

# **LONG LEARN ACTIVE LEARNING MATERIALS**

**FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN**

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

**LOCAL LEARNING PROVIDERS**

**AND**

**EVERYONE AND EVERY ORGANISATION WITH AN INTEREST IN CREATING  
STABLE, VIBRANT AND PROSPEROUS LEARNING CITIES, TOWNS AND  
REGIONS**

## **Chapter 7 Session 7.4:**

### **Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city: Mobilising the people**

*'one of the most important indicators of successful learning cities and regions is the extent to which their citizens participate in active citizenship programmes that enhance community living, learning and social cohesion'*

**From 'Learning Cities. Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government' (Norman Longworth)**

## Chapter 7 Session 7.4:

# Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city: Mobilising the people

**Session outline:** Most commentators on the nature of a lifelong learning society within a learning city or region believe that active participation in the life and growth of the community is one of its most defining characteristics. This lesson therefore presents a number of Case Studies, and best practices of active citizenship and volunteering in action. A wide range of assignments and exercises engage learners in the better understanding of a phenomenon that has grown more in some cities than in others. The session ends with a round-up of all the actions that cities and regions can take to improve their performance in mobilising the talents, skills, competences, experiences and knowledge of their citizens for the common good. 16 assignments backed by innovative learning approaches

### Guidelines for using this Active Learning session

#### Goals

The creation of learning cities and regions is in all our interests. It promotes social stability, encourages wealth creation, and enables citizens to fulfil their potential, their dreams and their ambitions. It is a survival strategy for our future, and that of our children and grandchildren. But it won't happen unless all of us play our part in making it so. It won't be a simple transition process, to be put into practice by someone else in the local authority. That means that we all, especially local government managers, professionals and staff, need to know and understand more about what it is, why it's important and what the major issues and opportunities are. There are many of them. These sessions have been written to enable each of us to increase our understanding and knowledge of those issues and opportunities. Each one, and there are 57 of them, takes a different theme and offers the learner new insights.

#### Learning approach

This is an Active Learning session. Lifelong Learning has taught us that people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning. We have therefore given the ownership of the learning over to you, the learner. As well as presenting new concepts in the assignments and exercises, we draw upon your experience, creativity, imagination and knowledge so that you can better understand the subject matter, and will be better able and more motivated to act upon it. You may, or may not, have a learning leader to help organise the groups, and to bring several learners together into discussion groups and sessions. That will certainly make it easier. We all have different learning styles – but we can also all learn from each other. That is why this session, like all the others, recommends a mixture of individual, small group and large group work, so that ideas and experiences and understandings can be bounced around people. Above all you are urged to make this an enjoyable experience. Learning can be fun. It's up to you to make it so.

#### Learning Organisation

You will find that the session is divided into 2 main parts

- ✓ **The Learning Space:** A set of assignments that will unlock the brain and involve learners in practical discussions and exercises leading to a greater understanding of the issue
- ✓ **The Learning Kitbag:** A set of source learning materials that provide additional information, charts, diagrams, case studies etc to stimulate further insights.

While each session could be used individually as a self-learning module, it is preferable if there is a learning leader to organise small and large group discussions and to act as a focal point. This can be a departmental manager, a staff member appointed to perform that task, or a professional educator from inside or outside of the organisation. Assignments may be studied on site, or set as preparation for group discussions in the workplace or at a learning provider.

The whole course can be incorporated into a continuous professional development programme in the workplace, or taught separately at a school, college, community centre or university. It takes its provenance, and its inspiration, from the book:

**Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government**  
By Norman Longworth, published by Taylor and Francis ISBN 10 0 415 37175 9

Learners taking the course are recommended to obtain this book either from Amazon.com or from the publishers at [http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping\\_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth](http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth)

### Target Audiences

The session will be suitable for those who wish to improve their understanding of the session title's theme, in order to help influence the city, town or region's response to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This includes:

- Elected representatives and Mayoral staff
- Managers, Professionals and staff from all departments in local government as part of a continuous development programme
- Community and Voluntary organisation leaders
- Educators at all levels in local and regional stakeholder organisations, including schools, universities, colleges and workplaces
- Industrialists and Business people as stakeholders in the local authority
- All Citizens with an interest in the development of their community
- Students in universities, adult education institutions and teacher training establishments

### Further Reading

Learning Leaders wishing to update themselves on the subject matter of this module will find the following additional references useful.

