



Employers of the Economically Excluded?

A SKEIN Pilot Research Report

A report on employment in small voluntary and community sector organisations working with London's economically excluded.

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Executive Summary

Employers of the Economically Excluded? emerges from a research project undertaken by LVSC between 2005 and 2006 into the extent to which beneficiaries from economically excluded groups were successfully progressing into the paid workforce of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the capital, and what lessons could be learned to improve the sector's record of actively breaking the cycle of economic exclusion of these groups.

The key findings from the research are:

- London has higher levels of economic exclusion than any other region in Great Britain, with the problems faced more acute for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, people with disabilities, and those with no, or low-level, qualifications
- With relatively high levels of unemployment across the capital, and elevated levels within the groups identified as facing economic exclusion, turnover of paid staff positions is also high and the need to recruit and retain appropriately skilled staff is key to the success of the VCS
- There are particular needs for investment in skills development to meet the gaps in strategic planning, information technology, fundraising and management skills
- Against a wider picture of investment in apprenticeships in the public sector, and the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence, there is a danger the VCS may not keep pace with the skills agenda
- London's VCS demonstrates it is valuing the skills gained through training and work placement programmes, both within the sector and from outside
- VCS organisations are ideally placed to break the cycle of economic exclusion through their close links with beneficiaries
- A robust track record of engaging individuals from diverse communities is reflected across the VCS, laying firm foundations for a wider drive to employ more people experiencing economic exclusion within the sector
- However, due to issues with capacity within the sector, the key progression route offered remains volunteering rather than paid positions, with the skills gaps of individuals a real barrier to their employment within the sector.

Based on the findings of this research, *Employers of the Economically Excluded?* goes on to make the following recommendations:

- Increase accreditation of skills gained from volunteering or Board roles
- Invest in voluntary and community sector apprenticeships
- Establish a Centre for Vocational Excellence in sector skills
- Develop of an Employment Agency targeting paid work at beneficiaries.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
a. Aims of the research project	4
b. Background to the research project	4
c. Research methodology	4
d. Outcomes of the research project	5
2. London Voluntary and Community sector information	5
a. Size and diversity	5
b. Employment, training and skills needs	5
c. Personnel recruitment and retention	6
3. London demographic information	7
a. Defining “Economically Excluded”	7
b. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities	7
c. People with disabilities	8
d. People with no, or low-level, qualifications	8
4. The external context	9
a. Employee turnover and retention	9
b. Legislative changes affecting the workforce	9
c. Training and skills development programmes	9
d. The Global picture	10
5. Research analysis	10
a. Response levels to questionnaire	10
b. Summary of findings	11
c. Paid staff data	11
d. Volunteer data	12
e. Board member data	12
f. Analysis of recruitment methods across roles	13
g. Analysis of factors affecting recruitment methods across roles	14
h. Analysis of diversity across roles	15
i. Work placements	16
j. Barriers to employing from beneficiary groups	16
6. Case studies	17
a. Thames Reach Bondway: “Giving Real Opportunities for Work”	17
b. Richmond CVS: Women in Governance Programme	17
7. Recommendations	18
a. Accreditation of skills from volunteering or Board roles	18
b. Investment in apprenticeships	18
c. Centre of Vocational Excellence in voluntary sector skills	19
d. Beneficiaries Employment Agency	19
Appendix One – Questionnaire	21

1. Introduction

a. Aims of the research project

Employers of the Economically Excluded? reports on the research conducted from August 2005 to June 2006 exploring:

- i. Whether economically excluded beneficiaries in receipt of support from small community organisations engaged on the skill and employment agenda for London are employed by the sector that is supporting them and by the wider voluntary and community sector
- ii. Whether paid employment in the sector is not achieved but volunteering opportunities are taken up
- iii. Whether the sector could be doing more to employ from the pool of skills developed by the programmes they are running.

b. Background to the research project

The research conducted forms a pilot project supported through the Skills for Economic Inclusion Network (SKEIN), which works with the smallest community organisations from across London contributing to the capital's skills and employment agenda, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and European Social Fund (ESF). SKEIN is voluntary-sector-led and brings together eight Learning Hubs to offer local and regional support across several neighbouring boroughs. This pilot project complements the work of SKEIN by:

- i. Building the knowledge base on good practice in capacity building around workforce development
- ii. Identifying the economically excluded communities that need additional support and services
- iii. Informing thinking for SKEIN's work beyond 2006.

c. Research methodology

To ensure engagement with the research by a diversity of London's voluntary and community sector organisations, a range of research techniques were employed to produce the *Employers of the Economically Excluded?* report:

- i. Desk research on previous work undertaken, and contextualisation data on London's voluntary and community sector and the demography of the capital
- ii. Questionnaires to 900 groups involved with the SKEIN Hubs
- iii. Telephone and face-to-face interviews with a sample of 16 groups reflecting a geographic spread across London.

d. Outcomes of the research project

The specific outcomes from the research conducted for *Employers of the Economically Excluded* are:

- i. Indicative data on the move of beneficiaries from training and other programmes into employment in the voluntary and community sector
- ii. Indicative data on the groups still facing economic exclusion, even from the voluntary and community sector
- iii. Good practice examples, including highlights of the underlying capacity building and workforce development issues
- iv. Suggestions and recommendations for capacity building to support those moving into work in the voluntary and community sector.

