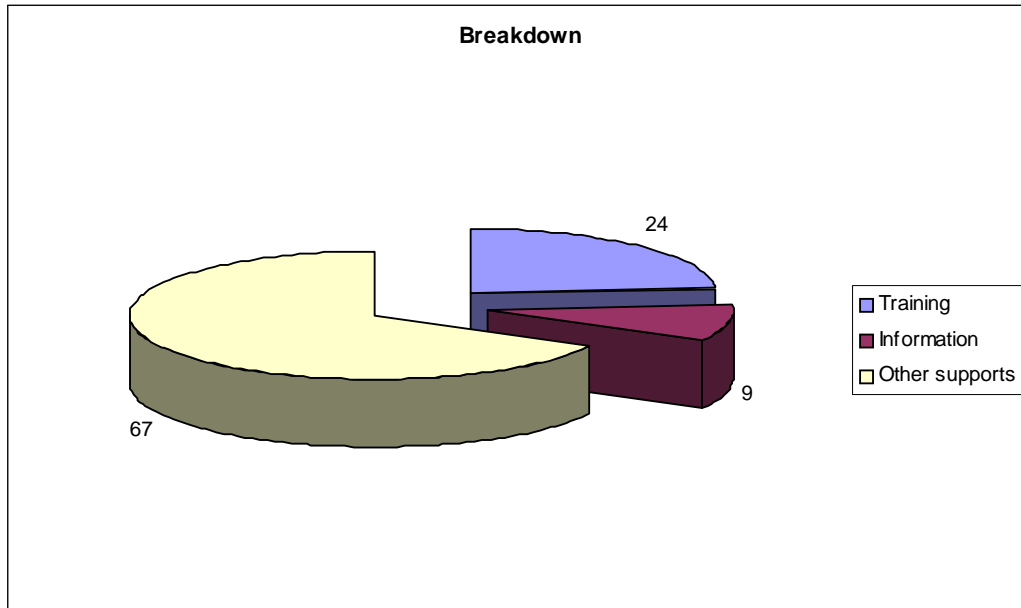
6.8 Question seven asked respondents to indicate how many hours a month on average they volunteer. An analysis of the table reveals that 87 volunteers work a total of 677.5 hours a month, an average of 8 hours a month. Table 25 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made.

Table 25: Number of hours volunteered



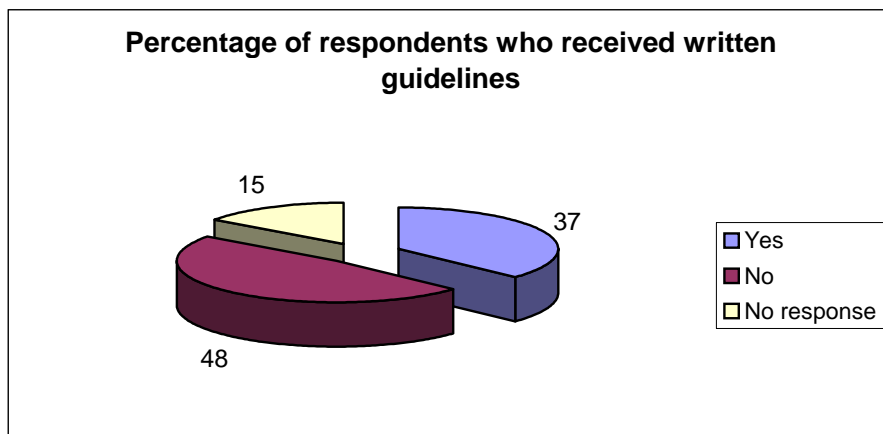
6.9 Question eight asked ‘When you first became a volunteer, what information/training did you receive?’ A variety of responses were made and can be viewed in **APPENDIX F**. Responses were grouped under several headings for ease of interpretation and the following chart illustrates the breakdown.

Table 26: Volunteering supports



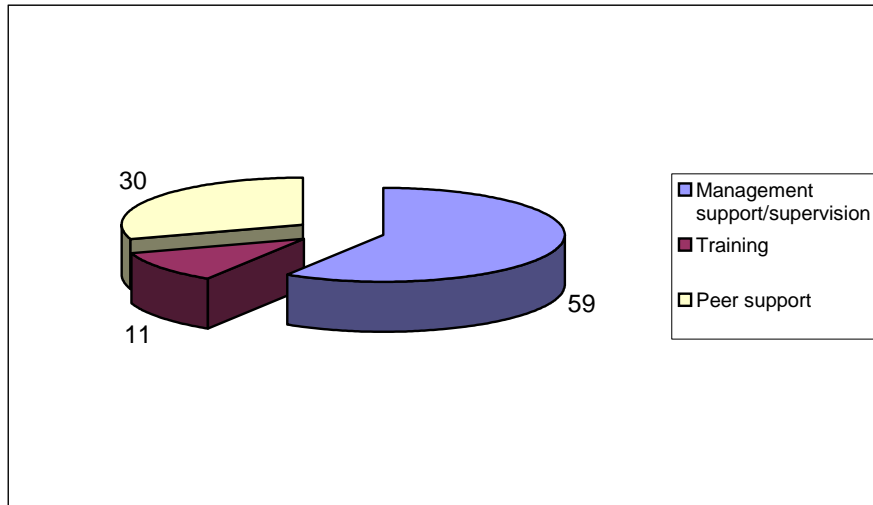
6.10 Question nine asked ‘Did you receive any form of written guidelines?’ 37% (38) said yes while 48% (50) said no and the remaining 15% (16) did not respond.

Table 27: Written guidelines



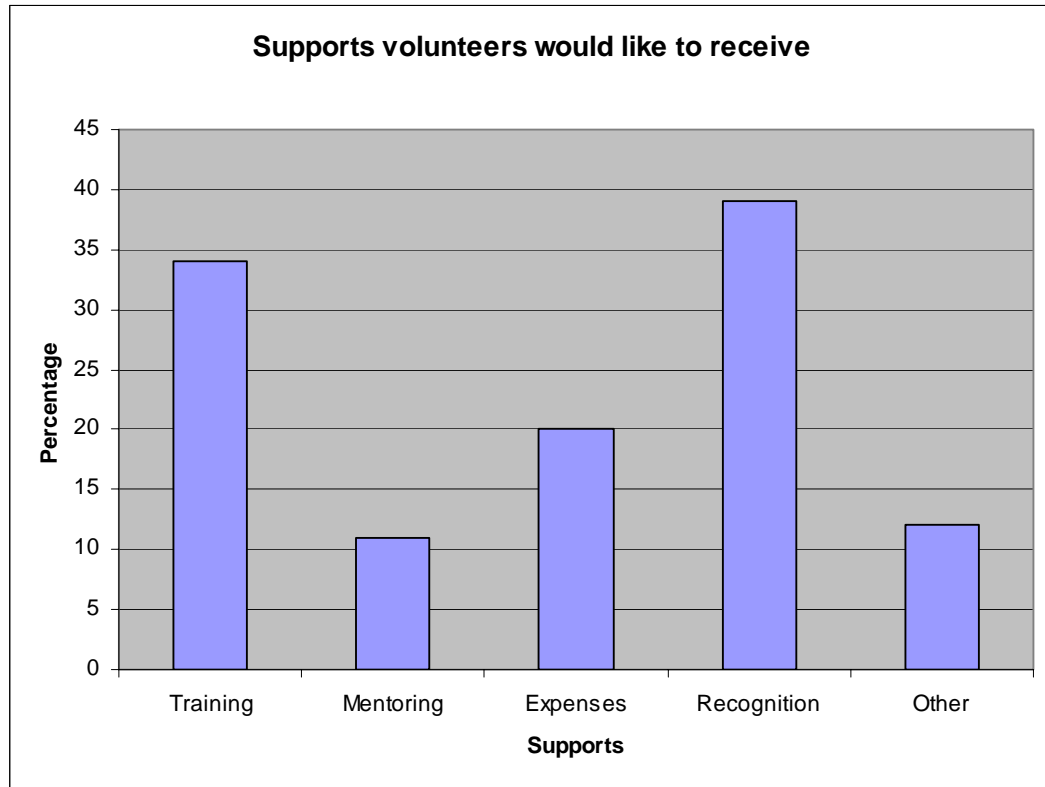
6.11 Question ten asked ‘When you first became a volunteer, what information/training did you receive? A variety of responses were made and can be viewed in **APPENDIX F**. Responses were grouped under several headings for ease of interpretation. Volunteers obviously receive a variety of supports with management and supervision being the most frequently mentioned. Peer support is also provided and appears to be valued. Training was mentioned quite often but there were no common threads running through the responses. The following chart illustrates the breakdown.

Table 28: Supports provided



6.12 Question eleven asked respondents to tick to indicate what other supports they would like to receive as a volunteer. Volunteers would most of all welcome more recognition and training. 20% indicated they would welcome expenses but this comparatively small response indicates that many volunteers do not seek recompense. Table 29 below highlights the number and percentage of responses made.

Table 29: Desired supports

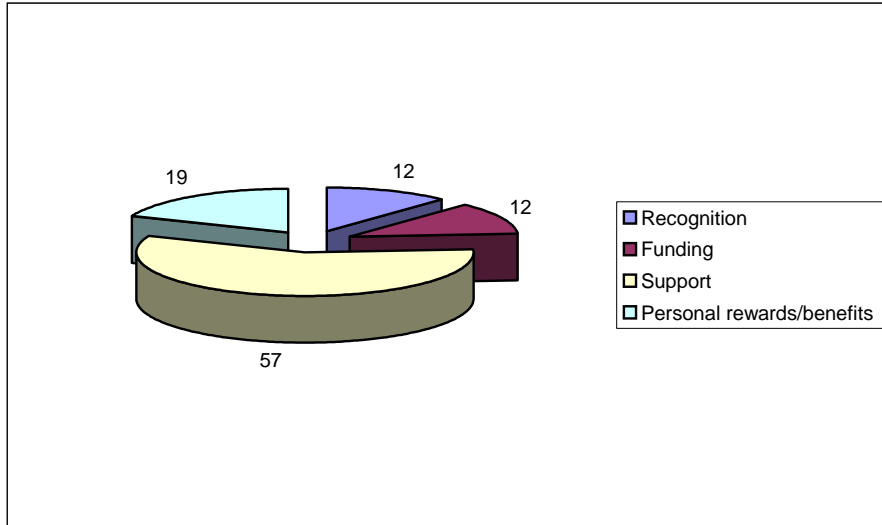


NB: Respondents were permitted to give more than one response to this question.

6.13 Question twelve asked those volunteers who have ceased volunteering with a particular group to outline why. There does not appear to be any main reason why volunteers ceased to be involved with a particular group though age, time pressures and some personal issues are more prominent than others.

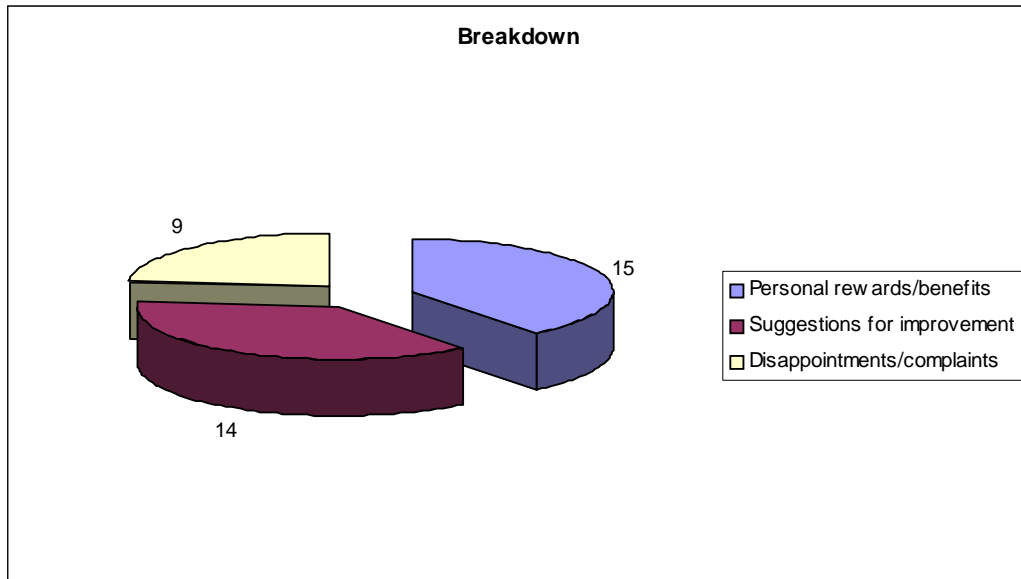
6.14 Question thirteen asked respondents to detail what would enhance their experience of volunteering. A variety of responses were made and can be viewed in **APPENDIX F**. Responses were grouped under several headings for ease of interpretation. Volunteers would welcome a very wide variety of supports particularly more volunteers, less bureaucracy and networking. While there is a demand for more funding it is worth noting that this is aimed at the groups rather than at the volunteers themselves. Only one volunteer mentioned personal travel expenses. The following chart illustrates the breakdown of responses.

