

Working Group Report into a National Youth Volunteering Programme



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FOREWORD BY THE FIRST MINISTER

Young people are at the heart of modern day Scotland. They are the well from which our future business and community leaders will spring. Harnessing their drive, energy, talents and ambitions can make a real and positive difference to everyone who lives and works here.

Throughout the length and breadth of Scotland our schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, community groups and voluntary organisations already do much to support and nurture young people. But there is always scope to do more and to provide new opportunities for developing talents, networks and skills outside of the club, school or workplace. Volunteering helps achieve this.

In order to consider ways of further unlocking this huge potential, in June 2003 I asked Julia Ogilvy to chair a working group to consider the scope for developing a new national youth volunteering programme for Scotland. This report is the result.

I wholeheartedly endorse the recommendations of this report. It is both visionary and inspirational. The proposal to establish a nationally recognised full-time volunteering programme, bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors in a long term creative partnership, provides an exciting new approach towards engaging young people in volunteer activity. It has been developed with a direct input from young people themselves and will undoubtedly generate much interest locally, nationally and even globally.

Our Scottish government will do all it can to support the development of Project Scotland to ensure that it succeeds. Our commitment to Project Scotland forms only one facet of our wider support for volunteering, but it will be an inspiration to others. Everyone - individual volunteers, the organisations they work with and the communities they serve - stands to benefit from this effort and investment.

Every young Scot should have the best possible start in life. If they have problems, we should help. And if they need a second chance, we should provide it.

Project Scotland will provide chances for all, especially those who need them most. I am very grateful to all who have brought us this far, and enthused by the potential of what is to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jack McConnell'.

Jack McConnell, MSP
First Minister

INTRODUCTION

I was delighted when, in June 2003, the First Minister asked me to chair a working group to advise on the feasibility of developing a new national youth volunteering programme. For several years I had taken a close personal and professional interest in the ways in which young people – often in the most difficult personal circumstances – can have their potential realised through individually tailored support and mentoring. I therefore welcomed the opportunity to extend that interest to include organised volunteering.

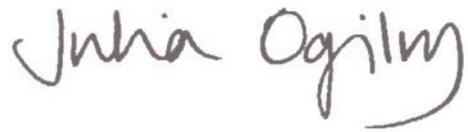
In taking our work forward, the working group had certain key objectives in mind. We wanted to learn from existing good practice both in the UK and overseas; we wanted to build on and add-value to existing volunteer programmes; we wanted to involve young people directly in developing our proposals; and we wanted to develop something that bound the public, private and voluntary sectors into a long term sustainable partnership. But over and above all of this, we wanted to develop a high quality product that was both life-enhancing and life-transforming for the volunteer and which provided benefits for everyone: individual volunteers, the communities in which they live and work and the organisations which they support through their volunteering.

Our report sets out the basis for what we believe is a robust, well researched and unique programme. It focuses on stimulating both the demand for and supply of full-time volunteering placements for young people aged between 16 and 25 from all backgrounds. It sets out the ways in which we might work with existing volunteer agencies to develop the pool of talent and skills which will help underpin daily life in Scotland for years to come; it identifies the various issues associated with turning our vision into reality; and it proposes the basis for involving the private, public and voluntary sectors in a new partnership for the common good of Scotland as a whole.

Inevitably, given the speed at which we worked, there are some outstanding issues where further work is required before our blueprint is complete. We will take these forward urgently during the rest of 2004, with the intention of ensuring that our first tranche of Project Scotland volunteers are taken on board in 2005.

I would like to conclude by thanking publicly the members of the working group for their invaluable contribution over several months. The credit for this report rests entirely with them and for the mix of knowledge, skills and insights that they brought to bear during our discussions. I would also like to pay tribute to the very many organisations within the voluntary and private sectors who have assisted with our task. They provided both the reality checks and the enthusiasm necessary to ensure that our proposals can work in the real world. A special thanks goes to the staff at Volunteer Development Scotland who provided much of

the research evidence on which the report is based. Finally, I would like to thank the First Minister and the Scottish Executive for having the vision and foresight to endorse our proposals and ensure that Project Scotland becomes a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Ogilvy". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Julia Ogilvy
Chair of the Working Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In June 2003 the First Minister asked Julia Ogilvy to set up a Working Group in order to develop proposals which would encourage young Scots to participate in volunteering during ‘gap’ or ‘transition’ years in their life. This report sets out the conclusions they reached.
2. The Working Group assessed a large amount of evidence about the nature of volunteering activity in Scotland, the United Kingdom as a whole and abroad. It also drew upon discussions with potential stakeholders in the voluntary, private and public sectors; and tested its emerging thinking with a sample of young people drawn from socially diverse backgrounds and with a range of volunteer placement organisations.
3. The Working Group’s objective was to help unlock the enormous potential that young people from all backgrounds have both for contributing to society and for personal self-development. The Group deliberately aimed high. It set out to create an initiative which will help transform the volunteering landscape in Scotland and create a culture of volunteering among young Scots that is both life-enhancing and life-transforming. The objective is to give young people from all backgrounds an equal opportunity to benefit from taking up to a year out to develop their personal skills, new social networks, and form opportunities to become more active citizens.
4. Scotland is fortunate in having a relatively robust culture of volunteering, and very many volunteering organisations are active in the management and placement of individual volunteers. It also has a clear political commitment to support and develop volunteering, expressed through the Scottish Executive’s new Volunteering Strategy. Project Scotland, our preferred name for the new programme, is intended to complement the work of these existing organisations and support the objectives of the Scottish Executive’s Volunteering Strategy.
5. The Project Scotland proposal is based around developing full-time quality-assured volunteer placements for 16-25 year olds. Our discussions with young people led us to propose a modular approach which would encourage volunteers to participate in up to 3 modules lasting 3-4 months each during a calendar year. During this period volunteers would receive out of pocket and living expenses but they would not be paid a salary in the accepted meaning of the term.
6. At the end of their volunteering experience, volunteers would be eligible to apply for modest amounts of funding which could be used to open doors for future education, training or business start-up opportunities. They could also be eligible to receive a points based ‘thank you’ gift provided by project sponsors.
7. In order to develop, manage and deliver the Project Scotland proposals, we advocate establishing a bespoke delivery agency. This would be a not for profit company limited by

guarantee which would have charitable status. The delivery agency would market and promote the Project Scotland brand, work with existing volunteer providers and help develop new full-time volunteering opportunities. The delivery agency would be independent from government, although we are looking to the Scottish Executive to fund the initial start-up costs and to contribute approximately half of the overall funding required thereafter. We intend the balance of the funding requirement to be met from the private sector and other sources.