2. London Voluntary and Community sector information

a. Size and diversity

- i. London is home to over 23,000 registered charities, and is a growing sector – the number of registered charities has grown by 24% in the four years prior to 2006¹.
- ii. According to a survey by the London Development Agency in 2002, the sector employed 5% of the capital's paid workforce (compared to 2.2% for the UK as a whole²), contributed over £3billion to London's GDP and had a total income approaching £12billion.
- iii. Volunteers remain the core of the services delivered by the voluntary and community sector, representing around double the number of full-time equivalent paid posts in the sector³.
- iv. Funding for the sector is diverse, with 35% coming from individual donors, 38% from the public sector, 1% from the private sector, 10% from the voluntary sector and 15% from internal sources⁴.
- v. Larger organisations are increasing their share of the total funding in the voluntary and community sector – over 65% of income is generated by around 2% of organisations⁵.
- vi. In summary, the voluntary and community sector in London is a large employer, manages and generates high levels of finance, and is engaged with cross-sector agendas to meet the needs of Londoners.

b. Employment, training and skills needs

- i. Our understanding of the employment, training and skills needs of the voluntary and community sector can be greatly enhanced through two

¹ Charity Commission

² UK Voluntary Sector Almanac (2006), National Council for Voluntary Organisations

³ As note 2

⁴ As note 2

⁵ As note 2

key studies – *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project*, completed in 1999 and focussing on London’s voluntary and community sector, and *Futureskills 2003*, offering an insight into workforce issues facing the sector based on experiences from across the UK.

- ii. *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project* identified a breakdown of paid roles within the sector, as featured in the table below:

Occupation	% of staff
Managerial	18%
Professional	3%
Associate technical or professional	40%
Project workers	9%
Administration or clerical	16%

- iii. The research also identified some key skills gaps within the sector, which they found to be increasing inefficiency and preventing organisations from fulfilling their potential. The key gaps identified are as listed in the following table:

Skill or experience gap	Respondents
Basic IT	47%
Fundraising	40%
Advanced IT	33%
Forward planning	29%

- iv. Organisations surveyed in *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project* showed a strong investment in staff training and development, with 74% spending money on training, including 36% investing in courses leading to accreditation or academic qualifications.
- v. The London experience reflected in *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project* in 1999 shows similarity with the themes emerging from *Futureskills 2003*, which also identified priority skills needs for the future including planning and organising, strategic planning, partnership skills, IT and fundraising skills – supporting the idea that *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project* findings are still relevant seven years after they were first published.

c. Personnel recruitment and retention

- i. *Futureskills 2003* identified issues with candidates having incorrect assumptions of work in the voluntary sector, combined with uncompetitive remuneration, as adversely affecting recruitment.
- ii. Research would seem to indicate that staff retention in the voluntary and community sector is good, with 59% of organisations surveyed by *The Third Sector Skills Analysis Project* reporting that no staff had left their organisations in the preceding 12 months.

- iii. Given the expansion of the voluntary sector identified in (2.a.) above, the need to both retain quality staff and find appropriately skilled workers to take on new roles, will remain a key challenge for the sector for the foreseeable future.
- iv. Voluntary and community organisations are, however, showing an increased awareness of the importance of quality marks such as Investors in People (IiP), and the impact this has on staff recruitment and retention – 40% of organisations surveyed by *Futureskills 2003* either working towards, or already having achieved, the IiP accreditation.
- v. Volunteering has also evolved to form a stronger part of the skills development agenda, reflecting the 15% of people who started volunteering to develop new skills and the 11% for whom it was connected to their work⁶. An increasing range of accreditation routes are available to recognise the skills and experience gained, including, for example, the ASDAN Certificate in Community Volunteering at Levels 1 and 2⁷.

3. London demographic information

a. Defining “Economically Excluded”

- i. This section focuses on demographic information as it relates to the communities in London principally affected by economic exclusion.
- ii. People facing economic exclusion will be either unemployed (i.e. individuals not in paid work who are available to join the labour market) or economically inactive (i.e. not in employment or fitting the definition of unemployed, including people with caring responsibilities or who are retired). “Worklessness” is used to combine both those who are unemployed and those who are economically inactive.
- iii. London faces acute issues relating to economic exclusion due to higher levels of worklessness than are experienced across other regions of Great Britain. The unemployment rate in 2005 was 7.1% in London (the highest for any region) compared to 3.4% for the South west (the lowest for any region). This again masks great variations across London, with Tower Hamlets recording unemployment of 11.3% compared to 4.1% in Richmond upon Thames⁸.

b. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities

- i. 46.4% of all the BME population of Great Britain live in London⁹, representing 30.7% of London’s population¹⁰.