Table 30: Enhancing the experience



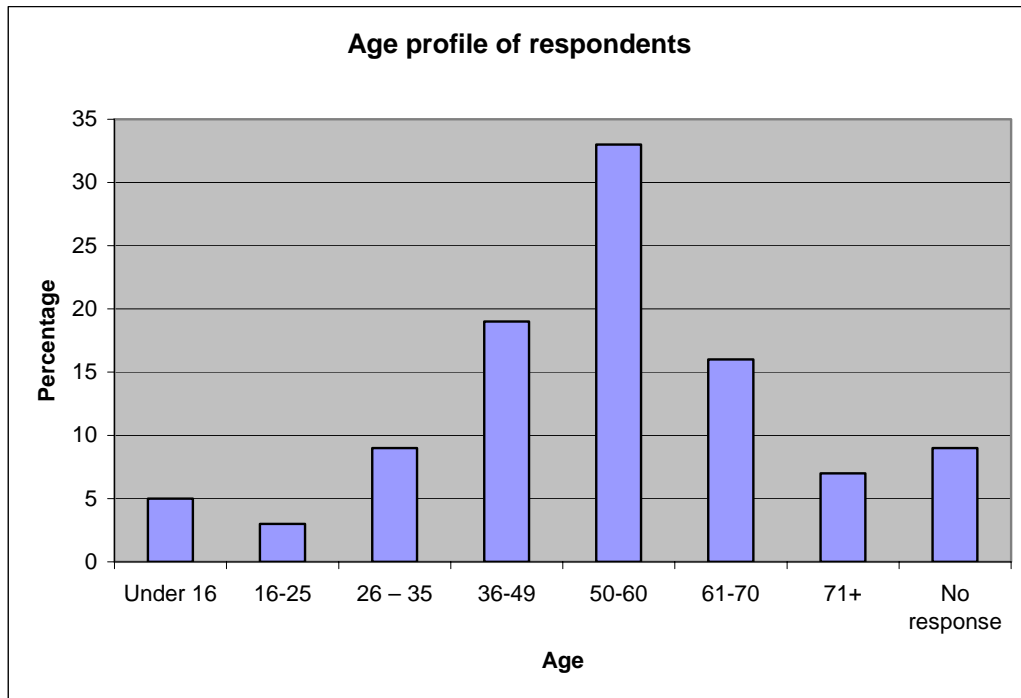
6.15 Finally, respondents were asked for any further comments in relation to their experience of volunteering. A variety of responses were made and can be viewed in **APPENDIX F**. Responses were grouped under several headings for ease of interpretation. Again, the personal benefits and rewards which can come from volunteering are mentioned and prominent among these are enjoyment and personal satisfaction. However, there are a considerable number of both suggestions for improvement and disappointments or complaints. There is no single main suggestion for improvements and among the disappointments or complaints the principal issues centre on the difficulties of attracting more volunteers, the lack of recognition or appreciation and the bureaucracy. The following chart illustrates the breakdown.

Table 31: Experiences



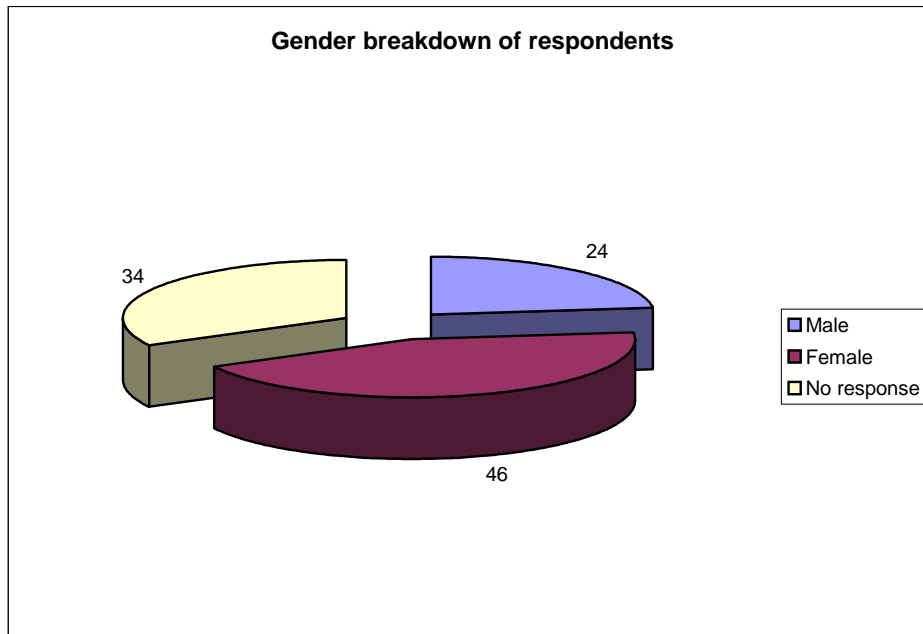
6.16 A profile of respondents is set out in Table 32 below. Just over half of respondents are over 50 years of age and 23% are over 70; just 8% are under 25 and 28% are between 26 and 49. These figures suggest that young people are not being attracted to volunteering and that there is not a flow of younger people aged between 26 and 49 coming forward to take the places of older people.

Table 32: Age profile of volunteers



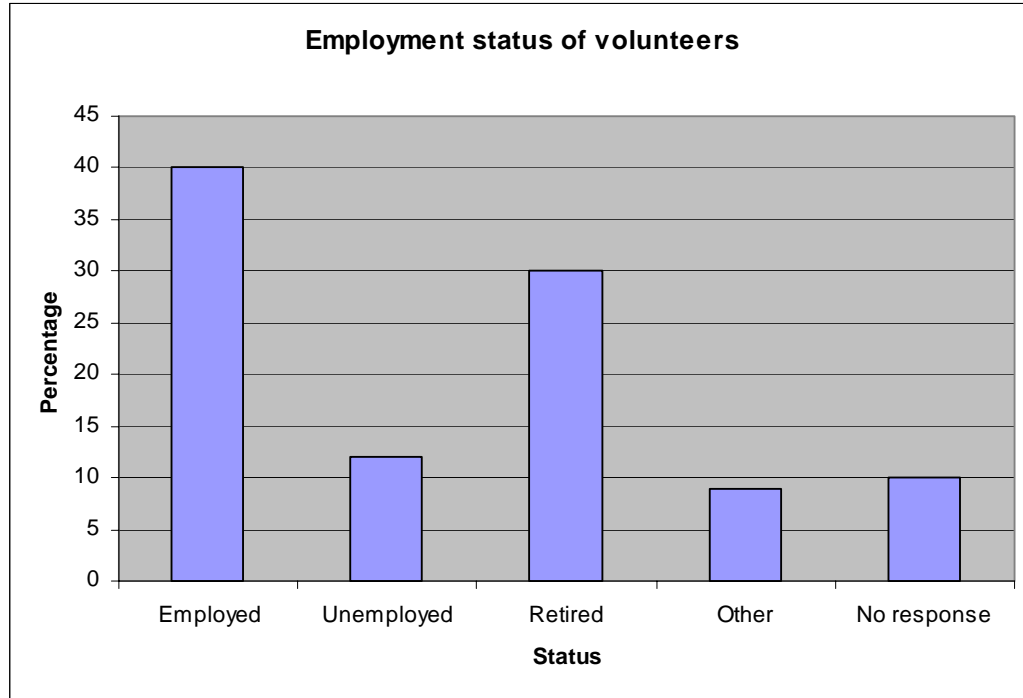
Women respondents outnumber men in volunteering on a ratio of 2 to 1. Table 33 below illustrates the gender balance of volunteers.

Table 33: Gender analysis of volunteers



6.17 Almost a third of volunteers are retired confirming the importance of this group to the community and voluntary sector. It is encouraging to note that 40% of respondents are in employment and 12% of respondents are unemployed indicating a very welcome willingness by both employees and unemployed people to give up time for volunteering. Table 34 below provides details of the economic status of volunteers.

Table 34: Employment status of volunteers



Conclusions:

- Word of mouth is by far the most common method through which volunteers heard about the opportunity to volunteer
- The majority of volunteers are motivated by their social conscience or social awareness
- Most popular sectors in which people volunteer are youth and children, older people and health/disability
- The most popular activities include practical work, fundraising, campaigning and awareness raising, information giving and management
- A very impressive percentage of volunteers, 49%, have been volunteering for over 10 years. At the other end of the scale just under 10% have been involved in volunteering for less than a year
- 87 volunteers work a total of 677.5 hours a month, an average of 8 hours a month
- Half of volunteers did not receive any written guidelines
- Volunteers would most of all welcome more recognition and training
- The personal benefits and rewards which can come from volunteering are most valued and prominent among these are enjoyment and personal satisfaction

7. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOPS

7.1 ORGANISATION OF THE WORKSHOPS

Community and voluntary groups were invited by letter to attend one of a series of consultative workshops held at various locations across the county:

Longford Town, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Ballinamuck, Ballymahon and Lanesboro.

The mailing was supplemented by press advertising (copy enclosed as **APPENDIX G**), by inserts in the notes of local press correspondents, by request to churches to publicise the meetings through their newsletters and by posters at key locations. Finally, the consultants participated in a live radio interview on Shannonside.

The workshops were facilitated by staff from Mentor and each workshop began with a Powerpoint presentation on volunteering. A copy of the presentation is enclosed as **APPENDIX H**.

7.2 ATTENDANCES

Unfortunately, the publicity failed to generate large numbers at the workshops. Attendances at all 6 workshops totalled 30 people. Participants attending were all very committed volunteers; many were volunteers in several organisations and many had been volunteering for many years.

Participants were almost all middle aged or elderly and were predominately female.

7.3 FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKSHOPS

Feedback from the workshops can be summarised as follows:

7.3.1 Attracting volunteers

Practically all participants indicated that the organisations in which they were involved are having difficulty in attracting volunteers. Perceptions as to why this was so included:

- People are just too busy; many are working and commuting quite long distances, in many families both parents are working and in families with lone parents it is not generally possible for the parent to leave the children to go volunteering. Grandparents are increasingly helping their working children by taking on the role of childminder for grandchildren and therefore are not free to volunteer to the extent they may have been previously.
- There is less interest now in volunteering; people expect others to volunteer but many do not see they have a responsibility to become involved also. Examples

were quoted of individual parents happy to drop their children off at a youth club or a music class but they would be completely unwilling to, for example, help out with transport or fundraising. There was a view, expressed by several participants, that people are increasingly seeking to be paid for anything they do.