8. A key feature of Project Scotland is that it seeks to bring together the public, private and voluntary sectors in a new type of creative partnership. We strongly believe that this approach will bring benefits to all concerned – to young people, to voluntary organisations, to employers, and for Scotland as a whole. We already have strong indications of buy-in from leading organisations within the private and voluntary sectors. We aim to develop the opportunities arising from meaningful partnership working based around a shared agenda and believe that the principles underpinning this arrangement can be extended over time to other areas beyond volunteering.

9. Subject to confirmation from the Scottish Executive of their support for the scheme, the next steps are to set up the delivery agency, formalise agreements with volunteer placement organisations and develop the Project Scotland marketing arrangements. This work will help to flesh-out the framework we have proposed and clarify the detailed operational arrangements that will be developed. These tasks are likely to be completed by early 2005. We envisage that an initial tranche of 400 volunteers will then come on board during 2005. The numbers of volunteers attracted to the scheme is expected to increase to around 1,000 per annum thereafter, depending both on funding and the ability of the voluntary sector to generate and manage these levels of placements. If there is demand and the delivery agency can secure the resources to meet that demand, higher numbers of young people will be involved. The overall costs will depend in part upon the numbers of volunteers attracted to the scheme. We will be refining our business model over the next few months and we anticipate that no more than 50% of the costs would be met from the public purse in the long term.

10. Although the initial focus for Project Scotland is on young people aged between 16 and 25, we feel that there is considerable scope for extending the concept over time to include other age groups. We have the potential to create an entry portal which could ultimately embrace all volunteering activity in Scotland.

11. In conclusion, we believe that we have helped to develop a product with several defining characteristics that will complement, rather than compete with, the work of existing volunteering agencies. The key ones are:

- its focus on revitalising volunteering in Scotland by providing a portal designed to appeal particularly to young people and by encouraging existing volunteering agencies to work more closely together;

- its focus on providing the volunteer with a life-enhancing experience that will also have substantial practical benefit in terms of future employment, training, educational or business opportunities;
- the guarantee of a high calibre volunteer; and
- an ability to forge a project which draws together the public, private and voluntary sectors for the good of all.

All of the members of the Working Group are committed to this vision which it believes will transform the concept of voluntary service for future generations of Scots.

CHAPTER 1: REMIT AND RATIONALE

Introduction

1. In June 2003 the First Minister asked Julia Ogilvy, former Scottish Businesswoman of the Year, to set up a working group in order to develop proposals which would encourage young Scots to participate in volunteering during “gap” or “transition” years in their life. Group members brought together a range of skills in business, volunteering and understanding of young people. The full remit for the group, together with a list of its members, can be found at **Annex A**.

2. The group met on five occasions between July and December 2003. These formal meetings were supported by a range of complimentary activities including:

- a comprehensive written review of the volunteering landscape in Scotland, prepared by Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS);
- research into existing gap-year volunteering schemes operating in both the UK and abroad;
- brainstorming meetings with stakeholder organisations in the voluntary, public and private sectors;
- a significant programme of market research designed to test and validate emerging thinking amongst the intended target audience; and
- validation of the proposal with existing volunteering and voluntary sector organisations.

Policy Context

3. For reasons set out more fully in Chapter 3, we suggest that the proposals outlined in this report should be branded and marketed as “Project Scotland”. They were developed in parallel with the Scottish Executive’s broader strategy for promoting and supporting volunteering. Two key elements of that strategy concern the need to do more to promote volunteering among young people – primarily those in the 16-25 age group – and the need to do more to promote volunteering around key life events. The Project Scotland proposal contributes directly to both these aims and therefore is well placed to become a flagship scheme in support of the new strategy.

4. In June 2003 the leaders of the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats published a Partnership Agreement setting out the policy principles and major initiatives to be implemented during the life of the current Scottish Parliament. This included a commitment to “... introduce a scheme, alongside the existing Millennium Volunteers

scheme, which recognises youth volunteering ...’. Implementing Project Scotland would fulfil that commitment.

Definitions

5. The Working Group has used the widely accepted definition of “young people” as referring to those who are in the 16-25 age group. The Group has focussed on “formal” volunteering – ie activity organised through some sort of intermediary organisation – rather than on “informal” volunteering activities such as babysitting or running an errand for a neighbour.

Our Vision

6. The thinking behind our proposal is both broad and ambitious. We believe passionately in the enormous potential that young people from all backgrounds have both for contributing to society and for personal self-development. Our aim is to unlock this potential by providing them with the opportunity for an exciting, demanding and quality assured volunteering experience that will be both life-enhancing and life-transforming. We are not interested in creating ‘just another initiative’. We want to create a project which will - over time – transform the volunteering landscape in Scotland and help to embed a lifelong culture of volunteering within all young Scots. To achieve this we believe we must create a powerful volunteering brand which is attractive to its particular target audience, that fills an existing gap in the market place and that provides distinct value-added over existing products. This new brand would encourage greater co-operation between volunteering agencies, develop links between a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and deliver tangible benefits to volunteers, the organisations they are involved with, and Scottish society as a whole.

7. In developing our proposals we consulted stakeholders representing government, the private sector, charities and voluntary organisations – both UK and overseas-based - involved in the development and management of volunteering. We are grateful to all for their contributions which were indispensable. However, the most significant contribution to our thinking came from our engagement with young people themselves. We have discussed with them the ways in which Project Scotland might meet their aspirations and needs and harness their enthusiasm, energy, integrity and selflessness. We have built the results of this into our proposal. By so doing, we believe we can deliver a product which young people will respond to. We are confident that Project Scotland provides them with the opportunity they want to contribute to the development of a healthy, vibrant and confident Scotland.

CHAPTER 2: THE VOLUNTEERING MARKET PLACE

Context

8. Scotland is fortunate in already possessing a reasonably robust culture of volunteering amongst people of all ages. The last UK volunteering survey carried out by the National Centre for Volunteering in 1997 suggested that around half of all Scots had volunteered in some capacity during the previous year - a figure slightly above that for the rest of the UK and much of Europe. Scotland also has a relatively well-developed volunteering infrastructure. For example, there is a national network of over 50 volunteer centres core funded by the Scottish Executive, with at least one in each local authority area. There is a national body – Volunteer Development Scotland – also core funded by the Scottish Executive, which promotes, supports and develops volunteering at a national level. In addition there are a large number of organisations operating in Scotland with a proven track record in managing and placing volunteers. To this already healthy mix can be added a welcome and growing interest from public and private sectors employers in supporting volunteering within the workplace. There is also growing evidence that the private sector increasingly appreciates the role that volunteering plays in contributing to corporate social responsibility.