⁶ National Survey on Volunteering (1997), Institute for Volunteering Research

⁷ More information on the ASDAN qualification can be found at www.asdan.org.uk

⁸ Labour Market Report, published online 28th July 2006, Office for National Statistics

⁹ Table KS06, 2001 Census, Office for National Statistics

¹⁰ Table 1.1, Labour Market Data for Local Areas by Ethnicity (2004), Office for National Statistics

- ii. Employment rates for the BME population are significantly below those of the population as a whole – in 2005, for example, the national employment level stood at 75% whilst BME employment was at less than 60%. Statistically, BME men are about twice as likely to be unemployed as white men¹¹.
- iii. Economic activity varies greatly, with some parts of some communities more affected by inactivity than others – over 70% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are inactive, for example¹².
- iv. Where individuals from London's BME communities are in employment, there is a great disparity between wages – mean weekly gross income for White individuals is £620, Asian or British Asian is £427, and for Black or Black British individuals is £417.¹³

c. People with disabilities

- i. 20% of London's population is made up of people with disabilities, who are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled Londoners. When in work, people with disabilities in London earn, on average, 20% less per hour than non-disabled Londoners¹⁴.

d. People with no, or low-level, qualifications

- i. Qualifications are a key route to economic inclusion, with the acute skills gap a pressing issue for London – 46% of jobs by 2010 will require a qualification at Level 4¹⁵ or above¹⁶.
- ii. Although the percentage of Londoners with no qualifications is slightly below the level for Great Britain as a whole (13.9% compared to 15.1%), this masks a great disparity between parts of London – Tower Hamlets, for example, has 26.6% of the local population with no qualifications¹⁷.
- iii. Londoners with Level 1 qualifications¹⁸ as their highest level of educational attainment comprise 27.8% of the population, higher than the 23.3% seen across Great Britain as a whole¹⁹.
- iv. Future prospects for qualification levels in London are also challenging, with current levels of achievement at Level 2²⁰ of Londoners by age 19 standing at 68%, compared to the national average for England of 70%. Further, the proportion of young people in London not in

¹¹ Department for Work and Pensions, Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force presentation (May 2006)

¹² Department for Work and Pensions, Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force presentation (May 2006)

¹³ Table 3, Targeting Worklessness in London (July 2006), London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce

¹⁴ Greater London Authority's Disability Equality Scheme (January 2005)

¹⁵ Academic courses at Level 4 are higher-level - this might be a degree, or a Certificate or Diploma in Higher Education

¹⁶ The London Learning and Skills Plan (March 2006), Learning and Skills Council London Region

¹⁷ Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

¹⁸ Defined as a formally recognised qualification below 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent

¹⁹ Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

²⁰ Defined as 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or an equivalent formally recognised qualification

education, employment or training (NEET) stands at 7.7%, again the highest level for any region in the country²¹.

4. The external context

a. Employee turnover and retention

- i. Research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) indicates that turnover has remained stable for at least the past three years, standing at 15.7% for the UK as a whole²².
- ii. However, the same survey demonstrates that turnover is highest in areas where unemployment is lowest – suggesting that organisations in London are likely to experience turnover rates higher than the average for the UK.
- iii. Staff turnover is a challenge for voluntary and community sector organisations given the high costs of recruitment and selection, and the costs of induction for new staff members (especially considering the skills and experience gaps identified in (2.b.) above).
- iv. The *Employee turnover and retention* report produced by the CIPD clearly identifies methods for reducing employee turnover, including: “maximise opportunities for individual employees to develop their skills and move on in their careers” – of particular interest as part of the *Employers of the Economically Excluded?* research.

b. Legislative changes affecting the workforce

- i. Recent years have seen a growth in the range of equality and discrimination legislation affecting employment, including:
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2005
 - National minimum wage
 - Age discrimination legislation
 - Legislation relating to religion, faith and sexual orientation.
- ii. Given the nature of the economically excluded groups identified in section (3) above, these legislative developments provide a clear framework for organisations to operate within to improve employment opportunities for communities experience exclusion.

c. Training and skills development programmes

- i. Skills development is an integral part of London’s wider development agenda, with the London Skills Commission’s regional skills action plan for 2005/06 including the ambition to ensure that “London’s diverse

²¹ The London Learning and Skills Plan (March 2006), Learning and Skills Council London Region

²² Recruitment, retention and turnover 2005, CIPD

communities [are] able to contribute to our global competitiveness and to benefit equally from the capital's success"²³.