- 'Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21<sup>st</sup> century Education' by Longworth, (Taylor and Francis, Abingdon) [http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping\\_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth](http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth)
- 'The Local and Regional Dimension of Lifelong Learning' EC Policy Document found on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/poledu/tels.pdf>

**Ideas for treatment particular to this session:** *For seminars and courses with several participants it is suggested that assignments 1 and 2 are completed as an exercise for individuals with the answers debated in open session afterwards, facilitated by a learning leader. Assignments 3 to 13 may be completed in small groups of 2 or 3 people again with the results discussed after completion. Some of these, and particularly assignment 12, are particularly creative and can be run as a competition between different groups. Assignments 14 and 16 are better completed in individual mode but 15 is again a small group exercise – you may wish to change the people working together to enable a mix of ideas, experiences and opinions. The last assignment should provide the feedback that will enable you to improve the session next time round.*

**For *self-learning individuals* all assignments will be individual efforts but try to find someone with whom you can discuss your answers and opinions either by email or face to face. In this way you can enrich the learning experience by experiencing other viewpoints.**

## The Learning Space

**Assignment 0:** These learning materials derive from, and extend, the concepts and ideas in ‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.’ Reading pages 153 to 160 of this valuable book before carrying out these assignments would provide an excellent introduction to the session, and strengthen learning.

**Assignment 1:** Write down here what you understand by the term ‘Active Citizenship’ and whether you think it to be a desirable thing.

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**Assignment 2:** Write down a number of activities which happen in your city and which you would put under that heading. Say who/what does this.

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**Assignment 3:** Discuss your observations with others

**Assignment 4:** Actionsheet 1A in the learning kitbag below is a case study from France. Please read it and then answer the questions on Actionsheet 1B.

**Assignment 5:** Actionsheet 2 in the kitbag is an example of a short-term volunteering commitment – please read this and answer questions 1 to 5 below it.

**Assignment 6:** Actionsheet 3 in the kitbag is an example from Business and Industry in the community. Please this and answer the questions on the same Actionsheet,

**Assignment 7:** Please write down your personal reactions to these 3 Case Studies below. What have you learned from them? How much are they part of your city’s culture etc.

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**Assignment 8:** Discuss with others your answers to the questions and exercises and your personal observations above.

**Assignment 9:** Actionsheet 4 in the learning kitbag is the Universal Declaration on Volunteering produced by the International Association for Volunteering Effort. Pleased through the two pages and complete the questions and exercises embedded in them up to and including question/exercise 6 .

**Assignment 10:** How closely do you think that your city or region matches up to the ideals mentioned in the declaration?

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**Assignment 11.** Discuss the Actions you have recommended and your personal observations on the declaration with others.

**Assignment 12:** Now complete exercise 8 on the same Actionsheet, Do it with other people. Make it creative and meaningful while at the same time attractive to potential volunteers.

**Assignment 13** Show your Actionsheet to other groups and people and ask them to comment on it. Improve it on the basis of their comments. If the opportunity arises present it to city or regional management.

**Assignment 14:** Actionsheets 5A and B in the learning kitbag comprises 3 more case studies of volunteering from different standpoints. Say how they differ from each other below and what you have learned from them.

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**Assignment 15:** Actionsheets 6A and B in the kitbag are a distillation of best practises in volunteering organisation from a number of cities and regions. Say whether or nor your own city or region carries them out and then discuss with others how your city or region can improve its own performance in the area of volunteering and active citizenship

**Assignment 16:** Use the web to discover how those cities at the forefront of volunteering are organising and mobilising the talents at their disposal. You may wish to start with the example given in the 'Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities' book of Volunteering Queensland.

**Assignment 17:** This completes this session but not hopefully your need for knowledge on this important subject. You are invited to complete the diagram on the next page by ticking the relevant box.

## LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE - YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

|    |   | High | Enough to get by | Not enough | None | Session                  |
|----|---|------|------------------|------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Consultation methods and levels   |      |                  |            |      | 7.1, 7.2                 |
| 2  | Characteristics of a Learning Organisation                                  |      |                  |            |      | 2.3                      |
| 3  | Your city as a learning organisation  |      |                  |            |      | 2.4                      |
| 4  | Skills and competences for learning cities and regions                      |      |                  |            |      | 1.6                      |
| 5  | The city as an ideopolis  |      |                  |            |      | 1.5                      |
| 6  | Learning Communities in all their senses                                    |      |                  |            |      | 2.5                      |
| 7  | Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities                                     |      |                  |            |      | 2.6                      |
| 8  | Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture                        |      |                  |            |      | 3.3                      |
| 9  | Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:                    |      |                  |            |      | 3.2                      |
| 10 | Leadership in the Learning City/Region:                                     |      |                  |            |      | 3.4                      |
| 11 | Tools for measuring city and region performance                             |      |                  |            |      | 3.1,4.1,4.2, 4.3,4.4,4.5 |
| 12 | Lifelong Learning as wealth creator   |      |                  |            |      | 5.3, 1.5,2.3             |
| 13 | Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits                    |      |                  |            |      | 5.4,5.5,5.6, 5.7,5.8,5.9 |
| 14 | Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?                       |      |                  |            |      | 6.1                      |
| 14 | Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region                       |      |                  |            |      | 6.2, 8.4                 |
| 15 | Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region             |      |                  |            |      | 6.3                      |
| 16 | Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region         |      |                  |            |      | 6.4                      |
| 17 | Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city                        |      |                  |            |      | 6.5, 8.5                 |
| 18 | Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world |      |                  |            |      | 6.6                      |
| 19 | Family Learning   |      |                  |            |      | 6.7                      |
| 20 | The power of partnerships   |      |                  |            |      | 6.8                      |
| 21 | Using Technology in the learning city                                       |      |                  |            |      | 7.3                      |
| 22 | Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city                    |      |                  |            |      | 7.4                      |
| 23 | Mentoring in the learning city and region                                   |      |                  |            |      | 7.5                      |
| 24 | Resources for the Learning City and region                                  |      |                  |            |      | 7.6                      |
| 25 | Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions           |      |                  |            |      | 8.1                      |
| 26 | Internationalising Learning City Networks                                   |      |                  |            |      | 8.2, 8.3                 |
| 27 | International projects as learning city stimulators                         |      |                  |            |      | 8.4, 8.5                 |
| 28 | Two-way profiting from international cooperation                            |      |                  |            |      | 8.6                      |
| 29 | Organisational issues in the learning city and region                       |      |                  |            |      | 9.2                      |
| 30 | Enabling issues in the learning city and region                             |      |                  |            |      | 9.3                      |
| 31 | Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions                          |      |                  |            |      | 9.4                      |
| 32 | Practical Actions to become a learning city                                 |      |                  |            |      | 9.1, 1.4                 |
| 33 | Learning Cities for Elected Representatives (Councillors                    |      |                  |            |      | 4.6                      |
| 34 | Individuals as learners   |      |                  |            |      | 5.1,5.2,6.7              |
| 35 | Change, society and the city/region   |      |                  |            |      | 1.1, 1.2                 |
| 36 | Learning City Domains   |      |                  |            |      | 1.3                      |
| 37 | Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions                        |      |                  |            |      | 4.2,4.3, 4.4             |
| 38 | Towards true Learning Societies   |      |                  |            |      | 2.2                      |
| 39 | Defining Learning Cities and Regions  |      |                  |            |      | 2.1                      |

All sessions shown in the last column follow the progress of the book **‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government’** by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – [www.tandf.co.uk/books/](http://www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9, and add new dimensions. They are downloadable from [www.longlearn.org.uk](http://www.longlearn.org.uk)

**Assignment 18:** On the lines below please put your personal reactions to working on this session, based on how much you have learned, how much you have worked creatively and how your ideas have developed as a result.

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## Chapter 7 Session 7.4

**The**

**LEARNING**

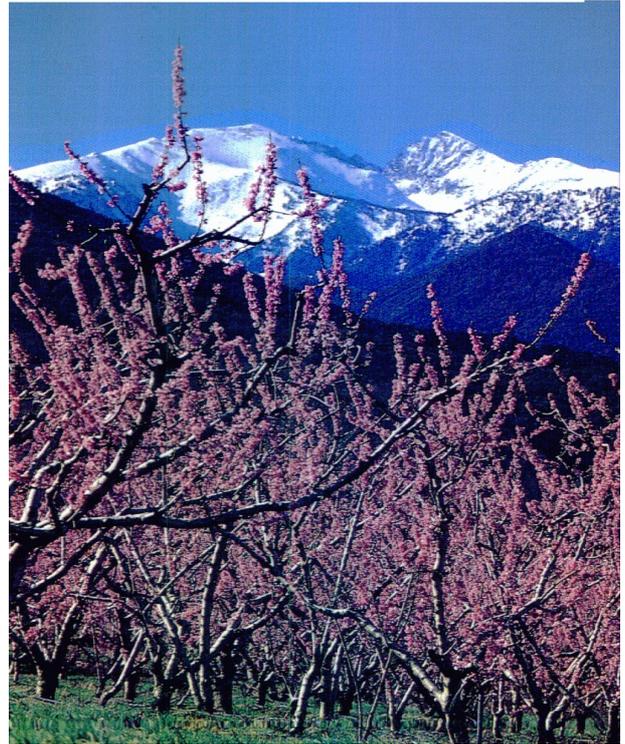
**KITBAG**

## Actionsheet 1A - A Case Study from France

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**Eus – A village perché in France**



**Mount Canigou – sacred mountain of the Catalans**

Extract From 'Learning Cities from a Learning Century'

'I live in a particularly beautiful area of Southern France. My village of some 300 souls is one of those villages perchés and one of the 100 most beautiful villages in France. The view from my office opens out across the valley onto the Canigou, a 9000 foot mountain, snow-capped for 10 months of the year. In the foreground are peach, apricots, almond, cherry and nectarine trees which, during blossom time, form a rich carpet of pink, white and green on which, it seems, one could float into El Dorado. Prades, the nearest town, comprises about 7000 inhabitants. Its secondary school and college are fed by the families of the town and the many villages around. On its curriculum at all levels are languages, including English and German, Biology, Music, Geography, Mathematics, as well as a host of other subjects.