9. Despite this generally positive picture, both the review of the volunteering landscape conducted by VDS and the Scottish Executive's own work in developing its new volunteering strategy identified a number of concerns which the working group has had to address as it developed the Project Scotland idea. These included:

- evidence suggesting that there were problems in matching the supply of and demand for volunteers within Scotland;
- significant concerns about the failure of particular groups of people – especially those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, the unemployed, the long-term sick and disabled and those lacking in formal qualifications – to engage in volunteering, despite appearing no less willing than others to do so;
- a gender imbalance among volunteers, with particular problems associated with attracting young males;
- the sometimes confusing nature of the volunteering landscape with a large number of alternative providers, projects and schemes jostling for position alongside each other and a lack of clear guidance and signposting for people wishing to develop volunteering opportunities, often associated with poor marketing of these opportunities;
- the lack of an instantly recognisable brand-leader;

- perceptions amongst young people about the downbeat image of volunteering, and the impact of negative peer group pressure;
- lack of awareness of the benefits derived from volunteering; and
- the difficulties of reconciling volunteering with other lifestyle pressures – time, money, education, employment etc.

10. Our research also identified some of the key demographic and social factors against which any new youth volunteering project must be set. **Table 1** sets out some of the salient statistics. It was clearly evident to the Working Group that the Project Scotland proposal would need to respond to these contextual issues if it were to have credibility, make an impact and be sustainable over time.

11. In considering the nature of the Project Scotland model, we also took into account the work undertaken by existing organisations providing volunteering experiences for young people. For example, within the UK the Millennium Volunteers scheme allows people aged 16-25 to develop a sustained commitment to volunteering by qualifying for hours-based excellence awards. Schemes focussing on gap-year students are run by the Rank Foundation, Community Service Volunteers and the World Youth Awards. The salient characteristics of these are set out in **Tables 2-4**. From abroad, we looked closely at the Americorps scheme and at the Voluntary Social Year scheme operated in Germany. Details of these are summarised in **Tables 5 and 6**.

12. Our engagement with volunteer placement organisations clearly demonstrated that although they shared a wealth of experience in managing volunteers and volunteering projects, relatively few were experienced in handling full-time volunteers. The range of full-time opportunities was fragmented and host organisations were not always geared up to accommodate large numbers of full-time 16-25 year old volunteers. There was also an element of competition between volunteering agencies which, although understandable, was not always something that worked in the best interests of the volunteer.

13. We concluded from this that there was a clear market opportunity to focus on developing full-time volunteering by building upon the small number of gap-year schemes that already exist. We therefore began to look at ways in which we could complement – rather than compete with – existing providers, for example by increasing brand awareness or by focussing on developing the quality of the volunteering experience. However, we were very aware that the concept of a full-time volunteer does not always sit easily with the idea of volunteering as an unpaid activity. We needed to square this circle.

14. Our initial remit specified that we should consider the relationship of any new scheme to accreditation/competency processes. Our market research confirmed that young people are keen to gain ‘something for the CV’, but did not provide a clear indication of the type of accreditation which would be preferred by participants. In the first instance we therefore

decided to focus on how to best recognise, rather than formally accredit, the achievements of Project Scotland participants.

Key Issues

15. It was clear that in developing Project Scotland we should draw upon some of the positive aspects of these schemes as well as the lessons that have been learned from them. Our analysis of these schemes also identified a number of critical issues which we examined further in our consultations both with the volunteering sector and with potential volunteers. Our response to these issues helped to shape our vision for Project Scotland. The list of issues under consideration included:

- supply and demand issues;
- the ‘fit’ with other related volunteers schemes and initiatives;
- the role of existing volunteer placement organisations;
- the need for and role of living expenses;
- the role of both cash and in-kind ‘payments’ or inducements for volunteers; and
- the underlying social purpose of such schemes, which is clearly very important to young people.

16. Our analysis led us to draw a number of conclusions. The first, and most important, was that it confirmed that there is a clear opportunity to develop a new volunteering initiative aimed at the gap year market. The evidence strongly supported the case for developing a new product designed to give young people of all backgrounds an equal opportunity to benefit from taking a year out on a full-time basis – in order to develop their personal skills, new social networks and opportunities to become more active and rounded citizens. The scheme should be open to people from all backgrounds, but we want to ensure that a particular effort is made to attract those groups that tend to be under-represented in such initiatives.

17. Our second conclusion was that we should look to work with existing volunteer placement organisations in order to capitalise on their expertise and experience. We see Project Scotland acting as a national volunteering portal, attracting new volunteers and matching them to development opportunities offered by existing volunteer management agencies. We accept that some may need help in order to gear up their capacity to respond to this challenge. We also concluded that over time Project Scotland should be developing new volunteer placement opportunities itself, in order to stimulate the demand for quality assured volunteering opportunities.

18. Our third main conclusion was that in order to achieve this, we need to create a strong aspirational brand which would help to improve the image, supply of and demand for

volunteering. A marketing-driven approach is essential to achieving this. Our plan for tackling this involves creating quality recognition for all volunteers and linking this to opportunities in further education, employment or the voluntary sector.

19. Our fourth conclusion was that we need to create a joined-up project that involves government, business and the voluntary sector. We want to develop a product that has buy-in from all sectors and captures the strongest and best elements of each.

20. Our fifth conclusion was that we had to listen to what young people wanted. At present, when young people leave education, they are faced with a number of choices. They can get a job. They can learn a trade. They can go into higher education or, in some cases, they turn to the benefit system. Our ambition is to create another easily accessible and attractive option for them – the option of volunteering. But to achieve this, it is essential that the product should reflect their needs, aspirations and concerns.

21. Our sixth conclusion was that there was an opportunity, over time, to extend the concept of the Project Scotland model to cover other social groups such as the retired, or those taking a career break. We accept the logic of starting out with a focus on 16-25 year olds, but believe that the concept is too good to be kept limited to this group for ever!

22. Our seventh conclusion was that we wanted to create a scheme that balanced the desirability of remaining true to the ethos of volunteering as an unpaid activity with the need to ensure that volunteers received basic living expenses and that they and their families were not disadvantaged in respect of the receipt of state benefits to which they may be eligible.

23. Our eighth conclusion was that we needed to identify from the start the key elements which are central to ensuring the success of Project Scotland. In our view these are quality assurance, marketing/branding, resolving the issues of incentive and reward, and ensuring buy-in from the key stakeholders in government, the private and voluntary sectors.