- ii. Recognising the barriers to employment faced by certain groups, activities have been planned to target programmes at specific groups, including refugees, people with disabilities, those with mental health problems, migrant workers and people with basic skills needs²⁴.
- iii. Specific mention is made of the need for investment in managers and leaders in London's voluntary and community sector, building capacity with a focus on increasing the ability of the voluntary and community sector to deliver publicly procured services²⁵.
- iv. There is a need for the voluntary and community sector to benefit from the tried and tested models developed and deployed in other sectors of the economy to ensure the workforce is suitably upskilled. The London Learning and Skills Plan²⁶, for example, has a commitment to increase the number of apprenticeships in the public sector and share good practice from the NHS skills escalator model²⁷.

d. The Global picture

- i. London is increasingly competing in a global market for jobs and opportunities, placing an added burden on the voluntary and community sector to be competitive in relation to employment, skills and training opportunities.
- ii. The Government has recognised the importance of the skills agenda within the global economy, introducing the National Employer Training Programme to deliver workplace-based training to over 200,000 low-skilled employees, and expanding the number of apprenticeships from 75,000 in 1997 to over 250,000 in 2006²⁸.
- iii. This wider context is significant in informing our understanding of routes for skills development within the voluntary and community sector, through learning from the experiences of such programmes.

5. Research analysis

a. Response levels to questionnaire

- i. 900 questionnaires were distributed to voluntary and community sector organisations across London involved with a SKEIN Hub, during the period October 2005 to March 2006 – a copy of the questionnaire devised is included as Appendix One to this report.
- ii. 42 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 4.7%.

²³ World Class Skills for the Global City, London Development Agency

²⁴ As note 21

²⁵ As note 21

²⁶ The London Learning and Skills Plan (March 2006), Learning and Skills Council London Region

²⁷ A commitment to lifelong learning and individual strategies to move "up the escalator" based on changing needs within the NHS in relation to developments in service delivery

²⁸ Productivity in the UK 6: Progress and new evidence (March 2006), HM Treasury and Department for Trade & Industry

- iii. The sample size is too small to be statistically reliable, but as a pilot research project is deemed appropriate to draw initial conclusions to identify needs for further research and examination.

b. Summary of findings

- i. Organisations responding to the survey reflected the diversity of the voluntary and community sector in London – 52% are registered charities, 9.5% are pan-London, 43% work in more than one borough, and 40.5% are single-borough.
- ii. Beneficiary groups of organisations responding again reflected a broad cross-section of London's communities, including: people with mental health problems; young people and children; single parents; unemployed people; people with disabilities; homeless people; refugees and asylum seekers; local residents; and specific BME communities.
- iii. 43% of respondents employed paid staff from their beneficiary groups.
- iv. 55% of respondents engaged volunteers from their beneficiary groups.
- v. 43% of respondents employed paid staff who were beneficiaries of other programmes, such as ESF funded training courses, Springboard and the Medical Foundation.
- vi. 40% of respondents engaged volunteers who were beneficiaries of other programmes, such as RWA Mentoring Schemes, Richmond Fellowship and BESIDES.
- vii. 62% of respondents employed people from work placement schemes.

c. Paid staff data

- i. The average number of paid staff in each organisation is 3.4, though respondents ranged from 0 to 25 employees – 14% had no paid staff.
- ii. 32% of the paid staff are full-time, 67% are part-time.
- iii. 58% of employees are female, with 42% male.
- iv. 63% of paid staff are from BME groups.
- v. Respondents use the following methods for recruitment of paid staff:

Recruitment method	Respondents
Open advertisement in local press/internet	67%
Word of mouth	55%
Open advertisement in national press/internet	50%
Training and employment programmes	48%
Known individuals	48%
Open advertisement in specialist press/internet	43%
Recommended individuals	43%
Jobcentre Plus	29%
Recruitment consultants	7%

- vi. Respondents were also asked what factors determine their recruitment methods for paid staff positions, with the following results:

Factor affecting recruitment method	Respondents
Organisational policy	69%
Cost	62%
Skills needed are difficult to find	48%
To fill short-term funded work quickly	33%
Other	2%

d. Volunteer data

- i. Almost all responding organisations engaged volunteers in support of their work (93%), with the average number of volunteers per organisation being 15.4.
- ii. Respondents reported volunteers committing between 2 and 60 hours per week, with an average of 8.1 hours per week per volunteer.
- iii. 75% of volunteers are female, with 25% being male.
- iv. 52% of volunteers are from BME groups.
- v. Respondents use the following methods for recruitment of volunteers:

Recruitment method	Respondents
Word of mouth	71%
Recommended individuals	64%
Training and employment programmes	60%
Known individuals	57%
Open advertisement in local press/internet	36%
Open advertisement in specialist press/internet	24%
Open advertisement in national press/internet	21%
Jobcentre Plus	14%
Recruitment consultants	2%