I am not the only British resident of this paradise. Among our small community of 100 people are a much-travelled world-class biologist who was secretary to the Prince of Wales environmental trust, a former teacher trainer in geography and environmental studies, a mathematics teacher who has taken early retirement, 3 English as a foreign language teachers, 2 former Opera singers also trained in music teaching, a former dietician and a former professor of German. These are just the skills I know about. All of us also have personal and social skills and competences in such things as sport, cuisine, public speaking, hobbies and pastimes.

The application of logic seems to point to the marriage of these talents with the schoolchildren who might benefit from them, enriching their learning world with the stories, adventures and experiences of those who have personal immersion in the subject, and from time to time giving the teachers a rest from the stress of the school-day. And if asked, all of those people would be happy to devote a few hours a week, a month or a year to making their knowledge and assistance available. But of course we have not been asked. We are seen as a threat rather than a means of enriching the education of the children, and I am not aware of any school which has begun to explore the wealth of human talent and expertise in its own community.'

## Actionsheet 1B: Some Exercises

The author says that all these people could enrich the education of the children. Fill in the boxes below with ten examples of how this might be achieved.

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2. Why do you think they are seen as a threat \_\_\_\_\_

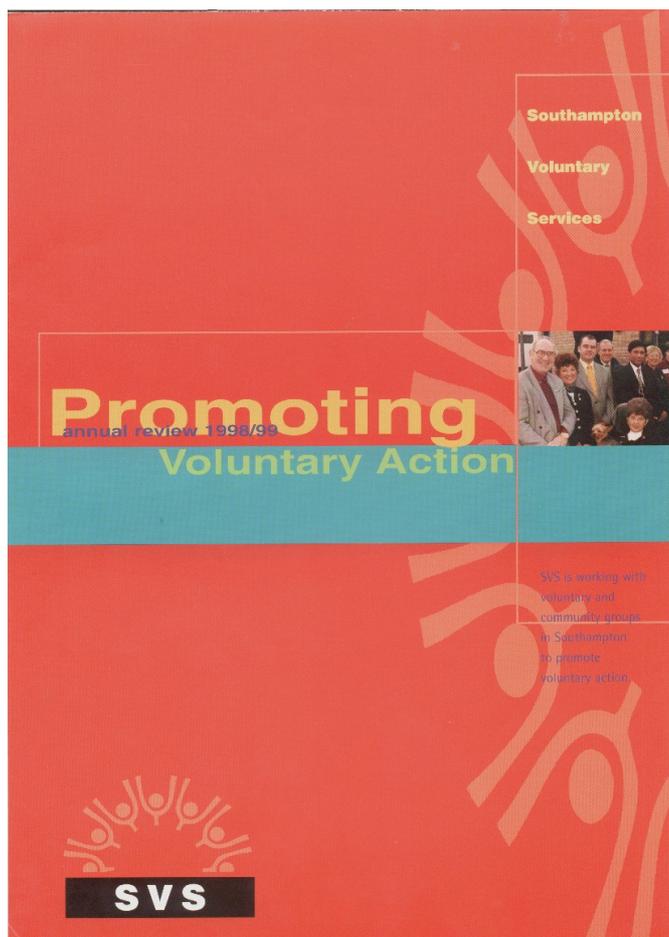
3. If this idea catches on, how would it change the job of the teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Think of your own workplace. Make a list of ten of the personal skills, competencies, knowledge etc that exists there that could be useful in and out of the curriculum

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5. Has anyone ever tried to organise these skills for the good of a school or other educational place? Y/N

## Actionsheet 2A - Community Service Volunteers – a short term commitment to volunteering



In another national project organized by the British charity 'Community Service Volunteers', budding contributors were invited to join the 'Yellow Pages Make a Difference Day.' The Yellow Pages refers to the sponsor of the event, being a subsidiary company of British Telecom. As the title indicates this was a day event to encourage participation in community improvement projects, and followed a successful British television programme describing such work. It provided an opportunity for those who may not want to make a long-term commitment to contribute for a defined period of time. Participants were invited to look around the local community to see what needs to be done. They were encouraged to make this a fun event with a defined outcome - the building of a community shelter or the painting of an old person's house. They were encouraged to join or gather together a group and divide out the tasks of making the outcome happen - one person would be responsible for publicity, another for fund-raising and obtaining sponsors, another for recruiting experts etc.

Each year on 'Make a difference day' the Community Service Volunteers organization provides the publicity leaflets, recruits celebrities to help locally (a good way of motivating people), gives hints on how to volunteer and make things happen, creates a database of projects, approaches national sponsors, encourages national and

local media support and in general markets the idea to both organizations and people. It is presented as a fun day out, meeting new people, learning new skills, and accomplishing something which would not otherwise be done.