- People are being deterred by the level of bureaucracy now involved in volunteering and they lack the skill to deal with that bureaucracy or are just put off by what they perceive as the hassle entailed.
- The emergence of paid workers through projects such as FAS Community Employment schemes, Rural Social Scheme and Pobal schemes. Before the introduction of these schemes much of the work now being undertaken by paid employees was done voluntarily and there is evidence that as paid workers came in, volunteers left or actually got the paying job opportunities.
- People are being deterred from volunteering by the fear that once involved they will not be able to stop and so there was a welcome for the suggestion that potential new volunteers be asked initially to commit to undertaking one small task or to do something for a fixed period. There was little evidence that such an approach had been tried though in one town it was tried to secure volunteers to erect the annual Christmas lights but this proved almost impossible; people came but only stayed a few hours and then drifted off and did not return.
- Quite a number of participants indicated they find themselves being treated with cynicism by their peers and their motives are questioned. There is a growing belief that people who volunteer must be doing it for some reward or personal advantage.
- There were several reports of individual organisations having to cease operations because they could not attract sufficient volunteers. For example, a Guides troop is losing its leader and no parent is willing to take on the role; Granard lost its Community Games and Ballymahon Family Resource Centre is at risk of losing its youth programme as no volunteers can be found.
- There were few ideas about attracting new volunteers; there was almost a sense of resignation that no new faces would come forward. Reference was made by several participants to the difficulties in attracting men to volunteer. Face to face requests for volunteering appeared to have the highest success rate for getting one off volunteering; this is supported by some research carried out by Volunteering Ireland which revealed that 52% of volunteers got involved because they were asked.
- Almost all participants indicated they relied on word of mouth to attract new recruits.

7.3.2 Working with volunteers

- There were few if any references to the costs people incur in volunteering.

- It is becoming increasingly difficult to get people to take leadership roles such as chair or secretary or treasurer because people perceive they do not have the administrative skills needed to undertake these roles.
- Quite a number of participants indicated they did not receive any recognition for their efforts and when ideas such as cards at Christmas or Christmas parties were suggested the almost universal reaction was that groups could not afford such costs. There was no sense that groups could not afford not to recognise volunteers.
- The vast majority of participants appear to volunteer because they enjoy what they do, they have a personal commitment to their organisation and they want to contribute to society. There were a number of individual comments from participants about the benefits they had gained from their involvement and these broadly are in line with responses from the survey.

Conclusions:

- Practically all participants indicated that the organisations in which they were involved are having difficulty in attracting volunteers
- There is less interest now in volunteering
- People are being deterred by the level of bureaucracy
- People are being deterred from volunteering by the fear that once involved they will not be able to stop
- There were few ideas about attracting new volunteers
- Almost all participants indicated they relied on word of mouth to attract new recruits
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to get people to take leadership roles
- Quite a number of participants indicated they did not receive any recognition for their efforts
- The vast majority of participants appear to volunteer because they enjoy what they do

8. CASE STUDIES

8.1 In consultation with the Longford Volunteer Centre the consultants selected four groups which were visited by one of the consultancy team for a more in-depth gathering of opinion and experience than could be secured from the survey. The groups selected were: Longford Social Services, St Christopher's in Longford, Ballymahon Family Resource Centre and Rathmuire in Granard.

8.1.1 Longford Social Services

Longford Social Services (LSS) is a voluntary organisation based in Longford town but operating in rural areas also. The organisation works mainly with elderly or disabled people. One of its main activities is to supply the Health Service Executive with a number of buses which can be used to transport elderly or disabled people.

LSS also operates a meals on wheel scheme and has 5 meals on wheels vans which are specially refrigerated to facilitate the provision of the service. These vehicles are all operated by volunteers.



The organisation has 25 volunteers and 10 voluntary committee members. LSS has one full time staff member and also has several full-time volunteers who assist with administration and befriending and occasional visitation. Volunteers are actively engaged in:

- Caring
- Driving
- Administration
- Fund raising
- Management
- Cleaning

Volunteers spend an average of 6-8 hours per month while management committee members spend an average of over 14 hours per month. There are between 25-30 volunteer drivers who agree to give 2 hours every 4 to 6 weeks to the service.

No training, induction or support for volunteers is presently provided.

Volunteers are recruited by interview and references are taken up. However, LSS finds it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers. Up to now, they have relied almost exclusively on word of mouth but there has been an involvement with a pre-retirement course offered by Longford CIC which assisted in attracting several new recruits. The organisation does not have enough volunteers and could do with 1 more management volunteer, 2 more drivers 10 more to assist with fundraising.

There is a health and safety policy in place.

LSS would welcome assistance from the Volunteer Centre with the recruitment of volunteers, the implementation of policies and procedures, volunteer retention and training.

8.1.2 St Christopher's Services Limited

St Christopher's Services Limited was established over 40 years ago initially to provide services to children with a mental disability. The organisation today provides services for people of all ages. Among the activities of the organisation are:

- Pre-school care unit for children between 2 and 5 years
- Special school for children between 4 and 18 years who have a moderate learning disability
- Adult day services help people with mental disabilities to develop social and practical skills for everyday living
- The Vocational Training Unit aims to equip young people over 16 with the academic, social, personal, practical and vocational skills to increase their level of independence
- Adult Training Unit
- Activation unit which provides an individualised service for people with high support needs
- TASC employment preparation programme
- Sonas unit for an active age group which has retired from workshop training programmes
- Leisure Buddies which provides volunteers to enable service users form friendships and enjoy social activities

St Christopher's operates in both Longford Town and in Ballymahon and has a number of group homes for adults at various locations.

Volunteering in St Christopher's happens mainly within the Board of Directors of which there are 10 voluntary members, the local branches and the Leisure Buddies Scheme. One board member, for example, undertakes an extensive commitment, two

or three days a week, on a voluntary basis as the organisation's public relations officer. Board members generally spend between 6 and 8 hours per month. There are some 78 volunteers who participate in caring and fundraising.

About half the volunteers spend 1-2 hours a month while the other half spend 3-5 hours a month. A small number spend 12-14 hours per month.

Volunteer carers are given induction and support within the unit in which they volunteer.

Volunteers are recruited using interviews, references and an application form. Garda vetting is used.

All relevant policies are in place.

St Christopher's requires additional volunteers in both caring and fundraising and would welcome support from the Volunteer Centre in recruitment and retention, in implementation of policies and procedures and training.

8.1.3 Ballymahon Family Resource Centre

Ballymahon Family Resource Centre is one of a nationwide network of Family Resource Centres. It is based in a large community hall in the town centre. This includes a large multi-purpose hall, a stage, an office and a room with a full size snooker table for young people. The Centre is managed by a full time development worker.

The aim of the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme is to combat disadvantage and improve the function of the family unit. The emphasis in the projects is on the involvement of local communities in developing approaches to tackle the problems they face and on creating successful partnerships between the voluntary and statutory agencies in the area concerned. Family Resource Centres involve people from marginalised groups and areas of disadvantage at all levels in the project.

Activities provided at Ballymahon include:

The provision of information, advice and support to target groups and families in the area.

Practical assistance to community groups such as training, information, advice and photocopying facilities.

Work with young people, mainly in the leisure area.

A programme to bring housebound and elderly people into the centre for activities.

The centre has had particular difficulties with attracting volunteers and as a result has had to abandon its club for housebound people and its youth club.

The backbone of the centre are the members of the management committee who are all volunteers. The chairperson in particular spoke about the challenges she experienced in becoming chair for the first time; it was a role she had never experienced before but she relishes the new confidence which carrying out her role has given her.

8.1.4 Rathmuire Resource Centre

Rathmuire Resource Centre is based in Granard and is a community-based group.

The Centre has been in operation for some 15-16 years and initially addressed a wide range of local issues but then veered towards working to meet the needs of older people.

Currently the centre operates a day care facility in Aughnacliffe and has a club for older men.

Funding is received from sources such as the Health Services Executive, Department of Social and Family Affairs and Longford Vocational Education Committee.

There are 3 voluntary management committee members and 8 volunteers; the latter are engaged in caring, management, cleaning and befriending. Volunteers spend over 14 hours a month while management committee members spend between 3-5 hours per month on their activities.

Initially the Centre had no issues with volunteers but people are just not available now to volunteer. Young people would not be interested in volunteering. Consequently the Centre is not actively looking for volunteers.

The spirit of volunteering is not gone, however as people are moving on and , for example, going out to Africa to build houses.

Litigation has scared people.

No formal training, induction or support is provided but volunteers receive out of pocket expenses. Volunteers are mainly recruited through word of mouth and at present the Centre has enough volunteers. It would welcome assistance from the Volunteer Centre with the implementation of policies and procedures.

Conclusions:

- Three of the four organisations have difficulty in attracting volunteers
- Specific assistances required from the Volunteer Centre include the implementation of policies and procedures, recruitment and retention of volunteers

9. INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

9.1 A number of interviews were carried out with key community and voluntary organisations across County Longford. A list of the organisations contacted is enclosed as **APPENDIX I** together with a copy of the pro-forma used in the survey.

9.2 Feedback from stakeholders can be summarised as follows:

- Mixed views on issues around attracting volunteers; some organisations are facing constant difficulties while others claim not to have any problems. On balance, more are having difficulties.

- Those experiencing difficulties quoted the following reasons:

Women no longer at home but out working

Grandparents unavailable for childminding

People just too busy

People expect to be paid

- Those which claimed they did not have difficulties gave quite specific reasons including:

Being able to offer a benefit in kind e.g. free admission to a play or free boat trips

Targeting parents of children in an after school club

Organisation is well respected and people get a weeks training

- Particular areas where stakeholders identified attracting volunteers as very difficult included firstly, working with young people as young people are seen as cheeky and there are bureaucracy issues with child protection legislation and secondly, charitable work. It is also claimed that it is more difficult to get volunteers in disadvantaged areas where there will not be so many groups and clubs. It is hard to get people to sit on committees.

- Factors which are seen as motivating people in Longford to volunteer included:

An interest in the area.

Used as a stepping stone to go to do studies

Wanting to give something back (x 3)

Older people with time

Being able to make a difference and see something materialise (x 2)

Passion – people have been involved for years or have family members involved

Being asked face to face helps, having a commitment to the organisation and sharing a common vision
 St Christopher's is so well known and everyone knows someone involved
 Want the experience of working with children
 To gain experience
 Matching people with the volunteering opportunities
 Always easier to get volunteers in the field of politics and sport.
 Community spirit

- Issues which discouraged people included:

If the type of volunteering on offer is vague – need to be specific (x 2)
 If an event is not well organised it puts people off
 If you start you can't stop
 The commitment needed
 Legislation is a big barrier to people helping out with children
 People don't want to get involved
 Increasing expectations of volunteering; it's not as simple as it used to be
 Depends on the group and who is associated with the group. Also the type of volunteering; if you are asked to stand and collect money on the street it puts people off as people think that's what volunteering is
 The hassle you get. If people don't like the way an event was run, then the volunteers get hassle about it. People don't realise the volunteers give up their time voluntarily
 They feel like they are going to have to do everything and that they will be taken advantage of
 If they don't feel supported.

- Approaches to recruitment which have been successful included:

Advertisements in the paper (x 2)
 (One organisation stated and they got 30 applicants;)
 People will want to be involved if the organisation is professional, with clear aims, objectives of what they seek to achieve. Every group should have job descriptions.
 We always contact the parents to ask for volunteers; however, take up has been poor
 Advertise, word of mouth. Going around the schools for youth buddies works well
 We have to hand pick our volunteers, it has to be someone known to us
 Information day with a stand where people can pick an area of volunteering they are interested in. Volunteering is not as off putting if they can choose what they want to help with
 To show some appreciation. We invite volunteers to show that they are thanked.
 In the Attic Café, we take volunteers out for a meal to thank them. Bringing the volunteers together to socialise is important.
 Discrete projects / specific projects asking people on a one to one basis. People need to have a passion for the service; they need to be given support.

- Groups perceived as sources for potential volunteers; suggestions made included:

Retired waged people

New communities

Pre-retirement – ICA groups.

Actively elderly (x 2)

Retired nurses, whose kids have grown up, I have 8 volunteering at the minute and they are brilliant

Young people (x 4) In transition year they have to do work placement anyway if they were introduced at this stage there would be more chance of them staying involved.

Middle aged (50's) living on their own, widows good for them to relieve isolation and give something back.

Women at home or retired with time on their hands.

Asylum seekers – we have a lot of asylum seekers to help with the men's group.

The type of volunteering has to match their interest.

- Expectations of the Volunteer Centre:

To build up a database of people volunteering and increase the awareness of volunteering.