- vi. Respondents were also asked what factors determine their recruitment methods for volunteers, with the following results:

Factor affecting recruitment method	Respondents
Organisational policy	64%
Cost	43%
Skills needed are difficult to find	43%
To fill short-term funded work quickly	26%
Other	2%

e. Board member data

- i. The size of Board membership again varied between responding organisations, across a range from 1 to 15 members, with the average being 6.9 members per Board.
- ii. 51% of Board members are female, with 49% male.
- iii. 58% of Board members are from BME groups, with 55% of the Boards being black-led.
- iv. Respondents use the following methods for recruitment of Board members:

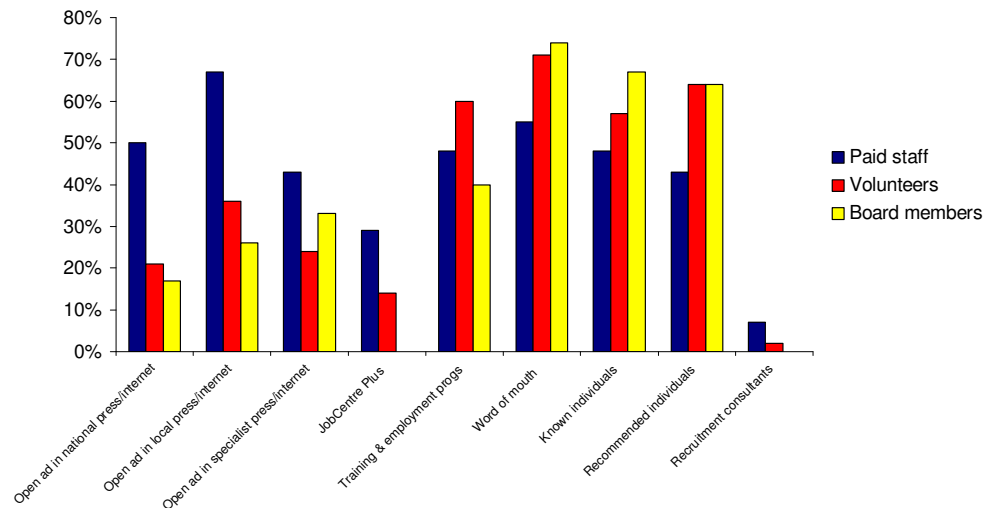
Recruitment method	Respondents
Word of mouth	74%
Known individuals	67%
Recommended individuals	64%
Training and employment programmes	40%
Open advertisement in specialist press/internet	33%
Open advertisement in local press/internet	26%
Open advertisement in national press/internet	17%
Jobcentre Plus	0%
Recruitment consultants	0%

- v. Respondents were also asked what factors determine their recruitment methods for Board members, with the following results:

Factor affecting recruitment method	Respondents
Organisational policy	71%
Skills needed are difficult to find	52%
Cost	31%
To fill short-term funded work quickly	0%
Other	0%

f. Analysis of recruitment methods across roles

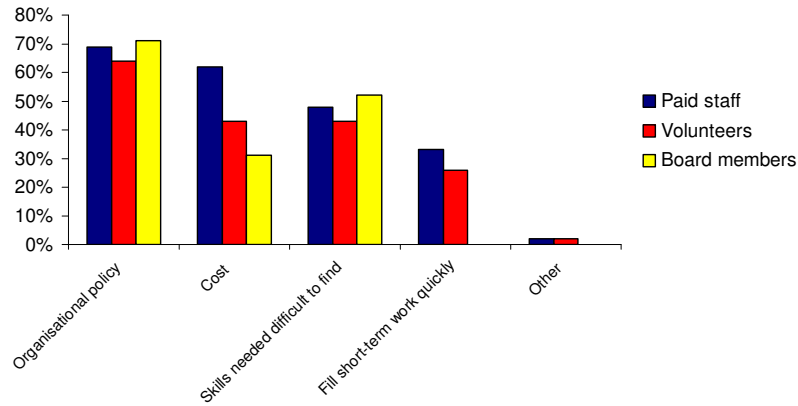
- i. The diagram below illustrates the variance in recruitment methods between paid staff, volunteer and Board member positions:



- ii. In summary, an analysis of this data indicates that:
 - Open advertisement across national, local and specialist press or internet is the preferred recruitment method for paid positions
 - There is a noticeable disparity between volunteers and paid staff in terms of being taken on following training and employment programmes, suggesting that organisations are not offering paid work to the beneficiaries completing their programmes
 - Informal networks (i.e. word of mouth and known or recommended individuals) are being used to recruit volunteers and individuals to join Boards.
- iii. The data would seem to indicate that voluntary and community sector organisations are not directly enabling economic inclusion, but instead are offering volunteering opportunities as a pathway to employment. However, given that 43% of respondents indicated they had employed people in paid positions who had completed programmes with other agencies, this could still be within the sector.