Make a Difference project examples include a group from Reading, in which 30 employee volunteers packed up boxes of baby clothes for Bosnia. They achieved 1500 boxes in 6 hours on the premise that the 'next person to look in that box would be a Bosnian mum'. In another project a group of 5-8 year olds set out to recruit people to reclaim an inner-city estate park. The playground had been vandalised. 200 young volunteers turned up with their mothers and fathers and completed the job. Such was the commitment and the sense of achievement that the group continued, one of their next tasks being to design and man a float in the following year's procession.

Question 1: The diagram shows a volunteering service operating in Southampton, UK: Does your city or region have a similar organisation tapping into the skills of volunteers Yes/No

Q2: Would you contribute to such a short-term commitment if approached? Yes/No/Don't know

Q3: Write down 4 ideas of things you could contribute for a day if some organisation were in place.

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Q4: Who would organise this in your city or region? \_\_\_\_\_

Q5: What sort of function would you be able to perform in helping to organise the day? \_\_\_\_\_

### Actionsheet 3: Active citizenship energised by Industry and Business - Case Study

Most large companies operate programmes that encourage their employees to involve themselves with the community within which the community resides. One example is IBM in the UK. We have already seen in the Woodberry Down twinning scheme (chapter 6 session 4) how the company established a twinning scheme with a local school and the many initiatives that took place in that. It goes further than that. Among the several initiatives in its '*on-demand community*' programme, all employees and retirees are urged to work with the schools of their choice in supporting the donation of free equipment and software. This not only helps the school to use the technology wisely, it also helps people to appreciate more the particular environment in which schools work and to extend their involvement to other issues.

The management and communications skills built up in the company are also valuable for community groups. The story of Christopher Bowers is but one example. On his retirement he established, with a grant from the company, a foster carer's association in Kingston, UK by creating a website offering training courses, practical advice and a forum for foster parents, linked into the borough's website. The company also runs several other social programmes, including the '*Reinventing Education*' project to share best practice methodologies between schools, which won a national lifelong learning award, and '*Book Buzz*' which encourages Nottinghamshire children to post a review of a recommended book they have read on a local website.

Science camps for girls take place in IBM locations to help them choose maths and science as a career, and a mentoring service offering guidance and study support is available to those students who want it. 7% of the IBM UK workforce, participate in grant-aided support schemes in the community, which, together with programmes for retirees who tend to have a little more time, amounts to 1200 people participating in active citizenship projects. Add this to the thousands of other actual and potential activities by business and industry, such as the *Guardian* Newspaper's and Hewlett Packard's science mentoring mentorship programmes, and learning cities and regions have a substantial additional resource on their hands that can, with proper management, be augmented and channelled.

1. Does your workplace encourage community contribution like this? Yes/no
2. Does it actively organise community contribution? Yes/No
3. What sort of contributions does it make?

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4. Does the 'proper management' mentioned in the piece exist in your city/region? Yes/No
5. Does the local authority encourage local industry to contribute to the community? Yes/No
6. How does/could it do that with success? Give several ideas for action.

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*Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety, and justice for all people.*

*In this era of globalization and continuous change, the world is becoming smaller, more interdependent, and more complex. Volunteering – either through individual or group action – is a way in which:*

- *human values of community, caring, and serving can be sustained and strengthened;*
- *individuals can exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities, while learning and growing throughout their lives, realizing their full human potential; and,*
- *connections can be made across differences that push us apart so that we can live together in healthy, sustainable communities, working together to provide innovative solutions to our shared challenges and to shape our collective destinies.*

*At the dawn of the new millennium, volunteering is an essential element of all societies. It turns into practical, effective action the declaration of the United Nations that “We, the Peoples” have the power to change the world.*

*This Declaration supports the right of every woman, man and child to associate freely and to volunteer regardless of their cultural and ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, and physical, social or economic condition. All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent, and energy to others and to their communities through individual and collective action, without expectation of financial reward.*

**Question 1: To what extent do you believe the following to be true:  
1= wholly true, 2= mostly true, 3= half true, 4= partly true, 5= not at all true**

|   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>In this era of globalization and continuous change, the world is becoming smaller, more interdependent, and more complex</b>   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>We, the peoples, have the power to change the world.</b>   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent, and energy to others and to their communities without expectation of financial reward.</b> |          |          |          |          |          |

**Question 2: What, in your opinion, are the main obstacles to progress in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of these?**

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**We seek the development of volunteering that:**

- *elicits the involvement of the entire community in identifying and addressing its problems;*
- *encourages and enables youth to make leadership through service a continuing part of their lives;*
- *provides a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves;*
- *enables others to participate as volunteers;*
- *complements but does not substitute for responsible action by other sectors and the efforts of paid workers;*

- *enables people to acquire new knowledge and skills and to fully develop their personal potential, self-reliance and creativity;*
- *promotes family, community, national and global solidarity.*

**Question/Exercise 3: Put the points above into order of importance according to your viewpoint**

*We believe that volunteers and the organizations and communities that they serve have a shared responsibility to:*