Help new communities to break into the areas of social care.

I have reservations about the image the centre is putting out. It is not a community project; it needs to be in an independent location in the town. It is very instrumental in helping groups who haven't the capacity. Needs to be community based though and where it is based and the image it's projecting isn't at the minute. Co-ordinator is brilliant, excellent person to motivate people to volunteer. She should be based in the Community Forum.

Not sure. It is really hard to get volunteers and not sure how the Centre can help the Travellers group as settled people tend not to volunteer in the Travelling community. However, for the library group we do need volunteer tutors, retired teachers.

Promote more choice for volunteers – for them to decide where and how they want to volunteer.

None, I haven't contacted them yet so I have no expectations.

Literacy Services have been passed on two people from the Volunteer Centre for training. They have missed this session but are on a waiting list for the next session. My expectations are that the Volunteer Centre will act as an agency for people wanting to volunteer.

Generate a huge buzz, targeting people to socialise. Make people more aware of volunteering and encourage one off volunteering as well.

- Groups which were not aware of the Centre were invited to indicate their expectations and these included:

Allowance for volunteers so they are not out of pocket and appreciation for their work.

To be able to provide extra volunteers for one off events. People who would be creative for one day a week to come into the group.

To provide back up i.e. volunteers to help out when I need to go to funeral etc. There has to be two people with the children at all times.
 Training is a need yet it is difficult to get volunteers to attend. Would be better to have a mentoring day to assist with funding programmes that would suit us. Look at the individual group's needs and assist us to prepare applications for funding.
 The assistance must be needs based. Go out of the way to find out what the groups need. Match the groups with something suitable for them.

- Other comments included:

Difficult to keep the group going, volunteers should be aware of what is expected. People have huge expectations of what they can achieve which is not always possible.

Set up a bank of volunteers who would welcome new communities into the area, show them around, discuss the different traditions and help them to set up a bank account.

Volunteering is very hard to keep going. The award ceremony by LCRL was very good in recognising the work of volunteers. It would be good to get cash for volunteers to give them something back

Publicise volunteer centre more didn't know anything about it until I got something about the post.

Volunteering is a great thing to do. It is a great way to get to know everyone in the area everyone should do it.

It is harder and harder to get good volunteers.

A lot of people are taking part in volunteering. It is something that everyone should do even a small bit.

Kids in disadvantaged areas really want to get involved. Even the hardest kids love to get involved. There is a real need to provide for kids in disadvantaged areas.

Conclusions:

- Majority having difficulties in recruiting volunteers
- Particularly difficult areas include working with young people and in disadvantaged areas
- Potential motivators include opportunity to gain experience, to give something back and to make a difference
- Need for specific volunteering opportunities
- Concerns that once in you cannot get out
- Need for professional approach to recruitment; advertising can work but word of mouth is best
- Number of areas from which volunteers might be recruited including young people, active elderly, new communities, middle aged living alone
- Range of expectations from Volunteer Centre including creation of database of volunteers, increasing awareness helping groups which have not the capacity, provision of volunteers for once off-events
- Need for more publicity for Centre

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1** This study of volunteering in County Longford has generated considerable input from voluntary and community organisations and volunteers. It has also received feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. The conclusions set out below can therefore be said to be statistically significant and reflective of volunteering in the County and to be sufficiently robust to enable firm conclusions to be drawn about the current status of volunteering in the County
- 10.2** The community and voluntary sector in County Longford is quite diverse with groups operating in many areas of the County and engaged in a wide variety of sectors especially working with children and young people, elderly people and people with disabilities. The sector could be said to be quite strong given that Longford has proportionately more people active in volunteering than the national average.
- 10.3** It is possible to draw some comparisons between the situation on volunteering in County Longford and in other parts of the county. In the table overleaf details are illustrated from a study Mentor undertook in County Louth in 2006, from the Bray Study undertaken in 2002 and from national statistics.



Recognising volunteering in County Longford: Some of the large attendance in the Longford Arms Hotel at UN International Volunteer Day on 5th December 2007

AREA	LONGFORD STUDY	LOUTH STUDY (Mentor 2006)	BRAY STUDY (2002)	NATIONAL STATISTICS-CSO
Age profile	Under 25, 7% 25-60, 60% 60+, 23%	-		Under 25, 14% 25-60, 66% 60+, 21%
Gender balance	Male- 22% Female- 43% No response- 35%	-	Male 32% Female 68%	Male- 49.7% Female- 50.3%
Top method of recruiting	Personal contact Advertisement in local papers- Notices in key locations	Personal contact- 61% Internet- 8%	Personal Contact Churches Group members	-
Primary reasons for volunteering	To give something back to the community To help those in need- Enjoyment	Ability to help others- To give something back to the community- Interest in the work of the group-	Help others/give back/share Something to offer Use free time-	-
Main activity areas	Practical Work- Fundraising- Befriending-	Administration- Management, Cleaning, Fundraising-	Committee work Administering the organisation Social/Recreational activities	
Main sectors supported	Youth/children- 30% Other people 27% Health/disability- 22%	-		Social/charitable organisation- 35% Sporting body- 33% Religious group or church- 26%

10.4 An analysis of this table reveals:

- Longford has fewer young people involved in volunteering
- Longford would appear to have fewer men involved in volunteering
- Personal contact is by far the most popular means of recruitment
- Giving something back to the community is the most popular reason for people volunteering

10.5 Key findings from the study are:

- The study identified almost 1,850 volunteers from 74 groups. Extrapolating the figures for all 241 groups in the County could mean up to 6,025 people are engaged in voluntary work in County Longford
- The total number of hours spent per month by management committee members and volunteers within the groups is 4,673 or the equivalent of 33 full time employees. Taking the average industrial weekly wage in 2006 of €537 this represents a total contribution of €3,630,120 per annum through voluntary input to the economy of County Longford
- 54 groups in County Longford – or 73% of respondents - need more volunteers to carry out their objectives. The survey identified 362 opportunities for volunteering in the area in various skill areas. Again extrapolating the figures across a similar percentage of the total 241 groups identified could potentially mean 1,616 volunteering opportunities
- 49% of volunteers have been involved in volunteering for ten years or more and 9% have become involved in the last year demonstrating that there still are people willing to volunteer in the area. The vast majority of volunteers learned about their current volunteering opportunity through word of mouth or personal contacts
- People volunteer because they have a social conscience, because they are committed to personal causes or interests and because they see volunteering as providing opportunities for personal development
- Activities which are most popular with volunteers are practical work, fund raising and campaigning and awareness raising
- There were some comments about the suitability of the current location of the Volunteer Centre office; some people consider it would be more appropriate and more accessible to have it located in a town centre base

10.6 Overall, the majority of the management committee and volunteers responding to the surveys have reported that volunteering is a very positive experience for them and the community they are helping. They have also highlighted the huge time commitments that they give in order to fulfil their voluntary role and the lack of help in doing so. Even with this, the majority would still actively encourage other people to get involved in volunteering as the benefits outweigh any negative aspects.

11. ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 This section sets out the main issues emerging and the opportunities identified during the study and then recommends actions which address the issues or take advantage of the opportunities.

ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY	RECOMMENDATIONS AT STRATEGIC LEVEL	RECOMMENDATIONS AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL
There is inadequate recognition of the work of volunteers in County Longford	The Volunteer Centre and Longford Community Resources Limited, in collaboration with the Steering Group members, should build on the success of the annual Volunteer Day which primarily focuses on recognition of existing volunteers and consider the expansion of this event into a volunteer awareness week in 2008.	Longford Volunteer Centre should actively encourage groups to offer some form of recognition and thanks to volunteers.
	Longford Volunteer Centre should explore the possibility of having a scheme, similar to the President's Gaisce award but targeted at adults over 18 or over 25 years of age.	
	Longford Volunteer Centre should publicise the huge voluntary contribution made by volunteers in the County and highlight the costs to the state if this support were not to be forthcoming.	
Many groups in County Longford require additional volunteers	Longford Volunteer Centre should explore the potential for attracting new Irish as volunteers; this could begin with working with refugees or asylum seekers.	Longford Volunteer Centre should publicise the volunteering opportunities of which it is aware in a fashion similar to job opportunities and should ask the local press to provide such advertising as a contribution to the work of the Centre.

	Longford Volunteer Centre should explore the potential for employee volunteering and the opportunities of using employers as channels of connection to potential volunteers.	Longford Volunteer Centre, in collaboration with The County Longford Older Persons Network, should organise more pre-retirement programmes and within these programmes should hold sessions which present volunteering as an opportunity for retired people.
	Longford Volunteer Centre should explore the potential for introducing more young people from 18-25 to volunteering.	
	In the case of out of pocket expenses for volunteers we recommend that all grant application forms should include a heading for volunteer expense costs, and a breakdown of such expenses a requirement from applicants. An organisation applying for funds should ensure this part of the application is completed appropriately. Funders should insist that they will not consider applications unless this part is completed. This at least promotes "Best Practice" in the area of valuing our volunteers and the contribution they make in our communities.	
Difficulties in securing volunteers to work with young people	Longford Volunteer Centre should collaborate with Longford Youth Services to identify actions which will attract more people to work with young people.	
Fear among some potential volunteers that once in they will not be able to leave	Longford Volunteer Centre should consider establishing a Task Force of people who have agreed to volunteer only for one-off events and make this resource available to the community and voluntary sector.	Longford Volunteer Centre should encourage groups recruiting volunteers to use short term assignments and one-off tasks initially with volunteers.

		Longford Volunteer Centre should collaborate with other agencies to deliver training for community and voluntary groups in succession planning (the process of ensuring a flow of new leadership in organisations).
		Longford Volunteer Centre should consider the provision of support to enable groups to offer additional training to their volunteers through the Volunteer Centre.
Need for support to groups in managing and motivating volunteers		Longford Volunteer Centre should support groups in areas such as the provision of written guidelines to volunteers, the use of job descriptions and application forms and Garda vetting.
Lack of collaborative working among groups and absence of central administrative support	Longford Volunteer Centre should itself collaborate with other agencies to foster collaborative working among groups and should initiate or support a study which would examine the feasibility of a new County Longford Community Hub building.	
Need for more publicity for the Centre	The suggestion was made that the Centre should have a higher profile location which would be more accessible than the current location and this is something which could be considered if and when new funding is agreed.	
	The Centre should embark on a planned campaign with the aims of attracting potential volunteers, of raising the profile of volunteering in the county and of making community and voluntary groups more aware of its existence with events like Give It Swirl Day.	

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference

Tender for Audit of Volunteering in Co Longford

The Promoter: Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd
Contact: Longford Volunteer Co-ordinator Karen Byrne

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Longford Volunteer Project

This is a new project in Longford to encourage, support and promote the voluntary contribution of members of the community in community and voluntary activities in Co Longford. The project has a newly appointed Volunteer Co-ordinator Karen Byrne who is managed by a Steering Group consisting of members of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group, the Co Longford Community and Voluntary Forum and employed by Longford Community Resources Ltd. The project is funded from the Volunteering fund from the Dept of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs through the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

2. Purpose of the Longford Volunteer Project

- ❖ To provide supports to existing groups/organisations who have Volunteers and wish to retain them and secure more
- ❖ To support new groups/organisations in their efforts to secure Volunteers
- ❖ Work with the Steering Group to develop a Work plan for the Valuing Volunteering Project
- ❖ Help identify, recruit, and select Volunteers for groups and services as part of a Volunteer Bank in Co Longford
- ❖ Develop and implement relevant Volunteer policies
- ❖ Support the development of a Network of Volunteers in Co Longford
- ❖ The Steering Group wish to establish an accurate profile of Volunteerism in Co Longford including a profile of groups/organisations requiring training annually

3. Aims of the Audit of Volunteering in the County

- ❖ The audit is to be conducted with groups/organisations in the social/issue/disability/community sector to establish a profile of the level of Volunteerism in Co. Longford. The audit should provide the Longford Volunteering Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd with a profile of Volunteerism in County Longford. It will also provide valuable

information on groups/organisations within the county and what their key issues regarding Volunteering.

