



Leadership Series:  
**Developing Citizenship –  
Volunteering for Life**

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# 1. Volunteering for life

The impact of volunteering on individuals and the local and wider community

## 2. When & where did volunteering in schools begin?

- In the early 1960s, at Sevenoaks, Eton, St Paul's Way & Haverstock
- Alec Dickson – founder of VSO & CSV – recognised that not everyone could volunteer full time
- But every young citizen goes to school

- 1969 - CSV launched “School & Community kits”
- Followed by a set of pamphlets illustrating how every subject could be enriched through service
- 1996 - Speaker’s Commission on Citizenship launched by CSV
- 1998 report proposed citizenship education including practical service
- Accepted by Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett MP

### 3. What do the key words mean?

- “Volunteering” is undertaken of own free will without expectation of any reward (OED) (although soldiers are certainly rewarded)
- “Community Action” is the government’s term for its new schools programme
- “Community Service” involves people in giving help to the environment or people often voluntarily, sometimes as part of the curriculum

## 4. Where does it begin?

### a) In the family

- Children understand intuitively a sense of reciprocity and mutuality
- Critically important
- Research into Dutch people who sheltered Jews from the Nazis and those who did not, showed that all those who did had been raised in altruistic families who helped their family and the wider community

b) At school

- Sharing – infant schools develop it from day one

c) Junior schools go further

- On CSV Make a Difference Day last year pupils from Blessed Sacrament at the back of Kings Cross cleared a derelict site

## Impact?

- Enjoyed a half day out
- Discovered what a difference they can make, together, through direct action
- Raised their voices to propose an improvement plan to the owner
- Learned the importance of holding authorities to account
- Their fall back position is to write to the chairman, whose name they found on the web

d) In secondary schools the range of engagement is much broader -

- Sometimes in PHSE
- Sometimes in citizenship

Brilliant impact

## e) Service within schools

Off site projects are challenging to organise

- At Battersea Technology College CSV worked with a group of excluded students to improve the schools grounds

## Impact?

Pupils learned to:

- Measure
- Quantify
- work as a team
- to produce and maintain plants
- to enjoy school
- And attendance rose

Staff were amazed by:

- the transformation of the grounds
- the transforming impact on the pupils

Outcome?

- HM the Queen visited to officially open the garden

## **f) Long term partnerships**

- Other schools develop relationships with play groups, hospitals, parks departments, community groups, residential care homes
- After a practical task pupils may propose other opportunities, e.g. refreshing gardens, organising recreational activities
- For example, sixth formers at Francis Holland School, Clarence Gate have developed a special relationship with Westminster Children's Services
- Over two years they support a group of "looked after" young people and plan with them a week long residential camp to follow their A-levels

The impact is enormous:

- The girls learn about the lives of some of the nation's most deprived citizens
- How to work as a team
- How to raise money
- How to organise a camp
- How to work with a group of young people with quite different life experiences
- The Westminster children benefit from the friendships they develop, raised aspirations and an excellent week away

## **5. The impact on volunteers is powerful**

- Empowerment – learning about how to make things happen
- New skills and knowledge not available in the classroom
- Communications
- Resource raising
- Planning
- Team work
- Raised expectations and self confidence
- Broadened career choices
- Improved well being

## **6. Impact on the local and wider community**

- Practical help to do things which would not otherwise get done
- New ideas and approaches
- Strengthened democratic process – more committed citizens
- Reduced fear of young people
- Reduced crime

## 7. Innovative developments

a) The US has drawn on our work here and overtaken the UK

Growing research reveals the impact of curriculum related service

Where students can see the point of service, attendance increases and attainment rises

## b) In Argentina

Students in an impoverished mountain village dependent on wine making, decided to try to raise its value

With their teacher they worked on the web to learn:

- How to improve the soil
- How to improve the wine
- How to communicate the change

## Impact?

- All the group are now at university
- Previously unattainable and unaffordable
- The economy and standard of living in the village has been transformed

## 8. Conclusion

Community involvement

a) Impact on participants:

- Attendance rises
- Attainment rises
- Soft skills improve
- Well being improves
- Career choices are broadened

## b) Impact on local and broader community:

- Practical help
- Crime falls
- Democracy is strengthened
- New ideas and approaches emerge
- Reduced fear of the young

## 9. For further information...

Visit CSV's website ([www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)) or call CSV  
Education on 020 7643 1320