24. Finally, we concluded that in order to deliver all of the above we needed a dedicated agency to promote and manage the Project Scotland brand. Although we considered the option of using existing volunteer agencies – either individually or through a consortium - to undertake this task, we concluded that we needed a new organisation in order to allow the sole focus of activity to be on Project Scotland, to reflect the principles which Project Scotland stands for and to generate some of the innovative relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors that we have in mind. We emphasise that we are not creating another “infrastructure” or “support” body. We intend the new body to be a delivery agency driven by challenging targets for the numbers of volunteers to be recruited by the Project Scotland programme.

Market opportunities

25. From this analysis we identified a number of parameters which we felt provided the baseline or framework for our project. The key parameters are:

- a focus on people aged 16-25;
- a focus on full-time 'gap year' volunteering opportunities;
- the need to give young people the option of volunteering with other young people as part of a team;
- a desire to create something that was universal – i.e. attractive to and accessible to people from all types of background;
- a wish to create a gateway to further opportunities for individual development;
- a need to remain true to the ethos of volunteering whilst also ensuring that basic living expenses were met; and
- the need to ensure that potential volunteers were appropriately recognised and thanked for their efforts.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT

26. In order to develop these baseline parameters further, we conducted research with groups of young people to investigate the concepts being developed by the Working Group. The objectives of the research were to:

- test specific aspects in detail;
- develop ideas generated by the focus groups; and
- determine the most appealing and appropriate package to present to the target audience.

27. The research methodology was built around a series of mini group discussions lasting approximately 1.5 hours each. The details of the sample makeup are set out in **Table 7**.

28. The key issues emerging from the exercise are summarised below:

Gender

- There were very few significant differences between the genders. However, females were generally less accepting of monetary compensation for voluntary work than males. They were also more inclined than men to undertake particular types of volunteering, such as caring.

Differences by socio-economic group

- Participants from lower socio-economic groups were generally more positive about receiving a cash sum as a bonus at the end of a volunteering experience than those from higher socio-economic groups.
- Unemployed males with little or no qualifications tended to see voluntary sector project work as a way of getting out of the house/a productive way of passing time/staying out of trouble. They were particularly positive about volunteering if they did not have to worry about money and the project improved their chances of getting a job afterwards.

Funding

- The focus groups illustrated that parental pressure was a significant barrier to potential volunteers from the lower (C2DE) socio-economic group. Parents were concerned that their children were wasting time “working for free” and were not contributing anything to the economic activity of the household.
- Most respondents were extremely sensitive about the perception that they were being paid for doing voluntary work. Some expressed concerns about the possibility of receiving a cash lump sum, although the majority accepted that it

was fair to receive reasonable living expenses to ensure that volunteers and their families were not out of pocket. The preferred payment was a weekly allowance. It was felt that the level of allowance needed to provide a credible alternative to the jobseekers allowance, working part-time, undertaking an apprenticeship or some other trainee position.

Rewards

- The notion of receiving some form of reward as a ‘thank you’ was generally appealing, provided that the thank you is not excessive. The idea of developing a points-based system which would qualify volunteers for particular types of reward (such as days out at sporting or music events) was strongly endorsed and seen as being intrinsically ‘fair’.
- There was some resistance to receiving significant financial rewards (ie thousands of pounds) which was seen as damaging to the project and contrary to the spirit of volunteering. There was greater acceptance to receiving lower amounts or to ring-fencing some funds to assist with lifelong learning/personal development/ education etc.

Flexibility

- The focus groups supported the view that the way in which volunteering activities were presented and marketed was crucial to the take-up of the scheme. It was very important that a wide choice of activity was available and respondents were keen to ensure that they could see the positive impacts resulting from their actions. Doing something that would help to win the respect of families and friends was also seen as very important. There was a strong preference for working on relatively well-defined ‘projects’ which had a beginning, a middle and an end; and for working in teams rather than working alone as individuals.

Time

- Respondents expressed a strong preference for a modular approach based around structured volunteering modules lasting 3-4 months each. Each module would provide for a full-time volunteering opportunity based either at home or elsewhere. At the end of each module people would be free either to leave the project, to continue with it or to join another project for a further 3-4 months. The maximum number of modules for which a volunteer could be funded would be three in any one year.

Living expenses

- A sum of £20-£60 per week (or “not less than what I can claim on jobseekers allowance”) was seen as fair and sufficient to allow living expenses to be met for

volunteers living at home. This would cover all reasonable living expenses such as accommodation, food and travel, with perhaps a little left over for daily activity. It was felt that funding should be represented as 'living expenses' or 'allowances' rather than as 'wages' or 'gifts'. There was also an understandable concern that volunteers should not be excluded from any state benefits for which they may be eligible.

Corporate sponsorship

- Respondents were asked about the role of corporate sponsors in volunteering projects. Corporate sponsors were generally seen as positive thing and as a way of helping to relieve the financial burden on the taxpayer. There was a clear advantage to develop a potential tie-in with the 'thank you' gifts. However, some brand names were seen as inappropriate as potential sponsors of volunteering effort.

Branding

- Focus groups strongly suggested that creating and maintaining a robust brand was one of the most significant factors in attracting young people to volunteering. There was a strong desire to associate with something that had a project focus, and an equally tangible desire to be seen to be doing something that contributed to the wider public good of Scotland. We tested scores of possible brand names but the relatively straightforward "Project Scotland" had the strongest resonance with our respondents.

CHAPTER 4: PROJECT SCOTLAND: THE BUSINESS MODEL

Objectives

29. Drawing upon our research and focus group discussions, we believe that the objectives for Project Scotland should be to:

- give young people of all backgrounds an equal opportunity to benefit from taking up to a year out to develop their personal skills, new social networks, and from opportunities to become more active citizens;
- create a strong, aspirational brand to improve the image of, and opportunities available for volunteering and create a culture of service to support worthwhile community activity in Scotland;
- provide quality recognition for all volunteers, helping link to opportunities in further education, employment or the voluntary sector; and
- encourage joined up thinking across Government, business and the voluntary sectors.