It needs to review the following:

- ❖ The number of Volunteers currently in place with groups/organisations and their time commitment to these groups/organisations
- ❖ What are the existing supports provided to existing Volunteering
- ❖ What supports do Volunteers feel they need
- ❖ How Volunteers are recruited
- ❖ Why Volunteers cease their activity with groups/organisations
- ❖ Make a comparison of Volunteer numbers currently with groups/organisations compared with Volunteer numbers three years ago
- ❖ What support is offered to Volunteers by way of training, mentoring, job description etc. by groups/organisations.
- ❖ Establish if groups/organisations have Volunteer policies and procedures in place
- ❖ Establish the level of demand for Volunteers in the county including the target roles for Volunteers and the number of hours required for each role
- ❖ Identify training needs common to groups such as health and safety, Volunteer recruitment and retention etc.
- ❖ Liaise with the Volunteer Co-ordinator in the preparation of a final evaluation report with recommendations
- ❖ Detail the supports needed to assist groups/organisations with Volunteering in the county.
- ❖ What mechanisms are in place to recognize the contribution of volunteers
- ❖ What mechanisms need to be put in place to recognise the contribution of Volunteers

4. **Requirements**

- To attend progress meetings with Longford Volunteer Steering Group and Volunteer Co-ordinator
- To liaise with Longford Volunteer Co-ordinator on organisational and administrative issues
- To provide a final report by the 26th Oct. 2007 to Longford Volunteer Steering Group

The audit will include groups/organisations in County Longford focused on community and voluntary issues including groups focused on supports and services to socially excluded groups. The audit will cover the entire county which covers the Villages of Abbeylara, Abbeyshule, Ardagh, Aughtnaccliffe, Ballinalee, Ballinamuck, Ballymahon. Clondra, Dromard, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Keenagh, Killashee, Killoe, Lanesborough, Legan, Longford, Moydow, Moyne, Mullinalaghta, Newtowncashel & Newtownforbes,

Payment schedule: Payment to the successful Tenderer will be made as follows 50% on production of the draft Plan and 50% on the completion of the Study invoice. Funding for this audit is provided by The Longford Community and Voluntary Forum through the Dept. of Environment and Local Government.

5. **Detailed Items**

Please respond to each of the following items in your proposal:

- Details of the Company's previous relevant experience; details of all Consultancy Team proposed for the project
- Proposed outline of activities
- Availability within the specified timescale
- Client List

6. **Evaluation Criteria**

The following criteria will be used to evaluate all submissions: Please ensure this criteria is clearly stated, and/or attached to this application:

- Curriculum Vitae's of Tenderer and Proposed Staff
- Substantial understanding of Volunteerism and associated issues
- Experience of working with voluntary and community projects
- Demonstrated track record in undertaking similar work with similar organisations
- Details of proposed approach to the work
- Costs
- Hourly rates/time allocated
- Possession of Professional Indemnity Insurance (photocopy must be supplied to Longford Community Resources Ltd)
- Up-to-date tax-clearance certificate (photocopy must be supplied to Longford Community Resources Ltd)

7. **Preparation of Tenders**

- Every tender received by Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd shall be deemed to have been subject to the terms and conditions of the tender contract.
- No representation, explanation or statement made to a Tenderer, by or on behalf of Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd as to the meaning of any of the Brief

Document, shall bind Longford Community Resources Ltd in exercise of its powers and duties under the subsequent contract.

- Should any conflict of interest, however arising, occur between the Tenderer and any person or body associated with the Project, then Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd withholds the right to not continue or proceed with the Contract
- Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd accepts no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liabilities arising out of the work or activities of the Contracted Promoter. Any commitments incurred before this agreement is made, or any commitment over and above the approved budget for the agreed project, shall be the responsibility of the Tenderer.
- Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd does not bind itself to accept the lowest Tender, or any Tender; Longford Volunteer Steering Group c/o Longford Community Resources Ltd will not accept responsibility for any expense or loss, which may be incurred by the Tenderer in the preparation of his/her Tender.
- Tenders can be submitted electronically to [enquiries@Longford Community Resources Ltd.ie](mailto:enquiries@LongfordCommunityResourcesLtd.ie) (attention Karen Byrne) or can be sent by registered post or recorded delivery service, or delivered by hand to Longford Community Resources Ltd, Longford Community & Enterprise Centre, Ballinalee Rd, Longford, Co Longford. Submissions must arrive not later than the 7th Sept 2007
- All prices shall be quoted in Euros and shall be inclusive of VAT.
- The contract is subject to review after two months, and may at that stage, be terminated by either side. The contract may also be terminated by Longford Community Resources Ltd if the successful Tenderer fails to maintain satisfactory standards of delivery.

APPENDIX B

Full Socio-economic Tables

DEMOGRAPHICS

Unless otherwise stated figures have been sourced from the Central Statistics Office.

Overall Population Profile

The population in Longford has increased by 10.7% to 34,391 between 2002 and 2006. 51% of the County's population is male and 49% is female.

Table 1 below shows 2002 population statistics in comparison to 2006:

Table 1

	Longford	State
Persons 2002	31,068	3,917,203
Persons 2006	34,391	4,239,848
Males 06	17,573	2,121,171
Females 06	16,818	2,118,677
Actual change 2002-2006	3,323	322,645
% Change 2002-2006	10.7	8.2

Longford's population has risen by 30% higher than the national average over the years 2002-2006.

Table 2 below shows a breakdown of population for 2006 by age:

Table 2

	Longford	%	State	%
Years				
0-4	2,611	7.59	302,252	7.12
5-9	2,448	7.12	288,325	6.8
10-14	2,404	6.99	273,872	6.46
15-19	2,368	6.89	290,257	6.84
20-24	2,387	6.94	342,475	8.08
25-29	2,519	7.32	373,078	8.80
30-34	2,413	7.02	349,361	8.24
35-39	2,434	7.08	322,105	7.60
40-44	2,347	6.82	301,329	7.11
45-49	2,279	6.63	274,745	6.48
50-54	2,181	6.34	247,068	5.83
55-59	2,062	6.00	225,328	5.31
60-64	1,612	4.69	181,727	4.23
65-69	1,215	3.53	143,396	3.38
70-74	1,153	3.35	119,152	2.81
75-79	824	2.40	92,466	4.03
80-84	656	1.91	64,884	2.82
85 and over	478	1.39	48,028	1.14
Total	34,391		4,239,848	

The breakdown of population by age shows that Longford has more people under the age of 19 than the country as a whole – 28.59% for Longford compared to 27.22% for the whole country. At the other end of the spectrum Longford has less people over 65 (12.58%) compared to the country as a whole (14.18%).

The age profile in the county for those aged less than 30 years was 43%, which is slightly less than the national average, which is 44%.

Social Class

Table 3 below shows population by social class, 2006

Table 3

Class	Longford	%	State	%
1	1,328	3.86	277,062	6.54
2	8,024	23.33	1,117,986	26.4
3	5,341	15.53	721,731	17.02
4	6,587	19.15	725,938	17.12
5	3,960	11.51	469,320	11.07
6	1,651	4.80	180,371	4.25
7	7,500	21.81	747,440	17.63
Total	34,391		4,239,848	

Longford has significantly less people in classes 1 and 2 than the state as a whole but significantly more in class 7.

Table 4 below shows the number of private households and number of persons, 2006

Table 4

Number of private households	Longford	%	State	%
Total	12,111		1,469,521	
Permanent	12,042	99.41	1,462,296	99.51
Temporary	69	0.57	7,225	0.49
Average number of persons per private household	2.79		2.81	
Number of persons in private households				
Total	33,839		4,123,318	
Permanent	33,708	99.60	4,106,753	99.60
Temporary	131	0.39	16,565	0.40
Average number of persons per private household	2.79		2.81	

There are no significant differences here between Longford and the state as a whole.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Table 5 below shows the Economic status of the population (aged 15 years and over), 2006

Table 5

	Longford	%	State	%
Total	26,928		3,375,399	
At work	14,527	53.95	1,930,042	57.18
Looking for first regular job	269	1.00	29,372	0.87
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	1,604	5.96	150,084	4.45
Student	2,400	8.91	349,596	10.36
Looking after home/family	3,441	12.78	387,014	11.47
Retired	3,305	12.27	377,927	11.20
Unable to work due to permanent sickness/disability	1,283	4.76	138,382	4.10
Other	99	0.37	12,982	0.38

Longford has slightly less people at work compared to the state as a whole and one third more people unemployed. There are proportionately less students but more people retired or looking after home or family. There are more people in Longford unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability.

Table 6 overleaf shows the unemployed (excluding first time job seekers) aged 15 years and over classified by age group, 2006.

Table 6

	Longford	%	State	%
Total	1,604		150,084	
15-19 years	85	5.30	8,291	5.52
20-24 years	240	14.96	21,993	14.65
25-34 years	416	25.94	40,278	26.84
35-44 years	302	18.83	31,388	20.91
45-54 years	343	21.38	28,348	18.88
55 years & over	218	13.59	19,791	13.91

There are no major differences here between Longford and the rest of the state.

Table 7 below shows the population 15 years and over classified by labour force, employment status and labour force participation rate.

Table 7

	Longford	%	State	%
<i>Total in labour force</i>	16,400	60.77	2,109,498	62.50
Employer or own account worker	2,826	17.2	308,221	14.61
Employee	11,648	71.0	1,616,304	76.62
Assisting relative	53	0.32	5,517	0.26
Looking for first regular job	269	1.64	29,372	1.39
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	1,604	9.78	150,084	7.11
<i>Total not in labour force</i>	10,528	39.23	1,265,901	37.5
Labour force participation rate	60.9	-	62.5	-
Total aged 15 years and over	26,928		3,375,399	

Though the percentage of people in the workforce is smaller for Longford than for the state as a whole Longford exceeds the state averages in every instance apart from the numbers of employees. This means Longford has proportionately more employers and more people who are unemployed.

Table 8 below shows the socio-economic groupings in the county and state in 2006

Table 8

	Longford	%	State	%
Employers & managers	4,123	11.99	650,552	15.34
Higher professional	1,074	3.12	245,170	2.78
Lower professional	3,317	9.64	451,865	10.66
Non manual	5,716	16.62	818,573	19.31
Manual skilled	4,079	11.86	429,779	10.14
Semi-skilled	3,104	9.03	355,441	8.38
Unskilled	1,393	4.05	159,904	3.77
Own account workers	1,406	4.09	180,500	4.26
Farmers	2,246	6.53	166,864	3.94
Agricultural workers	349	1.01	27,407	0.65
All other gainfully occupied & unknown	7,584	22.05	753,793	17.78
Total	34,391		4,239,848	

Longford has fewer employers or managers and lower professionals than the state as a whole but has a greater number of higher professionals. The county's workforce has more skilled and semi-skilled employees than the state as a whole and as might be expected there are more farmers.

DISABILITY

Table 9 below shows the number of Persons with a Disability classified by type of disability

Table 9

	Longford	%	State	%
Total persons	34,391		4,239,848	
Total persons with a disability	3,285	9.6	393,785	9.3
Type of disability				
Blindness deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment	677	20.6	76,832	19.5
A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities	1,634	49.7	177,085	45
Difficulty in learning, remembering or concentrating	907	27.6	113,133	28.7
Difficulty in dressing, bathing or getting around inside the home	796	24.2	88,318	22.4
Difficulty in going outside the home alone	1,059	32.2	117,171	29.8
Difficulty in working at job or business	1,175	35.8	140,910	35.8
Learning or intellectual disability	561	17.1	70,869	18
Psychological or emotional condition	459	14	64,955	16.5
Difficulty in participating in other activities	1,128	34	135,988	34.5
Other, including chronic illness	999	30.4	134,517	34.2
Total disabilities	9,395		1,119,778	
Persons with a disability as % of total persons		9.6		9.3

Longford has slightly more people living with a disability than the rest of the state.

VOLUNTEERING

Table 10 overleaf shows the number of Persons engaged in Volunteering classified by type of voluntary work.