g. Analysis of factors affecting recruitment methods across roles

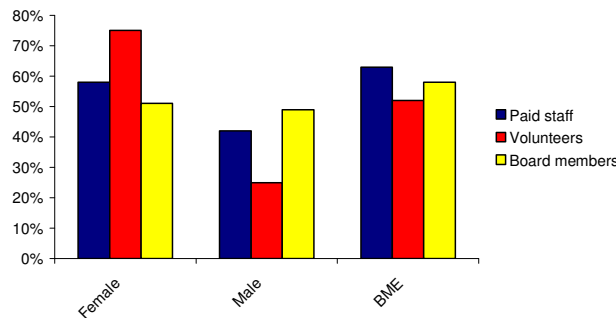
- i. The diagram below illustrates the variance in factors affecting recruitment methods between paid staff, volunteer and Board member positions:



- ii. A brief analysis of this data would indicate that the only two significant variation in factors affecting recruitment methods are:
 - Cost is a higher consideration for the recruitment of paid staff than for voluntary positions
 - Organisations are taking a positive approach to the recruitment of Board members with a longer-term, strategic view of the development of their organisations.
- iii. The data would seem to indicate that the primary factor defining the recruitment of paid staff, volunteers and Board members is organisational policy – a feature that will be explored in more depth in section (j) below, on barriers to employing from beneficiary groups.

h. Analysis of diversity across roles

- i. The diagram below illustrates the variance in diversity (in terms of gender and ethnicity) between paid staff, volunteer and Board member positions:



- ii. A snapshot analysis of this data would appear to indicate that:
 - The voluntary and community sector has a strong record of engaging individuals from BME communities in paid and voluntary

positions, with levels higher than in the population of London as a whole (where BME communities make up 30.7% of the population)

- There is an imbalance in relation to gender, with males under-represented in the workforce (paid and voluntary) of the sector
 - The most significant variation is in relation to volunteering opportunities, where there are three times more females involved than males.
- iii. The data would therefore seem to indicate a positive approach to diversity within the voluntary and community sector when applied to certain sections of society affected by economic exclusion (namely BME communities), which could form a strong foundation for exploring the greater involvement of other beneficiary groups in employment.

i. Work placements

- i. Of the 62% of respondents who take on staff from work experience placements, 45% take people from their own programmes, 48% from other programmes, and 17% from paid intermediate labour market (ILM) schemes.
- ii. The 38% of organisations not using placements were asked to identify the barriers, which are summarised in the following table:

Barrier preventing using placements	Respondents
Time	69%
Cost	50%
Space	31%
Police checks	31%
Skills	0%
Other	0%

- iii. The data indicates that issues relating to organisational capacity are the main barriers to taking on staff from work experience placements, rather than any significant policy or cultural attitudes.
- iv. The learning that can be gained from skills development programmes in other sectors (as highlighted in sections (4.c.) and (4.d.) above) is therefore vital to increasing the range of work placement opportunities within the voluntary and community sector, which will be explored in more depth in section (7) below.

j. Barriers to employing from beneficiary groups

- i. Organisations who identified barriers to employing staff from their beneficiary groups were asked to specify the issues involved, with the table below illustrating the responses:

Barrier to employing staff from beneficiary group	Respondents
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Skills	26%
Organisational policy	10%
Short-term contracts	10%
Access to beneficiary groups	5%
Other	12%

- ii. Respondents indicating “other” specified barriers including:
 - Difficulties in employing people with mental health problems, such as high levels of absence and inconsistent performance
 - Difficulties in employing elderly people
 - Lack of commitment
 - Worries about “nepotism” and potential corruption
 - Small number of staff so vacancies rarely arise
 - Beneficiaries seeing the job as a bridge to further “mainstream” employment rather than a permanent position.
- iii. The data clearly indicates that the overriding barrier to employing staff from beneficiary groups is the skills gap, the key issue to be addressed if the voluntary and community sector are to be enabled to actively become employers of the economically excluded.