- *create environments in which volunteers have meaningful work that helps to achieve agreed upon results;*
- *define the criteria for volunteer participation, including the conditions under which the organization and the volunteer may end their commitment, and develop policies to guide volunteer activity;*
- *provide appropriate protections against risks for volunteers and those they serve:*
- *provide volunteers with appropriate training, regular evaluation, and recognition;*
- *ensure access for all by removing physical, economic, social, and cultural barriers to their participation.*

**Question/Exercise 4: Against each of the above points, put a % mark which expresses the extent it has happened in your city or region**

*Taking into account basic human rights as expressed in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the principles of volunteering and the responsibilities of volunteers and the organizations in which they are involved, we call on all volunteers to proclaim their belief in volunteer action as a creative and mediating force that:*

- *builds healthy, sustainable communities that respect the dignity of all people;*
- *empowers people to exercise their rights as human beings and, thus, to improve their lives;*
- *helps solve social, cultural, economic and environmental problems; and,*
- *builds a more humane and just society through worldwide cooperation.*

*And the leaders of:*

- *all sectors to join together to create strong, visible, and effective local and national “volunteer centers” as the primary leadership organizations for volunteering;*
- *government to ensure the rights of all people to volunteer, to remove any legal barriers to participation, to engage volunteers in its work, and to provide resources to NGOs to promote and support the effective mobilization and management of volunteers;*
- *business to encourage and facilitate the involvement of its workers in the community as volunteers and to commit human and financial resources to develop the infrastructure needed to support volunteering;*
- *the media to tell the stories of volunteers and to provide information that encourages and assists people to volunteer;*
- *education to encourage and assist people of all ages to volunteer, creating opportunities for them to reflect on and learn from their service;*



## **Actionsheet 5A:**

## **Two Case Studies from Australia**

Mary, from Riverstone, volunteers at one of Australia's unique schools, the Thomas Pattison School at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. The Thomas Pattison School offers a bilingual program for Deaf children and children with Deaf parents or siblings, where the main form of communication is in Auslan, (Australian Sign Language). Although all lessons are conducted in Auslan, students learn to read and write in English as well.

While the school has many generous volunteers who give up their time to assist in the classroom, not many have the unique understanding of Deaf culture and education that Mary does. This is because Mary, like the students and some of the teachers, is also Deaf. Mary attended a Deaf boarding school in Newcastle, but, unlike the program offered at the Thomas Pattison School, her school offered an oral program where signing was banned. Mary learnt how to sign from other people, and now picks up a lot of Auslan from her three children, one of whom attends the Thomas Pattison School.

Mary has been helping out at the Thomas Pattison School since 1993. Back then she used to clean up and do odd jobs, including the photocopying. She started volunteering because she was simply interested and wanted to learn something. "I wanted to work with kids. I wanted something to do," she says.

Now Mary helps out in the classrooms at the school once a week. She assists the kids with their writing, and explains new words to them. "I really enjoy the littlies ... the ones in Kindy, Year 1 and Year 2. It's great to see them motivated and to see them learn." "The school has only a small number of students, so I see the same ones in a lot of different subjects in different situations," she says. "I am very close to all the students, they are like my family."

Mary does some relief work at the school for teacher's aides and hopes to one day to become a teacher's aide herself. Mary is one of over 150 volunteers who provide a significant, varied and valued contribution to the work undertaken at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

### **Dan's story**

My application to join the Volunteer Explainers was duly accepted and I undertook a training course conducted by staff. This was the start of what has turned out to be a fascinating and enjoyable experience. The trainers had all worked at Questacon for a number of years and really knew what they were talking about. In addition they were all extremely nice and very patient...not at all like the teachers I had at school! I was required to undertake at least 16 hours of training sessions and then be assessed on my knowledge and competence as an explainer. I was rather nervous at the prospect of being assessed and failing. I had read my notes over and over again at home and tried explaining various aspects of Questacon exhibits to my family. I was determined to master the complexities on one particular puzzle that had me initially stumped, but, would you believe, I wasn't asked to demonstrate that one.

Happily, I passed the test and became an Explainer. That was when the fun really started. I work a 4.5 hour shift, either morning or afternoon as many days as I desire each week. During school semester we have school groups visiting from all over Australia and sometimes from overseas. These children, of all ages, really keep us busy. Some just want to be entertained whereas others ask detailed questions. If we don't know the answers we can invariably refer them to someone who does. These days one hears criticism of the younger generation along the lines of 'I don't know what's going to happen to the world and why can't they be like we were'. However, here at Questacon we get to see another aspect, the young inquiring people who will make the discoveries of tomorrow. I met a group of 6 teenaged boys who were dressed like a street gang but were engineering students asking all sorts of probing questions...so you just can't pre-judge is this business. One day a group of Japanese high school students came in. I was working in a Gallery featuring devices that demonstrated the principles of physical forces. They were interested in everything except a simulated earthquake...said they had real ones at home! One of the great pluses of working at Questacon is the other people one works with. They are of all ages from students to retirees and from all works of life. There are scientists, teachers, military personnel, former Antarctic expeditioners, police, public servants, housewives, tradespeople, to name a few. They all have one thing in common. That is they are all interesting and have a story to tell. I have not met a more stimulating group of people in my life as I have here at Questacon. In addition I have had a million laughs. As a bonus, my cholesterol level has declined, my waistline has receded but unfortunately my hair is still falling out. Seems one can't have everything'