Table 10

	Longford	%	State	%
Total	26,928		3,375,399	
Helping or voluntary work with a social or charitable organisation	1,666	6.2	192,752	5.7
Helping or voluntary work with a religious group or church	1,310	4.9	143,133	4.2
Helping or voluntary work with a sporting organisation	1,785	6.6	180,465	5.3
Helping or voluntary work with a political or cultural organisation	452	1.7	46,944	1.4
Any other voluntary activity	1,041	3.9	140,461	4.2
Total persons involved in one or more voluntary activity	4,805	17.8	553,255	16.4
Persons not involved in voluntary work (including not stated)	22,123	82.2	2,822,144	83.6

In comparison to the rest of the Republic, Longford has more people involved in volunteering, a percentage of 17.8 compared to a national average of 16.4 percent.

APPENDIX C

Copies of Surveys to Community and Voluntary
Groups and Volunteers

LONGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE SURVEY OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Would you like a copy of the results of this survey?

YES

NO

1	Group Name:		
2	Address:		
3	Tel:	Email:	
4	Name of contact person		

5 Please tick to indicate which of these sectors BEST describes the nature of your group **Tick**

Community-based group (a group covering a particular estate, district or townland and dealing with a variety of issues)	
Voluntary group (a single issue group dealing for example with disability or poverty)	
Church-based group (a group sponsored by or linked exclusively to a single church)	
Other (<i>please specify</i>):	

6 Complete the following table showing the number of volunteers in your group:

Volunteers	
Management Committee Members	

7 For volunteers please tick to indicate the types of activities in which they are engaged (Tick all that apply):

Activities	Tick	Activities	Tick
Caring		Management	
IT		Cleaning	
Driving		Gardening/ Building	
Catering		Youth Work	
Administration		Befriending	
Fundraising		Virtual (On-line)	
Other (<i>please specify</i>):			

8 Approximately how many hours per month would your volunteers contribute (excluding your management committee)?

Number of hours volunteered	No. of volunteers	Number of hours volunteered	No. of volunteers
1 – 2 hours		3 – 5 hours	
6 – 8 hours		9 – 11 hours	
12 – 14 hours		Over 14 hours	

9 Approximately how many hours per month would members of your Management Committee contribute?

Length of time volunteering	No. of members	Length of time volunteering	No. of members
1 – 2 hours		3 – 5 hours	
6 – 8 hours		9 – 11 hours	
12 – 14 hours		Over 14 hours	

10 What training, induction or support, if any, do you provide for volunteers?

11. Do you provide volunteers with out of pocket expenses? YES NO

12. How are volunteers recruited and selected in your group? Please tick all those that apply

Recruitment	Tick	Recruitment	Tick
Advertisement in local papers		Radio advertisement	
Word of mouth		Volunteer Centre	
Internet		Notices in shops/community centre /library etc	
Other (please specify):			

Selection	Tick	Selection	Tick
Interview		Garda Vetting (if applicable)	
References		Application Form	
Other (please specify):			

13 Please indicate what policies your group have in place? Tick all those that apply.

Equality policy		Bullying / harassment policy	
Volunteer policy		Health and safety policy	
Child protection policy			
Other (please specify):			

14 Has your group enough volunteers to enable it to carry out its work? YES NO
 Does your group have job descriptions for volunteer opportunities? YES NO

15 If your group needs more volunteers please complete the table below to indicate the number needed in each skill area.

Skill areas of volunteering	No. needed	Skill areas of volunteering	No. needed
Caring		Youth Worker	
IT		Management	
Driving		Cleaning	
Catering		Gardening / Building	
Clerical / Administration		Befriending	
Fundraising		Other (please specify):	

16 What support does your group need from the volunteer centre? Please tick all those that apply.

Supports	Tick	Comments
Help to recruit volunteers		
Policies & Procedures		
Volunteer Retention		
Training		
Other (please specify):		

17 In the next few months the Volunteer Co-ordinator will be able to assist groups with Garda vetting. Is this a service your group requires?

YES

NO

If yes, the Volunteer Co-ordinator will be in contact with you shortly.

18 Have you any further comments to make in relation to your group's experience of volunteering?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

If you would like to be registered with your volunteer centre please log on www.volunteer.ie or call 043 45555

Please return to Longford Volunteer Centre, Longford Community Resources Limited, Longford Community Enterprise Centre, Ballinalee Road, Longford.
(Stamped addressed envelope enclosed)

LONGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE
SURVEY OF VOLUNTEERS
Confidential

If you would like a copy of the results of this survey, please enclose your name and address on a separate piece of paper and return along with this questionnaire in the envelope provided.

Please indicate the following

Age Group

Under 16 16-25 26-35 36-49
 50-60 61-70 71+

Gender

Male
 Female

Employment Status

Employed Unemployed Retired Other _____

1. Are you currently a volunteer? YES NO

2. Please indicate on the table below how you learned about your current volunteering opportunity.
 (Please tick all that apply)

Recruitment	Tick	Recruitment	Tick
Advertisement in local papers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio advertisement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word of mouth/personal contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Notices in shops/community centre /library etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)			

3. Why do you volunteer? _____

4. Please tick to indicate the sector in which you are volunteering: (Tick all that apply)

Sector

Older People/Active retired Childcare Sports/recreation Residential
 Arts/Culture/Media Animals Health/Disability Social Work
 Religion/Church Based Environment Education/Literacy Youth/Children

5. Please tick to indicate the activity in which you are volunteering: (Tick all that apply)

Activity

Befriending Computers Fund-raising Office
 Mentoring Shop/Retail Information Giver Management
 Campaigning & Awareness raising Driver Phone Line Help Practical work

6. Please indicate on the table below how long you have been a volunteer (if you currently volunteer or have volunteered with more than one group then select the box appropriate to your entire experience)

Time volunteering	Tick	Time volunteering	Tick	Time volunteering	Tick
Less than 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 months - 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 – 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	6– 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please indicate in the table below how many hours a month on average you volunteer:

Number of hours volunteered	Tick	Number of hours volunteered	Tick
1 – 2 hours per month		3 – 5 hours per month	
6 – 8 hours per month		9– 11 hours per month	
12 – 14 hours per month		Over 14 years	
One off volunteering (<i>Please specify</i>)			

8. When you first became a volunteer what information/training did you receive?

9. Did you receive any form of written Guidelines? YES NO

10. What supports do you receive as a volunteer?

11. Please tick in the table below what other supports you would like as a volunteer:

Supports	Tick	Supports	Tick
Training		Mentoring	
Expenses		Recognition	
Other (<i>Please specify</i>)			

12. If you have ceased volunteering with a particular group please outline why:

13. What would enhance your experience of volunteering?

14. Have you any further comments to make in relation to your experience of volunteering?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

If you would like to be registered with your volunteer centre please log on www.volunteer.ie or call 043 45555

Please return to Longford Volunteer Centre, Longford Community Resources Limited, Longford Community Enterprise Centre, Ballinalee Road, Longford.
(Stamped addressed envelope enclosed)

APPENDIX D

List of Groups which responded to the Survey

GROUPS WHO RESPONDED TO SURVEY:

98 Memorial Hall Committee, Ballinamuck
Abbeylara Pioneers, Abbeylara
Abbeylara Rural Culture Club, Abbeylara
Abbeylara Tidy Towns, Abbeylara
Acorn Community Development Project Ltd, Longford
Ballinamuck Community Association, Ballinamuck
Ballymahon Community Group, Ballymahon
Ballymahon Community Playgroup, Ballymahon
Ballymahon Womens Group, Ballymahon
Boy's Brigade, Ballymacormack
Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, Ballymahon
Camlin Anglers, Clondra
Clondra Community Association, Clondra
Co Longford Community Games, Edgeworthstown
Co Longford Youth Service, Longford Town
Colmcille Community Centre, Aughnacliffe
Community Centre Committee, Moyne
Community Mental Health Day Centre, Longford
Cruise Bereavement, Longford Town
Cullyfad Village Enhancement, Cullyfad
Dolmen Failte Services, Granard
Dromard Community Club, Moyne
Dromard Rural Development, Moyne
Drumlish Community Centre, Drumlish
Enable Ireland, Longford Town
Ennybegs Community Centre Committee, Killoe
Family Ministry, Longford Town
Farrell Clan, Longford
Foroige, Longford
Foroige Leep, Longford
Friends of Asthma, Longford Town
Friends of Children of Chernobyl, Curry
Girls Friendly Society, Cruckawn
Global Longford Ethnic Minority Support & Advocacy Group, Longford
Granard Community Association, Granard
Hillside Club, Ballinalee
Irish Country Homes Association, Longford
Irish Wheelchair Association, Colehill
Kenagh Community Co op, Kenagh
Lanesboro Tourism Co op, Lanesboro

Lanesboro/Ballyleague Community Playground, Lanesboro
Lasra Active Age Group, Lanesboro
Leebeen Park Development Co Assoc, Aughtnaclyffe
Legion of Mary, Longford Town
Longford Agricultural Show, Longford
Longford Community Mothers, Longford Town
Longford Dyslexia Workshop, Longford Town
Longford Genealogy Centre, Longford Town
Longford Hospice Homecare, Longford Town
Longford Mental Health Association, Creenagh
Longford Scouts, Longford Town
Longford Social Services, Longford Town
Longford Society for prevention of cruelty to animals, Longford
Longford South Community Games, Longford
Longford Tidy Towns, Longford
Longford Traveller Movement, Longford Town
Longford Women's Link, Longford Town
Lough Ree Development Group, Lanesboro
Mental Health Association, Longford
Multiple Sclerosis Society, Longford
National Council for the Blind, Longford Town
Newtowncashel Tidy Towns, Newtowncashel
Parents for Parents, Longford Town
Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, Longford Town
Rainbow, Longford Town
Rathmuire Resource Centre, Granard
St Christophers Leisure Buddies Project, Longford Town
St Christophers Services Ltd, Longford Town
St Martha's Hostel, Longford
St Vincent de Paul, Longford Town
Whizzkids Drumlish Community Childcare, Drumlish

APPENDIX E

Full Schedule of responses to Survey from
Community and Voluntary Groups

Question one asked respondents to indicate which sector *BEST* describes the nature of their group. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Nature of group</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Community-based group (a group covering a particular estate, district or townland and dealing with a variety of issues)	33	46
Voluntary group (a single issue group dealing for example with disability or poverty)	17	24
Church-based group (a group sponsored by or linked exclusively to a single church)	9	13
Other (please specify): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We bring Chernobyl to Ireland for a month each year • Agricultural show • Catholic based but not exclusive. Membership is open to all who accept the idea of sobriety • Community development group • Company limited by guarantee • Day centre • Extended family group & local history • Gardai Youth Diversion Project • Genealogy service • Home visiting programme • Hostel for homeless men • Mainly elderly and marginalised • Palliative care service • Part of national organisation • Promoting sporting activities for children • Voluntary group dealing with the community • Sporting • Youth clubs in the County 		

Question two asked the 72 groups to breakdown the volunteers in their group into volunteers and management committee members.

