

Mighty Oak /Age Friendly Volunteer Ambassador Programme

Volunteer Impact Assessment Report

2015/2016



Contents

Page 3	Background / Acknowledgements
Page 4	Methodology /Categorisation of impacts/ Research objectives
Page 5	The impact of volunteering
Page 6-7	Part 1 - Profile of volunteers
Page 8-12	Part 2 - Mighty Oak Volunteer feedback
Page 13	Summary/key findings
Page 14-15	Conclusions
Appendix 1	Volunteer Survey

Background

This report has been produced by North West Volunteer Centre with support from the volunteers recruited through the Mighty Oak/Age Friendly volunteer ambassador programme. The North West Volunteer Centre is a project of Churches Voluntary Work, set up in 1983 by the four mainline Churches in Northern Ireland (Roman Catholic, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian) to improve training and employment opportunities for young people.

Our organisation recognises the invaluable contribution volunteers make to society and we work to enhance and add value to these efforts. The core aims of our work are to promote volunteering, recruit and link volunteers to organisations, support local groups and communities to maximise the contribution volunteers make and ensure volunteering is recognised as a positive expression of active citizenship

We have offices in both Derry/Londonderry and Strabane.

This research report has been completed using the principles and guidelines of the **Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit, (VIAT)**, developed by Volunteering England and promoted by Volunteer Now in Northern Ireland.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the impacts of volunteering for Mighty Oak volunteer ambassadors.

Through this report, we will identify the benefits volunteering brings, highlighting the physical, economic, human, social and cultural capital (or differences) achieved through volunteer activity.

Acknowledgements

The North West Volunteer Centre would like to especially thank all the individual volunteers who took part in this research project and Department of Social Development who funded the project.

Methodology

The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) offers a range of different instruments for capturing information on how and to what extent volunteering impacts on people and organisations i.e. surveys, focus groups, topic guides and diaries.

The tool kit is a tried and tested adaptable way of assessing the impact of volunteering on volunteers, organisations, services users and the wider community.

One group of stakeholders were considered within this impact assessment:

1. Mighty Oak Volunteer ambassadors

Categorisation of Benefits and Impact

Individual volunteers recruited through the Mighty Oak Volunteer Ambassador Programme completed volunteer questionnaires to gather data and information on the following:

Physical Capital –the concrete product or output e.g. number of volunteer hours

Human Capital –the acquisition of skills and personal development

Economic Capital –the financial and economic effects that result from volunteering

Social capital – captures social impact, creating a more cohesive community through building relationships, networks and bonds of trust between people.

Cultural Capital –assets such as a shared sense of cultural and religious identity. Due to the sensitivity of some of these issues within a Northern Ireland context, questions relating to culture have focused on community identity and participation.

Research Objectives

1. To provide an understanding of the impact of volunteering for the individual volunteer who participated on the Mighty Oak Volunteer Ambassador programme.



The impact of volunteering on individuals

The report focuses on the responses from the volunteers from the Mighty Oak Volunteer Ambassador programme. Questionnaires were designed¹ and sent to the 28 registered Mighty oaks and 6 were completed and returned; a sample of 21%

All multiple choice questions asked within the volunteer questionnaire have been designed to allow for a scoring system called the traffic system. It provides a visual indication of the majority response to each question in the questionnaire. This system has been used for the table outputs relating to the volunteer responses. All the multiple choice questions used the following three of 6-point Likert scale below;

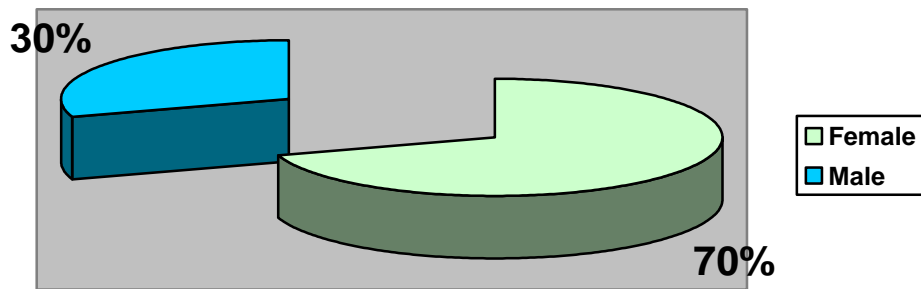
strongly agree	agree	Neither agree or disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	Not relevant
very satisfied	satisfied	neither satisfied or dissatisfied	not satisfied	Really not satisfied	Not relevant
Greatly increased	increased	stayed the same	decreased	decreased greatly	not relevant

- A green light indicates that the volunteer is happy and satisfied in their role as a volunteer within that area. This is usually awarded where the majority of respondents score strongly agree or agree/ increased greatly or increased.
- An amber light is a cue for further investigation or to consider whether the question was appropriate in the first place. This response is usually awarded where the majority of respondents score neither agree nor disagree/ the same or not relevant.
- A red light indicates that substantially more needs to be done in order to improve work in an area. This response is usually awarded where the majority of respondents score disagree or strongly disagree/decreased or decreased greatly.