## Actionsheet 5B

## And one from Canada

Giraffe Club in the Classroom

by [Marilyn Handeland](#)

You may think The Giraffe Club has something to do with The local zoo. In fact, this second grade social studies curriculum does include a study of this beautiful African animal, but has nothing to do with the zoo. The Giraffe Club unit of study is all about community service for young elementary students. How is the connection made between a giraffe and community service projects?

Second graders first listen to African legends about two giraffes, Moyo and Dafina. Each giraffe tells a different story of how their necks came to be so long. Moyo's story explains that when he was young all giraffes had short necks. The family needed protection from the enemy, a fast running cheetah. Moyo was the one giraffe brave enough to stretch his neck high above the savannah trees, in order to spot danger. He stuck out his neck to help others. This way giraffes evolved through the generations, all with long enough necks to protect themselves.

This story sets the stage for many more stories, true to life today. Stories are all about being brave enough to stick out your neck to make the community and world a better place. Students hear about everyday heroes of today. Hazel Wolf, a Seattle woman, was in her 80's when she became a Giraffe hero for her work in improving the environment. The Giraffe Club, headquartered in Langley, Washington, honors heroes like Hazel once a year.

As students hear more inspiring stories, they are planning their own service projects, in order to qualify for a Giraffe Club award. They first must see a problem in their community. They learn to be brave enough to actually take action. As a culminating activity, they prepare a poster and present their story to their classmates and parents. We invite the principal to our celebration, making this a special time of recognition for work well done.

Here are some examples of typical second grade Giraffe projects: weed and plant a garden, build a bird house, visit nursing homes, collect clothes for the homeless, pick up trash on the roadside, raise money for charity via bake sales, and many more. One boy collected school supplies from his classmates which he packaged and sent all the way to Haiti. To explain the dire situation in schools of Haiti, he invited a family friend to show her slides taken while on a mission trip to this small country. Views of children walking miles and miles to school, which only lasts a few hours a day, made the need very clear to second graders. They generously gave a large quantity of basic school supplies to children who had few pencils and crayons.

In another project, a student and his two brothers performed a musical program for a local retirement home, 3 stringed instruments accompanied by mother on the piano. I was touched by the story of one girl. She played the piano and read a story at the nursing home where her great grandmother lived. One week later her great grandmother passed away. Another young Giraffe hero was featured in the local newspaper. He played his violin at the grocery store in order to collect money for the needy. All these students receive a Giraffe Club certificate and are heartily applauded at our classroom celebration. Hopefully this second grade project is the first of many more acts of giving throughout the school years and beyond.

Actionsheet 6:

The following provides a comprehensive (but not necessarily complete) assemblage of activities undertaken by cities and regions that organise formal volunteering programmes. Please tick if they apply to your city or region or to an organisation the city or region has appointed to do this on its behalf. A number of blank rows is made available for additional ideas carried out locally.

|    | Activity  | ye<br>s | n<br>o | In<br>pla<br>n |
|----|---|---------|--------|----------------|
| 1  | Runs a volunteering programme as a business   |         |        |                |
| 2  | Uses a system in which local associations can insert opportunities for volunteering to a central office |         |        |                |
| 3  | Has a database of potential volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 4  | Has a skill bank of volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 5  | Offers a referral service matching volunteers to jobs   |         |        |                |
| 6  | Has established one or more 'volunteers centres'  |         |        |                |
| 7  | Has added a recruitment for volunteering onto its website   |         |        |                |
| 8  | Has added examples of volunteering experiences onto its website   |         |        |                |
| 9  | Has a freephone number for volunteers   |         |        |                |
| 10 | Offers regular training courses for its volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 11 | Has trained volunteer leaders in each section of the city.  |         |        |                |
| 12 | Provides public liability insurance for volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 13 | Provides personal accident cover for volunteers   |         |        |                |
| 14 | Provides professional Indemnity Insurance – eg for negligent advice                                     |         |        |                |
| 15 | Provides Motor Vehicle insurance where volunteers use their own private vehicles                        |         |        |                |
| 16 | Celebrates volunteering regularly   |         |        |                |
| 17 | Advertises volunteering as a fun thing to do  |         |        |                |
| 18 | Encourages its schools to use volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 19 | Encourages universities and adult ed colleges to engage students in volunteering                        |         |        |                |
| 20 | Encourages industry and business to provide volunteers  |         |        |                |
| 21 | Checks out volunteers for acceptability   |         |        |                |
| 22 | Has different levels of volunteering based on time available  |         |        |                |
| 23 | Has different levels based on skills offered  |         |        |                |
| 24 | Pays travel expenses for volunteers   |         |        |                |
| 25 | Runs a progressive volunteers appreciation scheme for time given  |         |        |                |
| 26 | Give awards for volunteers at special ceremonies  |         |        |                |
| 27 | Runs competitions for volunteers eg volunteer of the year   |         |        |                |
| 28 | Makes sure that the media recognise volunteers frequently by providing stories.                         |         |        |                |