	<i>Number of volunteers</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>
Volunteers	1426	72
Management Committee Members	352	72

Question three asked respondents to tick from a list the type of activities in which their group is engaged in. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Activities</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Fundraising	32	44	Cleaning	16	22
Management	26	36	Gardening/building	13	18
Administration	24	33	IT	9	13
Befriending	21	29	Driving	7	10
Caring	20	28	Catering	4	6
Youth work	18	25	Vitual (on-line)	1	1
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active age 60-80 • Diversion from crime/anti social behaviour • Early intervention activities for children with special needs • Education-stress management • Education • First aid • Home visiting for parents of children aged 0-5 years • Public speaking • Sports • Support eg court accompaniment for women in domestic violence • Tourism/local environment/local history • Voluntary readers for talking newspaper on a weekly basis 					

Question four asked the groups to provide the number of hours on average each volunteer (excluding their Management Committee) in their group contributed per month. The following table highlights responses made:

<i>Number of hours volunteered</i>	<i>Number of volunteers</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Number of hours volunteered</i>	<i>Number of volunteers</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>
1 – 2 hours	96	9	3 – 5 hours	147	17
6 – 8 hours	128	18	9 – 11 hours	47	7
12 – 14 hours	8	3	14 + hours	57	13

Question five asked the groups to state how many hours per month the members of their Management Committee contribute. The following table highlights responses made:

<i>Length of time volunteering</i>	<i>Number of members</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>	<i>Length of time volunteering</i>	<i>Number of members</i>	<i>Number of groups</i>
1 – 2 hours	86	16	3 – 5 hours	61	11
6 – 8 hours	28	6	9 – 11 hours	28	7
12 – 14 hours	12	4	14 + hours	40	14

Question six asked respondents to indicate what training, induction or support, if any, they provide their volunteers. The following responses were made:

- A general induction to service is done, following informal meeting and garda vetting there is first aid training then matching up with a buddy and they are supported to learn new things about their buddy
- All types of training in childcare is available at different times
- Courses, first aid, coaching etc
- Cruise training and in-service
- First aid, stewards training
- Group meeting with volunteer twice yearly
- Health and safety
- Child protection, sports coaching
- How to be a friend
- Induction and support is given to volunteer carers in the unit that they are placed in
- Informal talks/communication
- Levels 1-5 training on child protection etc including drugs, alcohol, programme development and design
- Life expenses, nothing formal
- Master and apprentice principle based on experienced person and inexperienced working together
- Meet and run through aims and objectives and child protection policy
- Meeting with staff to explain volunteers role and structure of the group
- Monthly meetings
- On the job training and support
- Pals course by HSE
- Rainbow basic and in-service
- Sharing knowledge and training in lung function
- Sharing skills
- Training is ongoing and support and first aid and various other HSE recommendations are carried out
- Training was given to readers of the talking newspaper
- Scout training
- Week long training in domestic violence, volunteers get ongoing support, ongoing training for management committee
- Work with one another to know what needs to be done

- Scheduled meetings which volunteers must attend it covers cultural background of children among other things

Question seven asked respondents 'Do you provide volunteers with out of pocket expenses? 36% (26) said yes while the remaining 64% (46) said no.

Question eight asked respondents to indicate how volunteers were recruited and selected in their group. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Advertisement in local papers	13	18
Word of mouth	45	63
Internet	3	4
Radio advertisement	4	6
Volunteer Centre	-	-
Notices in shops/community centre/library etc	12	17
Other:		
Community and Voluntary Forum	2	3
Ask people	1	1
Church	1	1
HSE-parent would be told about our group	1	1
Inserts in bulletins	1	1
Meeting every month to arrange tasks	1	1
Meetings & local notes	1	1
Ask parents of children who attend group	1	1
Recruit friends with small children	1	1
Talks	1	1

<i>Selection</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Interview	18	25
Garda Vetting	19	26
References	17	24
Application form	8	11

Other:		
Ask people we know	2	3
Home visits	1	1
We just take any volunteer who comes along	1	1
Membership on an annual basis of the club	1	1
No criteria just willingness to help	1	1
Suitability	1	1

Question nine asked respondents to tick to indicate which policies their group have in place The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Policies</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>
Equality policy	19	26
Bullying / harassment policy	18	25
Volunteer policy	17	24
Health and safety policy	34	47
Child protection policy	27	38
Other:		
Community Mothers Policy document	1	1
Children's officer	1	1
Mission statements	1	1
St Christopher's Volunteer procedure and policies and procedures	1	1
Staff absenteeism, behaviour, infection control, administration of medication, curriculum complaints, fire safety, confidentiality	1	1

Question ten asked respondents 'Has your group enough volunteers to enable it to carry out its work?' 28% (20) said yes while the remaining 72% (52) said no.

Question eleven asked 'Does your group have job descriptions for volunteer opportunities?' 15% (11) said yes while the remaining 85% (61) said no.

Question twelve presented respondents with a list and asked them to indicate how many more volunteers, if any, they would need in each skill area. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Skill area</i>	<i>No of volunteers</i>	<i>No of groups</i>	<i>Skill area</i>	<i>No of volunteers</i>	<i>No of groups</i>
Caring	25	10	Youth worker	34	10

IT	3	3	Management	38	14
Driving	14	4	Cleaning	8	8
Catering	13	4	Gardening/building	25	9
Clerical/administration	13	12	Befriending	125	12
Fundraising	55	20	Other: Coaching	1	1
Other: First aid	1	1	Other: Outdoor work	1	1
Other: Teaching activities	1	1	Other: We need people who believe children benefit from participation in healthy activities	1	1

Question thirteen asked respondents to indicate what supports, if any, their group needs from the Volunteer Centre. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made and comments:

<i>Support</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Help to recruit volunteers	38	53	-Advertising -Certain areas -One paid co-ordinator to keep the momentum up -Hard to get volunteers working with paid staff -Like everywhere we needs lots of volunteers -We invite people to join but we need to advertise -We need assistance with recruitment -We would welcome any volunteers you could help us get -As a result of small numbers we cannot undertake many activities on the games programme
Policies & Procedures	24	33	-Volunteer policy (2)
Volunteer Retention	20	28	-Retaining volunteer are as important as recruiting new ones

Training	23	32	-As and when we need it
Other: -Acknowledgement of volunteers -Any help would be welcome -Draft policies to use -Help in setting up a database of members -Help with organising activities for young pioneers which they can enjoy without alcohol -Supports may be needed at a future date and a co-ordinator for the talking newspaper -Teaching activities, supervisory			

Question fourteen asked respondents if they would need assistance with Garda vetting. 75% (54) said yes while the remaining 25% (18) said no.

Finally respondents were given the opportunity to make further comments in relation to their group's experience of volunteering. The following comments were made:

- We have an aging management committee, increased bureaucracy and the expense of being a volunteer is also a problem
- Any help would be a bonus
- Due to the nature of our service and child protection issues we do not use volunteers
- Communities are becoming more diverse so vetting will become relevant to us
- It is difficult to get new volunteers to take over the running of the committee centre
- It is difficult to get people to agree to do anything as they are too busy, have no time so the same people end up doing everything
- It is difficult to get people to commit
- First aid is so important, we need so many people to make a difference
- The group is undergoing change, we need to review services and policies
- The group meets on an ad hoc basis and the loose structure suits our needs
- There is a social aspect to the group
- It is extremely difficult to get volunteers, we can't really afford to pay people although we sometimes pay car park attendants
- It is the few older members of the centre who volunteer most of the time. We need young trained community/social workers to provide the alternative life style of the pioneers
- It would be great to have a volunteer centre in Longford which would be accessible to all based in Longford Town with some form of satellite service in the North and South of the county
- It is difficult to recruit volunteers as people have trouble with committing time and do not realise the need for volunteers and the benefits they would receive
- Male volunteer are harder to recruit; sharing information and skills are important
- It is difficult to get people on board for the management committee. The new crèche will hopefully bring about new people. It is great to see volunteers being recognised

- Many of our activities are dependent on people involving themselves. For our work to grow we need more people
- There is a great need for new blood
- Often groups are seen as a closed shop which puts people off
- Our dilemma is that parents want to be involved with activities the run but not necessarily the committee work
- Our group are finding it hard to volunteers, the main problem I see is the lack of training provided and no defined role laid out
- Volunteers numbers change yearly as some years we might need more than others. Some regulars need to take time out for various reasons
- Response for readers was good. Sometimes schedules timetables may not suit but we have produced tapes each week. I am co-ordinating the project at present as part of my week and I am committed each Wednesday when recording takes place. I could do with some help in this area
- There has been a lot of volunteers interested in the project however turnover of volunteers is high due to other commitments. Our longest volunteer and buddy match is currently 6 years. We have 25 currently involved in the project and about 100 waiting to join
- The rector deals with the garda vetting
- Volunteers are hard to find now everyone is too busy and most people will not do anything if not getting paid especially if others are getting paid for similar work
- We all love working with the children to see how they improve, many people simply do not have the time to spend
- We could avail of volunteers to help out when a staff member is sick and it is also good for a volunteer to help gain expertise in the childcare sector

APPENDIX F

Full Schedule of responses from Volunteers

Question one asked respondents ‘Are you currently a volunteer?’ 91% (89) said yes and the remaining 9% (11) said no.

Question two asked respondents to indicate on a table how they learned about their current volunteering opportunity. The table below highlights number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Word of mouth/personal contact	74	76
Advertisement in local papers	12	12
Notices in shops/community centre/library etc	9	9
Radio advertisement	4	4
Volunteer centre	3	3
Internet	1	1
Other:		
Annual membership of angling organisation	1	1
Neighbour	1	1
From my sister	1	1
Agency working alongside HSE	1	1
School	1	1
Meeting called in 1987	1	1

Question three asked ‘Why do you volunteer?’ The following responses were made:

- To give something back to the community (15)
- To help those in need (9)
- I enjoy it (6)
- I am interested in family history (4)
- Personal satisfaction (3)
- To better the community (3)
- To promote temperance (2)
- I feel the need (2)
- Its good for my community (2)
- I enjoy it and it keeps me active and useful
- I like to help my community
- I like spending time with older people
- To maintain my independence
- I love helping people
- I feel obliged to help out
- To do something good with my spare time
- To get out and about and keep in touch with people
- I get satisfaction in helping others
- I like mixing with others

- I have been a volunteer with community games for 30 years
- I want to contribute to an important area of society
- At the time there was no one else to do the job
- It supports my day job of helping to improve the quality of live for others
- Passion
- It is fun and a great way to meet and help others
- I like to feel I am giving something back to a society that has been good to me
- I like helping people and organisations
- Community interest
- To give back what I have received from others
- I love making a difference to someone
- I volunteered to gain experience in the field
- For social contact and to keep my mind active
- To get things done
- To be of service to people which I find very rewarding and fulfilling, its makes me a better person
- I like to make things better
- My community needs me
- I like working with people
- To share our faith with others; to comfort the bereaved; to assist the elderly; work at social events
- Previous involvement with a similar organisation
- To get in touch with others interested in the Legion of Mary in Longford
- New skills and friendship; therapeutic; giving of self; prevention of feeling of helplessness
- Child attends the workshop
- Initially I got involved because of personal need for information and support
- Pass the time
- To help our children
- To help get full time employment
- To spend time with the children
- My children are involved

Question four presented respondents with a list of sectors and asked them to tick to indicate which sector(s) they volunteer in. The table below highlights number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Sector</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Youth/children	29	30
Older people/active retired	26	27
Health/disability	22	22
Social work	18	18
Religion/church based	18	18
Education/literacy	16	16
Sports/recreation	15	15

Environment	15	15
Childcare	12	12
Arts/culture/media	11	11
Residential	7	7
Animals	3	3

Question five presented respondents with a list of activities and asked them to tick to indicate which activity/activities they volunteer in. The table below highlights number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Practical work	47	48
Fund-raising	32	33
Befriending	31	32
Campaigning and awareness raising	26	27
Information giver	21	21
Management	20	20
Computers	13	13
Mentoring	9	9
Driver	8	8
Office	7	7
Shop/retail	7	7
Phone Line Help	6	6

Question six asked respondents to indicate how long they have been volunteering. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Time volunteering</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Less than 6 months	4	4
7 months – 1 year	5	5
1 – 2 years	12	12
3 – 5 years	8	8
6 – 10 years	15	15
Over 10 years	51	52
No response	3	3

Question seven asked respondents to indicate how many hours a month on average they volunteer. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Number of hours volunteered</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
1 – 2 hours per month	9	9
3 – 5 hours per month	15	15
6 – 8 hours per month	27	28
9 – 11 hours per month	8	8
12 – 14 hours per month	8	8
Over 14 hours per month	14	14
No response	17	17
One of volunteering: - Family Resource Centre		

Question eight asked ‘When you first became a volunteer what information/training did you receive? The following responses were made:

- Heritage and history (4)
- Very little (2)
- Heritage and history local and international
- Guidance from previous committee members
- Training, manual, and lectures
- Training as a home help
- Some training and practical support
- Training nights
- Environmental course
- I am currently getting training for my role as volunteer on the management committee
- Two weeks of training
- Two day training with Rainbow leader
- I received training for victim support
- One week intensive course
- Relevant course
- Induction training, drug awareness, understanding, homelessness and computer training
- Information sessions and relevant training
- Received a handbook which contained all the information I needed plus I attend weekly meetings
- I had a meeting with the volunteer co-ordinator at St Christopher’s
- Support from the group
- Coaching training
- Support from other volunteers
- I already had professional training in my occupation
- Social welfare, information providers course, rural development, women and participation in community development and a diploma in computers
- Assist suicide training, fine line drug awareness, facilitation skills

- Peer help
- Informed of duty to perform

Question nine asked ‘Did you receive any form of written guidelines?’ 38% (37) said yes while 46% (45) said no and the remaining 16% (16) did not respond.