Main features

30. We propose that the main features of Project Scotland should be:

- a brand developed as a single portal for a range of quality assured full-time volunteering opportunities;
- a modular approach with volunteers encouraged to participate in up to three modules lasting 3-4 months each during a calendar year;
- an initial focus on 16-25 year olds from all social backgrounds, but with a concerted effort to attract those from traditionally under-represented groups;
- basic living expenses to be provided;
- volunteers eligible to receive a points based “thank-you” or modest “in-kind” benefits. The points allocation will depend on the number of modules completed. Recognition ceremonies would also serve to thank volunteers for their contribution;
- volunteers eligible to apply for funding at the end of their project to “open doors” for future opportunities. This to cover activities including education, training and business start-up;

- all volunteer placements to be quality assured and managed by a range of voluntary organisations, with an emphasis on flexibility, choice and opportunities for team work. Quality assurance recognition to be dependent on their providing a well-managed high quality, life-enhancing volunteering experience;
- a bespoke, delivery agency to be established to manage Project Scotland and act as a ‘feeder’ system to other volunteer placement organisations;
- young people should be given high quality support to access volunteering, particularly those for whom volunteering might not be an obvious choice during a gap year. Volunteers will also receive mentoring once engaged with specific projects;
- an emphasis on creating a brand that has a real currency with prospective employers and with further and higher education establishments.

Benefits

31. The main benefits of Project Scotland are:

- **to young people** – by allowing them to develop their personal skills, particularly their self-confidence and their awareness of the contribution that they can make to the wider community. We believe that Project Scotland will provide them with new networks other than school and family and increase the range of options and opportunities open to them upon leaving school. Project Scotland will provide a recognisable brand name which has currency on an individual’s curriculum vitae. The benefits arising from the scheme will be open to everyone irrespective of their background;
- **to voluntary sector organisations and charities** – Project Scotland will help stimulate the supply of volunteers to the voluntary and charitable sector. It will also encourage the sector to become more effective, improve the quality of the work they undertake, maximise their impact on and involvement with local communities and enhance their links with the public and corporate sector;;
- **to employers** – investing in the future talent pool by encouraging young people to learn increasingly important soft skills, giving them the opportunity to experience potential future career opportunities at first hand, providing opportunity for employee involvement in volunteer activity, and contributing towards corporate social responsibility;
- **for Scotland** – by enabling it to become a world leader in terms of developing the ways in which young people can become involved in community development, and by embedding a culture of volunteering within future generations of Scots, and by bringing together the public, private and voluntary sectors for a common public good.

Organisation

32. The Working Group initially considered the scope for developing a series of pilot projects to inform the development of the scheme. However it concluded that this was unnecessary as the Project Scotland product was of a relatively manageable scale and there was considerable potential for using learning from a range of voluntary schemes in the UK and abroad which provide incentives and awards, as well as emerging learning on the Young Volunteer Challenge pilots organised by the Department for Education and Skills. The group was also concerned that developing a series of pilot projects might detract from the overall impact obtained by the launch of any subsequent national programme.

33. We believe it is essential to set up a dedicated organisation which will deliver the Project Scotland product and help to develop and manage the brand. Although we examined the scope for using existing structures to undertake this task, we were influenced by a number of factors including the relative lack of sectoral experience in managing large numbers of full-time volunteers, the desire for securing an exclusive focus on the Project Scotland product, and a need for the organisation to reflect the core values embodied in the Project Scotland concept. We investigated many options but concluded that we needed to create a not for profit company limited by guarantee which would apply to the Inland Revenue for charitable status. In order to avoid creating negative perceptions of Project Scotland as a top-down Government driven initiative, we concluded that we should establish a voluntary organisation that would be operationally independent from Government with a relatively light organisational footprint. The CEO should combine entrepreneurial drive with an understanding of the needs of a wider range of stakeholder groups. The suggested organisational structure is set out at **Annex B**. Its stakeholder structure is set out at **Annex C** and its initial work programme is found at **Annex D**.

Targets

34. We propose engaging 450 young people in 2005, the first operational year of Project Scotland. This will increase, over time to more than 1,000 volunteers per annum. **Annex E** sets out projected volunteer recruitment for the period 2005-2014. More detailed success criteria will be identified as part of the process of developing the business plan for Project Scotland.

Costs

35. Our initial business planning suggests that approximately two-thirds of the total costs of Project Scotland will be accounted for by basic living expenses. The draft business plan identifies costs of just under £2 million in the first year of operation, rising to £5 million in years two and three, which can be met from a variety of sources.

36. We believe there may be significant scope for reducing some of the overheads associated with the development of the Project Scotland office by seconding staff from other organisations; by outsourcing common office services and activities to existing organisations, and by sharing overheads with existing bodies. This will be investigated further.

37. We propose that the costs of managing Project Scotland could be met from a variety of sources including the Scottish Executive, the corporate sector, and other sources such as charitable trusts and foundations. Although we envisage that the Scottish Executive will provide initial set-up costs and contribute to ongoing revenue costs thereafter, our research suggests that the private sector will also be in a position to play a meaningful part in helping to develop and sustain the proposal.

Relation to State Benefits

38. We envisage that Project Scotland recipients should not be disadvantaged by being excluded from State Benefits for which they – or their families – may be eligible. However, we are clear that a full-time volunteer would not be eligible for Job Seekers' Allowance. Unless the rules are changed we would propose that any Project Scotland volunteer should receive living expenses that are at least equivalent to what they would be entitled to under JSA. Further details of the relation to State benefits are at **Annex F**.

Next steps

39. The next steps are:

- for the Scottish Executive to confirm its level of funding and support;
- to establish a small initial board of trustees to help set up the delivery agency and oversee its first steps;
- to scope the Chair, Board and CEO roles and skill requirements, and to develop a transparent recruitment process;
- to refine the business plan, including confirmation of key success criteria such as range and number of participants completing modules, and examine the scope for reducing overheads further;
- to develop volunteer programmes with partner agencies in the voluntary and public sector;
- to continue discussions with the volunteering sector about ways in which Project Scotland can best compliment existing initiatives and opportunities;
- to continue discussions with the private sector to optimise their support;
- to further explore benefits issues to ensure these do not act as a barrier to potential participants in Project Scotland;
- to engage a marketing agency to help research the details of the project offering.

The model envisages that 2004 will be a 'set up' year and that the first tranche of Project Scotland volunteers will come on board during 2005.

WORKING GROUP

Terms of reference

The task of the working group is to prepare proposals and implementation arrangements for piloting a programme which recognises youth volunteering. This is likely to have a number of elements including:

- A national accreditation scheme focused on giving people without formal qualifications something that recognises their volunteering competencies and which might thus be used to help them gain entry into further or higher education and the job market;
- A volunteering scheme for “gappers” with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In developing their proposals it is envisaged that the group will need to consider:

- their vision for the scheme and its role in embedding a volunteering culture in Scottish society;
- its relationship to existing volunteering programmes;
- key success criteria;
- the target group (age/geographical area/socio-economic background);
- the needs and aspirations of individual volunteers;
- identifying incentives and disincentives to “gapper” volunteers and the impact of this on their eligibility to claim state benefits;
- its relationship to accreditation/competency processes;
- ways of joining up various stakeholder interests including business, government and the voluntary sector;
- the views of organisations with the potential to use volunteers in the future;
- costs; and
- implementation and management arrangements for the pilots.