6. Case studies

a. Thames Reach Bondway: “Giving Real Opportunities for Work”

- i. The homelessness charity Thames Reach Bondway established the “Giving Real Opportunities for Work” (Grow) programme in 2005, with the target of former beneficiaries making up 10% of the workforce within a two year period.
- ii. Grow has developed traineeship opportunities which will enable beneficiaries, over a period of 9 months, to develop or enhance skills for office environments, planning, and supporting and training people affected by homelessness.
- iii. Chief Executive of Thames Reach Bondway, Jeremy Swain, reports: “Someone who was homeless can not only empathise with current service users, but also act as an inspiration to them. They see they are being dealt with by someone who is skilled, trained and articulate, and yet was in the same position they now find themselves in.”²⁹
- iv. The Grow scheme is a model for the positive involvement of beneficiaries to overcome economic exclusion, whilst also increasing the efficacy and relevance of services offered to future beneficiaries.

b. Richmond CVS: Women in Governance Programme

²⁹ Ex-service users ‘add value’ as staff, Third Sector (12th April 2006), article by Graham Willgross

- i. Richmond CVS has been running its Women in Governance (WinG) programme since 2003 across the boroughs of Richmond, Kingston and Merton to empower women from socially and economically excluded communities to complete training and take on roles as Board members across the public, voluntary and community sectors³⁰.
- ii. WinG offers the beneficiaries accredited training at Levels 1, 2 and 3 through the Open College Network, focussing on the social, vocational and practical skills they will need to be effective representatives at Board level.
- iii. WinG has developed training materials in community languages and accessible formats, and adapted the training programme to cater for individuals from diverse communities – including migrant workers, individuals with complex disabilities and those with no (or little) former experience of education, training or employment.
- iv. The WinG model offers an insight into the effectiveness of equipping people in voluntary roles with the accreditation of their skills to empower them in their roles and highlight pathways for progression into paid employment where appropriate.

7. Recommendations

a. Accreditation of skills from volunteering or Board roles

- i. Given the high level of involvement of volunteers and Board members within the sector, and the willingness of organisations to take on people on work placement schemes, an opportunity to gain accreditation of the skills developed could bolster progression routes into paid employment.
- ii. By mapping the existing provision of accredited learning for the vocational skills and experiences of those in voluntary positions, a clear picture of the qualifications could be developed, and gaps filled through the development of new accreditation routes as appropriate.
- iii. Data indicates that a high percentage of volunteers are looking to improve their skills, and volunteering is recognised as a strong route into employment. By offering more accreditation opportunities, the voluntary and community sector could address the issues related to London's skills and qualification gap compared to other regions, both for the benefit of improving skill levels within the sector and the wider economy.
- iv. Further, as this research has demonstrated a high involvement of individuals from economically excluded communities in volunteering, this development would be meeting the skills needs of the communities most in need.

b. Investment in apprenticeships

³⁰ More information on WinG can be found at www.richmondcvcs.org.uk

- i. As identified in section (2.c.), learning can be gained from the approaches taken in other sectors, most notably through the development of apprenticeships within the sector.
- ii. Organisational capacity issues have been identified as key barriers to taking on beneficiaries, but with appropriate resourcing organisations could be equipped to take on apprentices and deliver the vocational learning that is key to their progression into paid work opportunities.
- iii. Further research is needed into the successes and challenges inherent in the apprenticeship schemes funded by the Learning and Skills Council for London in the public sector, with a feasibility study into how these can be applied to the unique environment of the voluntary and community sector.

c. Centre of Vocational Excellence in voluntary sector skills

- i. The London Learning and Skills Plan clearly identifies the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) as a key component of skills development within the capital, including cross-sectoral CoVEs in areas such as entrepreneurship³¹.
- ii. As the voluntary and community sector straddles so many skills areas (due to the diverse nature of work undertaken by the sector, and the range of roles available for people to take on), there is a pressing need to recognise the unique skills and experience mix needed for a successful career in the voluntary and community sector.
- iii. The establishment and resourcing of a CoVE for voluntary sector skills could meet the skills gaps identified in section (2.b.) of this report, as well as acting as a central point of excellence in the active promotion of the accreditation routes identified in section (7.a.) above.

d. Beneficiaries Employment Agency

- i. As organisations identify lack of paid job opportunities within their own organisations as a barrier to employing beneficiaries, and the data indicates that some organisations are taking on beneficiaries completing training or skills development programmes with other voluntary and community sector organisations, a sector-specific employment agency could be established to address this.
- ii. The recruitment method data indicates organisations are using open advertisement through appropriate media and intermediaries such as Jobcentre Plus to identify suitable candidates for paid work, though as there are no media outlets targeted at beneficiaries of other organisations this puts those beneficiaries at a disadvantage.
- iii. Through the creation of an online portal where beneficiaries completing training or skills development programmes within the voluntary and

³¹ London Learning and Skills Plan (March 2006), Learning and Skills Council London Region

community sector could register their interest in paid work, and be matched to employment opportunities within the sector, the issues relating to cost and finding people with appropriate skills to take on paid positions could be addressed.

- iv. Together with establishing a clear pathway out of economic exclusion, the voluntary and community sector could benefit from retaining individuals who have developed the skills and experience relevant for their successful achievement of workplace objectives within the sector.

Appendix One – Questionnaire



The voluntary and community sector – employers of the economically excluded?

This questionnaire has been sent to you as a member of the SKEIN project. The research looks at whether the sector is able to employ people from the groups that it works with.