Question ten asked respondents to detail what supports they receive as a volunteer. The following responses were made:

- Help of neighbours in management of this group
- Committee and group support
- Group support
- District clinic-citizens advice
- Citizens advice
- Management and peer support, expenses
- Very little
- The support of being a branch of a larger organisation
- We have a support worker
- Encouragement and appreciation
- Support from board, chair and manager
- We are a small group that support each other in our endeavours
- Training, encouragement, mentoring and recognition
- On going support
- Going to meetings
- Colleagues at the club support each other
- At Rainbows we have good support
- Training to be on a management committee, dealing with finance, presentation and communication skills
- Regular meetings with the supervisor
- Conference support
- Supervision and daily meetings while there
- Peer support, supervision session, training
- Working with people-communication
- Support from each other
- In a voluntary group with people who share the same thoughts and goals
- Forming friendships
- Staff support
- 6 month trial period where the co-ordinator supervised and supported me
- Support from volunteers
- FAS course and meetings
- Committee support and training
- Support from the line manager
- Support from my project co-ordinator
- Advice from others

Question eleven asked respondents to tick to indicate what other supports they would like to receive as a volunteer. The table below highlights the number and percentage of responses made:

<i>Supports</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Recognition	40	41
Training	32	33
Expenses	21	21
Mentoring	10	10
Other:		
Strict guidelines	2	2
More volunteers	2	2
Help with recruitment	1	1
Christmas dinner	1	1
More support from the community	1	1
Encouragement from established volunteers	1	1
Group work support	1	1
Night out	1	1

Question twelve asked those volunteers who have ceased volunteering with a particular group to outline why. The following responses were made:

- Work commitments (2)
- Ceased when my children grew out of the group (2)
- To much time was demanded for my role in the credit union
- I am engaged in a full time job and studying so do not have the time
- Eye sight deterioration therefore I can not drive in the dark
- Health reasons
- I am retiring shortly and feel I have done my bit for Ballymahon
- To change the group
- Retired
- Returned to full time education
- Time constraints, burn out, dissolution apathy of others
- Volunteered with various groups at different times during my adult years
- Time constraints
- Felt I was being used

Question thirteen asked respondents to detail what would enhance their experience of volunteering. The following responses were made:

- More support (6)
- More volunteers (4)
- Recognition (4)

- Co-operation (3)
- More funding for the group (3)
- Money (2)
- Satisfaction
- More support from parents
- More support from statutory bodies and council employed staff
- More support networks of like minded people
- A feeling of good
- Celebrations and more training
- Dedication
- Easier access to funds-less returns and red tape
- Events where you would meet others as it lifts you
- Greater support
- Group work and more social networking
- I would love to see more people being encouraged to volunteer, perhaps more recognition from government for the work of volunteers
- Less bureaucracy
- More help
- More information
- More knowledge
- Less political correctness
- More structures and timetables
- Specific rules, regulations and control
- Time frame for commitment
- To get a certificate for training
- Training
- Travel expenses to cover my costs

Finally respondents were asked for any further comments in relation to their experience of volunteering. The following responses were made:

- I enjoy what I do (4)
- I would like some younger people to get involved (2)
- If I didn't have my own transport I would not be able to volunteer (2)
- Appreciation and thanks are not forthcoming
- Better to undertake duties in groups of two but sometimes it is difficult to find a partner
- Can be very rewarding but sometimes frustrating
- Further courses
- Get great satisfaction
- I enjoy meeting and seeing the elderly and being of help and service
- I enjoy people young and old, I have been volunteering for over 30 years
- I like to see the happy faces and healthy animals are my reward
- I find it rewarding and a lovely past time
- I get great satisfaction from it
- It can be a thankless job but rewards are there if you work hard enough for them
- I would like to be a volunteer

- I would like to see more practical work e.g. clean up of environment, rivers and less reporting and theories on same
- If it became too formalised I would give up
- If there was more awareness and incentives to attract new members
- It can be very difficult when there are no new recruits
- It is a way to get involved in your community
- It is not easy especially when you have a family but it is worthwhile
- It is very hard to get people to volunteer
- It s a great activity to get promote self satisfaction I would encourage more people to partake
- It's a worthwhile and enjoyable experience
- Too much paperwork does not make allowances for the voluntary nature of our role
- People from overseas should receive more encourage to help out in order to integrate better
- So few people are volunteering, those that do are over burdened. If a person volunteers for a few years and served on a committee they could be pressurised to remain there for years. The bulk of the work often falls on one or two people and they become stressed out due to the uneven distribution of responsibility and or work. The same few willing volunteers are targeted by too many groups
- There is a need for more volunteers through personal contact
- To be recognised would be great
- Training in team building would be useful
- It is very hard to get people involved unless it is a sporting organisation
- Volunteers are a dying breed, people today simply do not want to get involved
- Volunteering can be lonely sometimes especially when you see how funds are being managed and wasted at times
- Volunteering can become a second job if one is not careful. Is your time valued?

Profile of respondents

<i>Age group</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of responses</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of responses</i>
Under 16	5	5	16-25	2	2
26 – 35	9	9	36-49	18	18
50-60	32	33	61-70	16	16
71+	7	7	No response	9	9

<i>Gender</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of responses</i>
Male	22	22
Female	42	43
No response	34	35

<i>Employment Status</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of responses</i>	<i>Age group</i>	<i>No of responses</i>	<i>% of responses</i>
Employed	41	42	Unemployed	9	9
Retired	31	32	No response	8	8
Other:					
Student	3	3	Career break	1	1
Self employed	2	2	Housewife	3	3

APPENDIX G

Copy of Press Advertising

STUDY OF VOLUNTEERING

Longford Community and Voluntary Forum have commissioned a study of volunteering in the county. If you are a volunteer or if you represent an organisation of any kind which uses the services of volunteers we would be pleased to hear your views on questions such as:

How difficult is it to secure volunteers?

What motivates or prevents people from volunteering?

What benefits do volunteers gain from their involvement?

What could be done to encourage more people to volunteer?

A series of meetings to discuss these and other issues related to volunteering have been arranged as follows and you are invited to attend:

Longford Arms Hotel	Longford	Mon12 th November	7.30pm
Rathmuire Resource Centre	Granard	Tuesday 13 th November	7.30pm
Ballinamuck Community Hall	Ballinamuck	Wednesday 14 th November	7.30pm
Dean Egan Hall	Ballymahon	Thursday 15 th November	7.30pm
Lough Ree Arms Function Room	Lanesborough	Monday 19 th November	7.30pm
The Green	Edgeworthstown	Tuesday 20 th November	7.30pm

Rural Transport needs will also be assessed on the same evening and venues from 8.30 except in Longford Town which is excluded from the transport study. Views on both issues are welcomed and necessary.

If you wish to find out more about the meetings or about volunteering please call Karen Byrne at Longford Volunteer Centre on 043 45555 or register as a volunteer at www.volunteer.ie.



The Volunteer Audit is funded by Longford Community & Voluntary Forum. The County Transport Plan is funded by Longford Community Resources from the Dept of Transport.

APPENDIX H

Copy of Powerpoint Presentation used at
Workshops



LONGFORD VOLUNTEER CENTRE

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION





The Volunteer Audit

- Longford Volunteer Centre was set up in 2007, has received €50,000 from the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs to carryout a pilot project
- 'Valuing Volunteers' project aims to support volunteering in Longford
- The project is affiliated to Volunteer Centres Ireland





Longford Volunteer Centre

- Longford Volunteer Centre operates and is managed through Longford Community Resources Ltd
- Karen Byrne is the Volunteer Co-ordinator for Longford County
- Her role is managed by a steering committee consisting of members from Longford County Development Board, Longford Community and Voluntary Forum and Longford Community Resources Ltd





Volunteering in Longford

- County Longford has hundreds of community & voluntary groups providing vital local services
- These include: caring services, disability groups, services for children/older people, sponsoring FAS schemes, managing sports, environmental and youth services





Why we need volunteers

- State cannot or will not pay for whole range of services needed by local communities
- Volunteers enable vital local services
- Volunteers bring special skills and personal attributes
- Volunteers augment work of paid staff
- Many community and voluntary groups could not exist without support of volunteers





What do volunteers do?

- Huge range of activities: caring, driving, administrative work, environmental work, visitation, catering, fund raising, cleaning, building, befriending, IT work





Why do people volunteer?

- To help improve the quality of life in their community
- To give something back to an organisation or community which has supported them
- To help deal with an issue which personally affects them/their family
- To gain new skills which will enhance their cv
- To make new friends, help address loneliness, make better use of free time
- To increase personal confidence





What puts people off volunteering?

- Bureaucracy
- Lack of time or energy: many families have both parents working and there is an increase in lone parenting
- Costs, e.g. childcare, elderly or dependency care, travel
- Lack of information about opportunities
- Uncertainty about making approaches
- Relied on too much by a project/service





How do we/can we support volunteers?

- Introductory sessions
- Training
- Ongoing support
- Recognition
- Thanks
- Travel expenses
- Uniform and meal allowances





How do we/can we support volunteers?

- Ensuring proper policies are in place, e.g.: Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equality
- Having proper job descriptions
- Having written volunteering policy
- Having written volunteer contract including grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Using Gardai vetting procedures where necessary
- Taking up references





Issues for organisations using volunteers

- Difficulties in recruiting volunteers
- Difficulties in retaining volunteers
- Difficulties in managing or supporting volunteers
- Difficulties due to lack of time





Issues for volunteers

- Poor induction and/or training
- Poor management and support
- Little or no recognition
- Being taken for granted
- Little or no expenses





Challenges for Longford

- What can we do to attract more volunteers?
- What can we do to retain more volunteers?
- How can we improve the support on offer to volunteers?
- What new approaches or ideas can we develop for volunteering locally?





Challenges for Longford

- What specifically can the Volunteer Centre do to support community and voluntary groups and individual volunteers?
- How can we make maximum use of the new Volunteer Centre?
- How can we ensure there are effective communications between the Centre and the local community and voluntary sectors?



APPENDIX I

List of Stakeholders Contacted

Stakeholders Interviewed

1	After school club	Lisa Brady
2	Leisure Buddies a Volunteer scheme part of St Christophers Co-ordinator	Michelle
3	Attic Youth Club	Mona Considine
4	Backstage Theatre – Link in with ongoing events Manager - Backstage Theatre Farneyhoogan	Events Manager -Mona Considine
5	VEC Literacy Services	Frances Stephenson
6	LEAP	Sinead Flannagan
7	Health Promotion Officer HSE	Eddie Ward
8	Youth Group Clondra	Veronica Gorman
9	CIC Citizens Information Centre	Connie Gerrety
10	LCRL Integration Officer	Noelle Murtagh
11	Kenagh Enterprise Centre	Patricia Harrison
12	Longford Traveller Movement	Fionnula Spillane
13	Equal Development Officer	Lorne Patterson
14	Longford Women’s Link	Lorne Patterson
15	Ballymahon Day Care	Emer O’Toole
16	Girl Guides	Josephine Bourke
17	Teagasc	Ann Chapman
18	Co. Longford Youth Service	Sara Jane Jordan
19	Acorn CDP	Josephine Stoker
20	Caring and Association	Bernie Belton
21	ICA Women’s Groups	Gen Doherty
22	Co. Longford Social Services	Annette McDonald
23	St Christopher’s	Maureen Donnellan
24	Rathmuire Resource Centre	Sr Maeve Brady