Timing

It is expected that the working group will meet on 5 occasions between June and December 2003. A final report will be submitted to the First Minister as soon as possible thereafter.

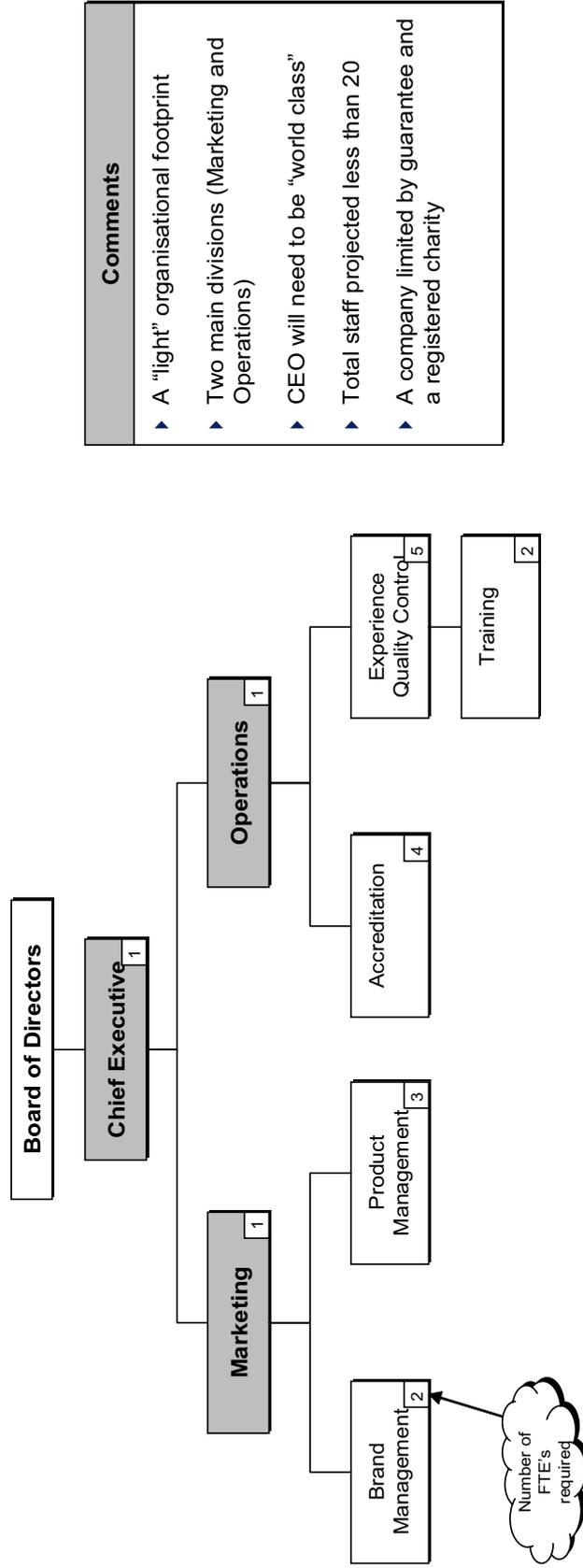
Membership

- Julia Ogilvy – Chair - Scottish Businesswoman of the Year, non-executive Director, Lloyds TSB Scotland, Director of Columba 1400, Patron of Big Brothers & Sisters.
- Graeme Alexander - Big Brothers & Sisters (UK)
- Samantha Barber - Scottish Business in the Community
- Robert Crawford - Scottish Enterprise
- Colette Douglas-Home - Journalist
- Euan Davidson - The Princes Trust
- Neville Mackay - Scottish Executive
- Rachel McEwen - Scottish Executive
- Stuart Miller - Young Enterprise Scotland
- John Moorhouse - The Big Idea
- John Mulgrew - East Ayrshire Education Authority
- George Thomson - Volunteer Development Scotland
- Melanie Ward - NUS Scotland

Servicing Arrangements

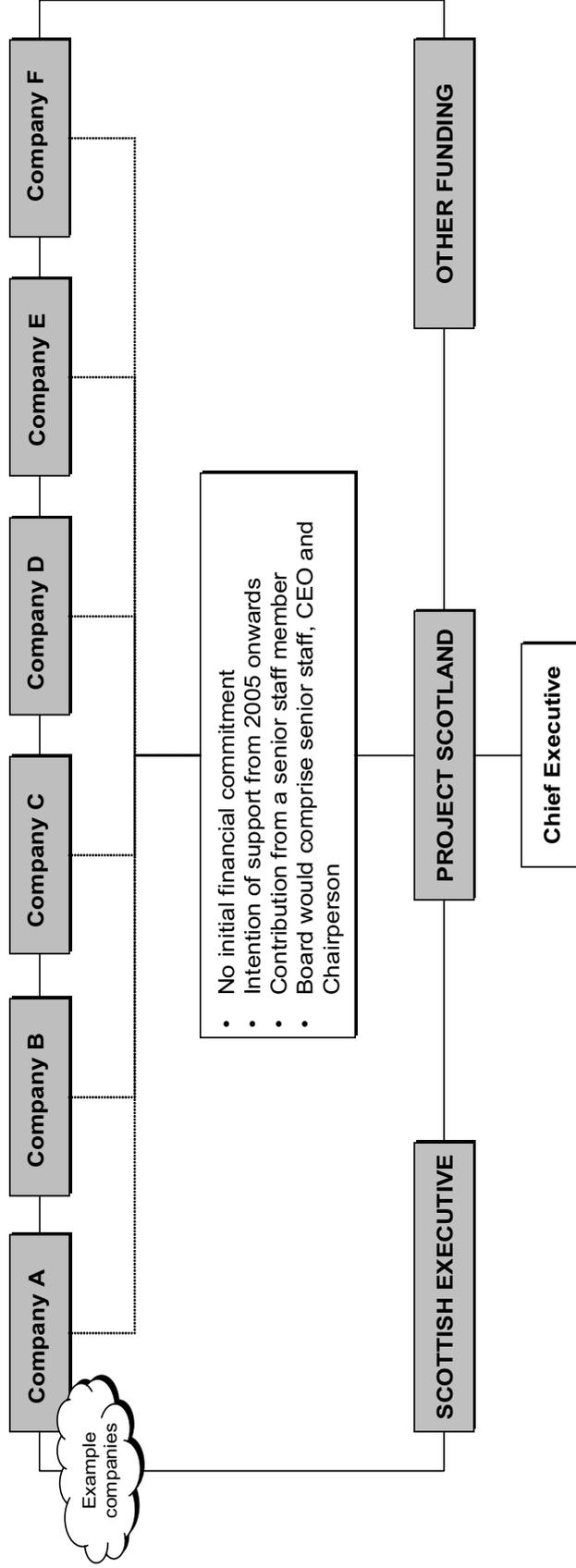
The working group will be serviced by Volunteer Development Scotland who has the day to day responsibility for managing the work of the group.