The questionnaire should only take 15 minutes to complete. All answers will be treated in confidence and the report will not refer to specific projects without prior consent.


If you would like to discuss this work please contact Elizabeth Balgobin, Chief Executive, London Voluntary Service Council. Thank you for your time.

Please return this form by email to (name) by (date)

CONFIDENTIAL

About your organisation			
1	<p>Organisation name:</p> <p>Registered charity? Yes/No (delete as applicable)</p>		
2	Address:		
3	Telephone number:		
4	Contact name:		
5	Contact email address:		
6	Borough(s) in which organisation operates:		
7	Target group(s) (e.g. women, Somali, disability):		
About your staff			
8	Number of paid staff:		
9	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Number of full-time staff:</td> <td>Number of part-time staff:</td> </tr> </table>	Number of full-time staff:	Number of part-time staff:
Number of full-time staff:	Number of part-time staff:		
10	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Number of women:</td> <td>Number of men:</td> </tr> </table>	Number of women:	Number of men:
Number of women:	Number of men:		
11	<p>Number of staff from ethnic minorities:</p> <p>Please describe which ethnic group(s) they are from:</p>		

12	<p>Were any paid employees previous beneficiaries of your programme (delete as applicable)?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
13	<p>Were any paid employees previous beneficiaries of another programme (delete as applicable)?</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Please specify which, if known:</p>		
About your volunteers			
14	Number of volunteers working for your organisation:		
15	Average number of hours a week worked by volunteers:		
16	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Number of women:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Number of men:</td> </tr> </table>	Number of women:	Number of men:
Number of women:	Number of men:		
17	<p>Number of volunteers from ethnic minorities:</p> <p>Please describe which ethnic group(s) they are from:</p>		
18	<p>Were any volunteers beneficiaries of your programme (delete as applicable)?</p> <p>Yes/No</p>		
19	<p>Were any volunteers beneficiaries of another programme (delete as applicable)?</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Please specify which, if known:</p>		

About your board		
20	How many board members does your organisation have?	
21	Number of women:	Number of men:
22	Number of board members from ethnic minorities: Please describe which ethnic group(s) they are from:	
23	Would you describe your organisation as black-led (majority of the board are from a BME group)? Yes/No	
About your recruitment practices		
24	How do you recruit to paid posts (please tick all boxes that apply)? 	
	a) open advertisement in national press/on internet	
	b) open advertisement in local press/on internet	
	c) open advertisement in specialist press/on internet please specify media used:	
	d) through Jobcentre Plus	
	e) through training and employment projects and programmes (including your own)	
	f) through word of mouth	

	g) known individuals you have worked with before	
	h) known individuals recommended to you	
	i) recruitment consultants	
25	How do you recruit volunteers (please tick all boxes that apply)? ↓	
	a) open advertisement in national press/on internet	
	b) open advertisement in local press/on internet	
	c) open advertisement in specialist press/on internet please specify media used:	
	d) through Jobcentre Plus	
	e) through training and employment projects and programmes (including your own)	
	f) through word of mouth	
	g) known individuals you have worked with before	
	h) known individuals recommended to you	
	i) recruitment consultants	
26	How do you recruit board members (please tick all boxes that apply)? ↓	
	a) open advertisement in national press/on internet	
	b) open advertisement in local press/on internet	
	c) open advertisement in specialist press/on internet please specify media used:	

	d) through training and employment projects and programmes (including your own)			
	e) through word of mouth			
	f) known individuals you have worked with before			
	g) known individuals recommended to you			
	h) recruitment consultants			
27	What factors determine your recruitment methods (tick all boxes that apply)?	Paid staff ↓	Volunteers ↓	Board ↓
	a) organisational policy			
	b) cost			
	c) skills needed are difficult to find			
	d) to fill short-term funded project work quickly			
	e) other - please describe:			
28	Do you take on work experience placements (please tick all that apply)? ↓			
	a) from your own programme			
	b) from other programmes			
	c) from paid intermediate labour market (ILM) schemes			
	d) no (go to question 33)			
29	If no, what are the barriers preventing you from taking placements (please tick all that apply)? ↓			
	a) cost			

	b) skills - please describe:	
	c) not enough time to support them	
	d) not enough space	
	e) police check needed	
	f) other – please describe:	
30	What are the main barriers to employing staff from your beneficiary groups (please tick all that apply)? ↓	
	a) organisational policy	
	b) skills - please describe:	
	c) short-term contracts	
	d) access to beneficiary groups	
	e) other – please describe:	

31	Please tell us about any good or bad examples of employing from beneficiary groups of which you are aware:
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32	Please tell us about any good or bad examples of organisational recruitment of which you are aware:
33	Would you be willing to be interviewed about issues raised in this questionnaire? Yes/No If yes, would you prefer to be interviewed: a) on the phone b) face to face

Thank you