|           |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>29</b> | <b>Creates a regular volunteer's newsletter</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>30</b> | <b>Encourages school to include service learning programmes to build up a volunteering culture</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>31</b> | <b>Has a formal volunteer management programme</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>32</b> | <b>Provides volunteers resource kits</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>33</b> | <b>Provides a help-line for volunteers</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>34</b> | <b>Provides Access to consultation and support on volunteer management issues and practices.</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>35</b> | <b>Involves its volunteers on city and neighbourhood committees</b>                                |  |  |  |
| <b>36</b> | <b>Provides a statistics and current trends service</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>37</b> | <b>Encourages universities to use the programmes for research in the community</b>                 |  |  |  |
| <b>38</b> | <b>Runs a local volunteer week/month/day annually</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>39</b> | <b>Provides special deals for volunteers eg shopping concessions</b>                               |  |  |  |
| <b>40</b> | <b>Provides a certificate of recognition for volunteers</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>41</b> | <b>Has a volunteering charter for the city or region</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>42</b> | <b>Has developed a code of practice for volunteering</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>43</b> | <b>Has a corporate membership programme for business and industry</b>                              |  |  |  |
| <b>44</b> | <b>Runs a volunteers conference locally</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>45</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>46</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>47</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>48</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>49</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>50</b> |  |  |  |  |
| <b>51</b> |  |  |  |  |

## MATERIALS ON LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE – A REMINDER

|    | Topics  | Session                 |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 1  | Consultation methods and levels   | 7.1, 7.2                |
| 2  | Characteristics of a Learning Organisation                                  | 2.3                     |
| 3  | Your city as a learning organisation  | 2.4                     |
| 4  | Skills and competences for learning cities and regions                      | 1.6                     |
| 5  | The city as an ideopolis  | 1.5                     |
| 6  | Learning Communities in all their senses                                    | 2.5                     |
| 7  | Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities                                     | 2.6                     |
| 8  | Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture                        | 3.3                     |
| 9  | Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:                    | 3.2                     |
| 10 | Leadership in the Learning City/Region:                                     | 3.4                     |
| 11 | Tools for measuring city and region performance                             | 3.1,4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5 |
| 12 | Lifelong Learning as wealth creator   | 5.3, 1.5,2.3            |
| 13 | Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits                    | 5.4,5.5,5.6,5.7,5.8,5.9 |
| 14 | Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?                       | 6.1                     |
| 14 | Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region                       | 6.2, 8.4                |
| 15 | Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region             | 6.3                     |
| 16 | Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region         | 6.4                     |
| 17 | Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city                        | 6.5, 8.5                |
| 18 | Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world | 6.6                     |
| 19 | Family Learning   | 6.7                     |
| 20 | The power of partnerships   | 6.8                     |
| 21 | Using Technology in the learning city                                       | 7.3                     |
| 22 | Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city                    | 7.4                     |
| 23 | Mentoring in the learning city and region                                   | 7.5                     |
| 24 | Resources for the Learning City and region                                  | 7.6                     |
| 25 | Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions           | 8.1                     |
| 26 | Internationalising Learning City Networks                                   | 8.2, 8.3                |
| 27 | International projects as learning city stimulators                         | 8.4, 8.5                |
| 28 | Two-way profiting from international cooperation                            | 8.6                     |
| 29 | Organisational issues in the learning city and region                       | 9.2                     |
| 30 | Enabling issues in the learning city and region                             | 9.3                     |
| 31 | Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions                          | 9.4                     |
| 32 | Practical Actions to become a learning city                                 | 9.1, 1.4                |
| 33 | Learning Cities for Elected Representatives (Councillors                    | 4.6                     |
| 34 | Individuals as learners   | 5.1,5.2,6.7             |
| 35 | Change, society and the city/region   | 1.1, 1.2                |
| 36 | Learning City Domains   | 1.3                     |
| 37 | Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions                        | 4.2,4.3, 4.4            |
| 38 | Towards true Learning Societies   | 2.2                     |
| 39 | Defining Learning Cities and Regions  | 2.1                     |

All sessions shown in the last column follow the progress of the book '**Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government**' by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – [www.tandf.co.uk/books/](http://www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9, and add new dimensions. They are downloadable from [www.longlearn.org.uk](http://www.longlearn.org.uk)