PROPOSED PROJECT SCOTLAND ORGANISATIONAL CHART



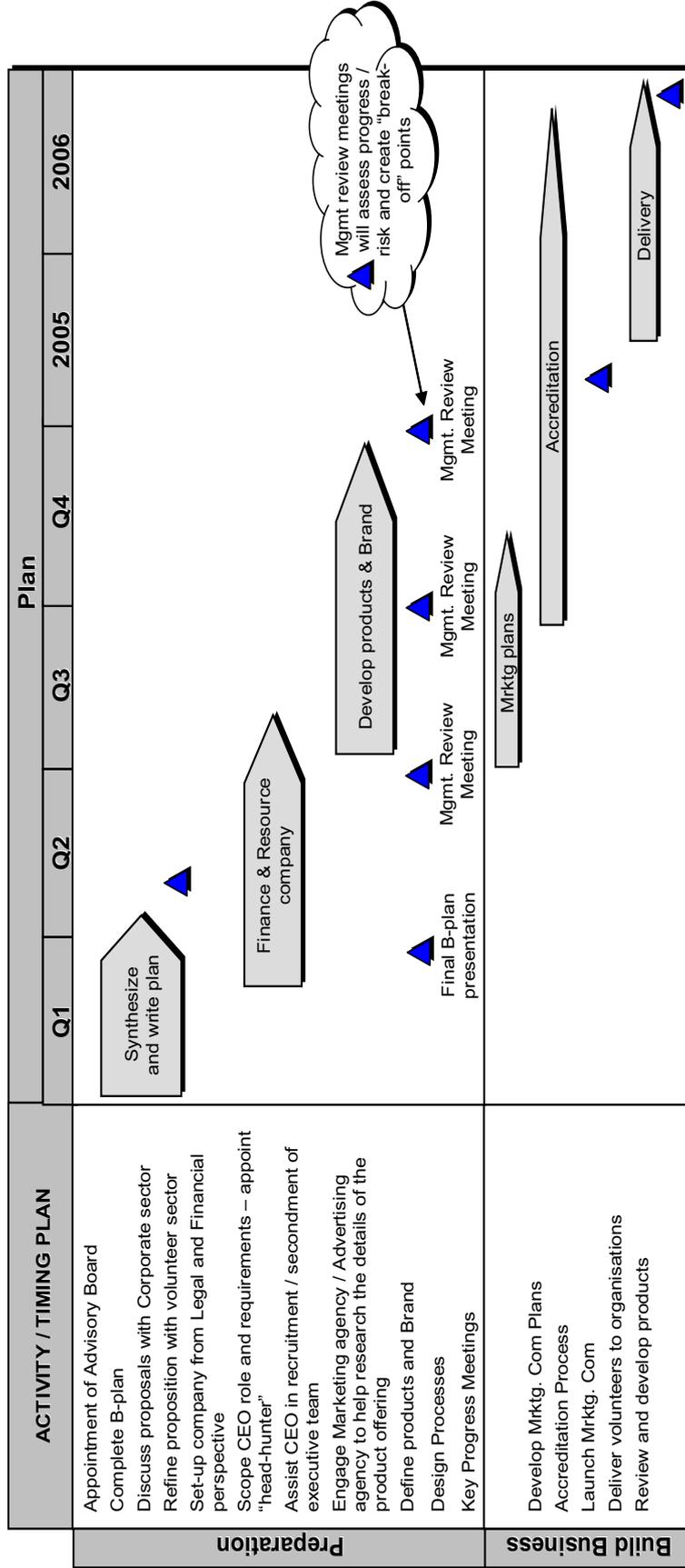
Comments
▶ A "light" organisational footprint
▶ Two main divisions (Marketing and Operations)
▶ CEO will need to be "world class"
▶ Total staff projected less than 20
▶ A company limited by guarantee and a registered charity

PROPOSED CORPORATE STRUCTURE



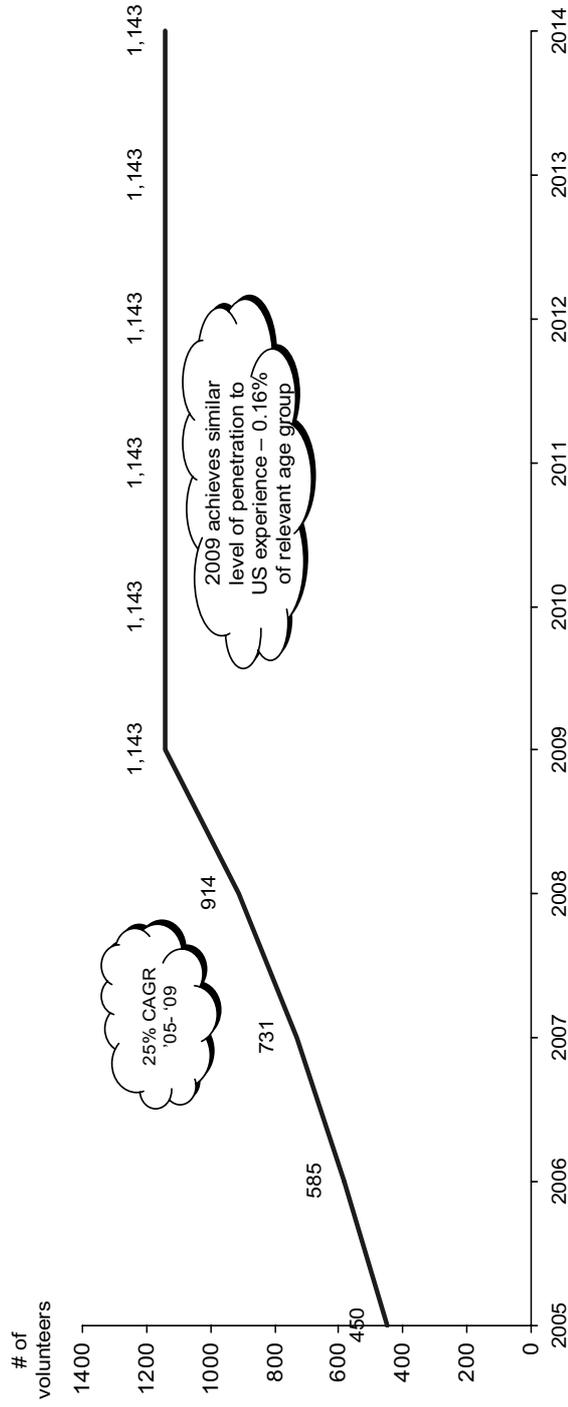
“VOLUNTARY WORK GIVES YOU MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO YOURSELF” - M, GRADUATE

PROPOSED PROJECT TIMING PLAN



“YOU CAN DO IT FOR YOURSELF JUST TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL WORTHWHILE” - F, FE STUDENT

PROJECTED PROJECT SCOTLAND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT (2005 – 2014)



"SENSE CHECK"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of secondary schools in Scotland as at Sept 2002 - 441 • Estimate 1-2 leavers on average choose Project Scotland • Plus a percentage of students who select Project Scotland as an alternative • Therefore volunteer numbers fall between 400 and 1200

Source: Working Group analysis. ISD Scottish Statistics 2000, assumes constant population levels

" I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO DO VOLUNTARY WORK ALL THE TIME, BUT I COULDN'T AFFORD TO DO IT" - M, GRAD

PROJECT SCOTLAND: ACCESSIBILITY & FINANCE

It is intended that Project Scotland should give young people of all backgrounds an equal opportunity to benefit from up to a year out volunteering. As participants will volunteer full-time, the vast majority will be financially dependent on income they receive through the project. It is envisaged that this would consist of a living allowance, and further to finishing volunteering, ring-fenced funds to help with education, training and personal development. During market research carried out with young people, the understandable concern was expressed that participants should not be out of pocket through participating in the scheme. Social security benefits are of course dependent on individual circumstances, but the following gives a flavour of the key issues for young people who might be concerned about finding themselves worse off financially through participation in Project Scotland.

- It is anticipated that many Project Scotland participants would be in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) prior to taking up their place. For benefit purposes, participants would not be classed as volunteers. Therefore they would not be able to fulfil the JSA requirements of being unemployed, actively seeking work and being available for employment. As such they would not be eligible for JSA.
- It is certainly possible to volunteer and access social security benefits. However, under benefits rules, volunteering cannot be remunerative work of 16 hours or more a week. It is defined as work without remuneration beyond reimbursement of expenses. Clearly, participants in Project Scotland would be required to participate for more than 16 hours per week and receive remuneration over and above out of pocket expenses. For benefits purposes, this remuneration would, quite logically, be treated as income. As such, participants would not be eligible for Income Support.
- When it comes to Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit, rules are in place to help ensure that people on low income who have a rent or council tax liability do not find themselves in a 'benefits trap'. For each additional £1 of income above Income Support levels, Housing Benefit is reduced by 65p and Council Tax Benefit by 20p. What this means is that in terms of income, the participants who are in receipt of these benefits would not be in a worse financial position than they were prior to participating in Project Scotland.
- Where a Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit claimant has an adult non-dependant living in the same household, such as a son or daughter, a deduction is normally made from their benefit in order to reflect a reasonable contribution towards the rent or council tax liability. The deduction is based on the non-dependant's age and financial circumstances. This means that if the participant is

living at home with parents or close relatives who are in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit, the level of Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit to which the participants' parents or close relatives were entitled prior to the participant starting volunteering may reduce.

It will be essential for Project Scotland to ensure that advice and support is in place to enable participants to access benefits for which they are eligible, and to ensure participants are not out of pocket through their efforts, through Project Scotland, to increase their own opportunities and contribute to the lives of others. It will also be necessary for those taking the project forward to check with the Department for Work and Pensions what the impact of Project Scotland financial allowances would be as these are finalised.

TABLES

TABLE 1: YOUTH VOLUNTEERING FACTS AND FIGURES

- approximately 550,000 16-24 year olds in Scotland (11 % of total population)
- 30% of volunteers aged 16-24 involved with work associated with children and families
- 30% of volunteers aged 16-24 involved with youth work
- 15% of volunteers aged 16-24 involved with faith organisations
- 70:30 split between female and male volunteers
- 15% of economically active 16-24 year olds are unemployed
- 34% of JSA claimants are aged 16-24

TABLE 2: RANK FOUNDATION GAP SCHEME

- Subsistence plus allowance of £35.
- £600-£1,000 after 6 months to spend as they wish.
- Aims to boost skills, confidence and aspirations.
- Certificate of Achievement (=NVQ Level 3).
- Award ceremony annually.
- Maintains portfolio to chart achievements.

TABLE 3: WORLD YOUTH AWARDS

- Four training courses: (introduction, programme preparation, in-country orientation, return participants weekend)
- All placements supported and supervised
- Pairing with local volunteers.
- Accommodation, food, travel plus £15 a week.
- Asked to raise £500.

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS (UK)

- Full-time residential volunteering opportunities in 500 community and care projects.
 - Structured placements from 4-12 months.
 - 35 hour week.
 - Accommodation + food (£35.50) + £29 pocket money.
 - One week paid holiday with return travel home.
 - Certificate and references.
 - Buddying system, pairing new and experienced volunteers.
-

TABLE 5: AMERICORPS

- One year's service involves 1,700 hours (partial award for 900 or 300 hours).
 - Living allowance \$10,000 (below minimum wage). No means testing.
 - Health insurance and training.
 - Education/Training award of \$4,725 valid for seven years.
 - Maximum of two annual awards.
 - 'Assists recruitment in weak areas such as teaching'.
 - Uses business practices, outside Government structure, board of directors etc.
 - High PR visibility. Personally led by Clinton. Government heads required to look for relevant proposals.
 - Costing note: Only half of earned awards are claimed.
-

TABLE 6: VOLUNTARY SOCIAL YEAR, GERMANY

- Placements within 130 organisations
 - Living allowance (food, accommodation, pocket money and work clothes).
 - Social welfare cover (health insurance, child care, child benefit and pension entitlement).
 - Social education element: Educational mentoring and 25 seminars throughout the year.
 - Universities and other HE organisations accrediting the year as an internship.
-

TABLE 7:

Group	Respondent details	SEG	Gender
1	Final year at school (Highers) Intending to take GAP year, then HE	ABC1	Male
2	5th/6th year school, no plan to stay on in education	C2DE	Female`
3	5th/6th year school, no plan to stay on in education	C2DE	Male
4	Left school – no employment 16-17	C2DE	Female
5	Left school – no employment 16-17	C2DE	Male
6	Final year at school (Highers) Intending to take GAP year, then HE	ABC1	Female