¹ Appendix 1 Volunteer questionnaire

PART 1 - Profile of Volunteers

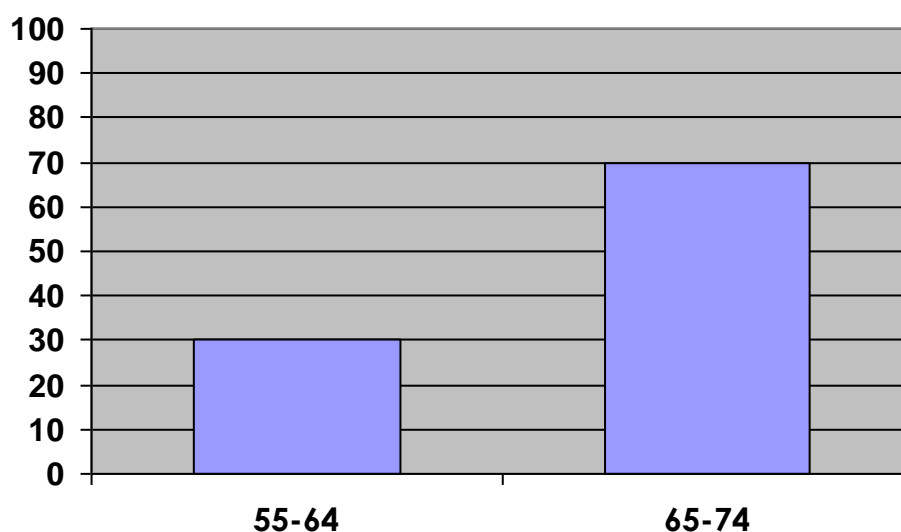
1.1 Gender 30% male and 70% female



“My Participation with the Mighty Oaks is something I will devote more time to this year, I value its intentions and feel and hope I can contribute to its aims” Mighty Oak Volunteer

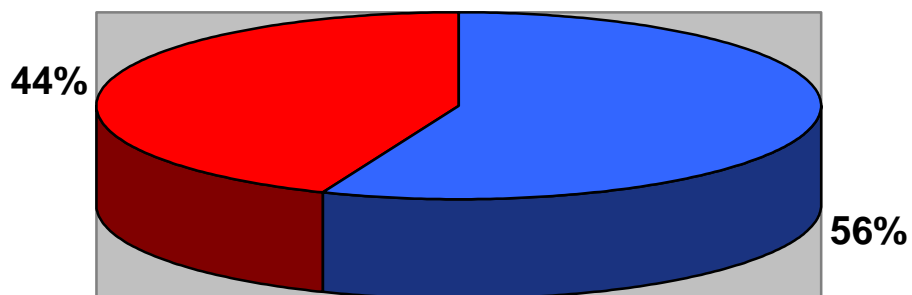
1.2 Age Range of volunteers

30% of volunteers were aged 55-64 and 70% of volunteers were ages 65-74.

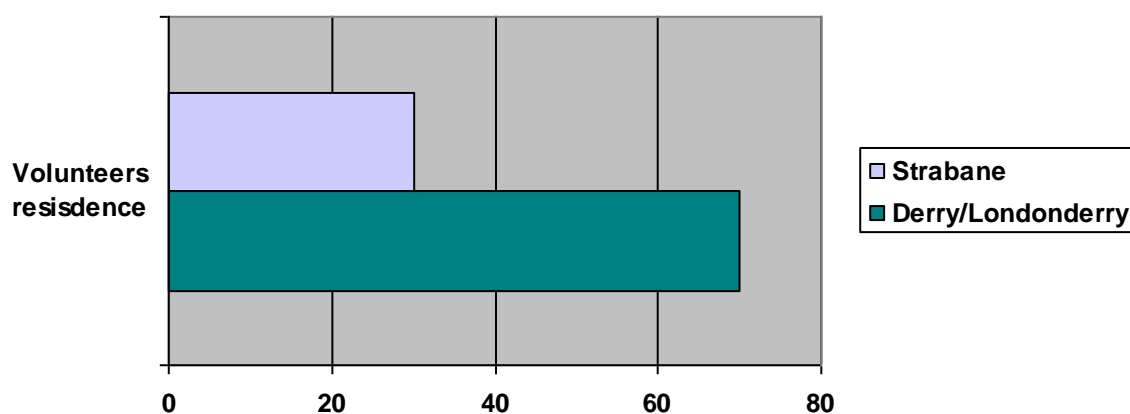


1.3 Caring Responsibilities

The pie chart below highlights that 56% of respondents have no caring responsibilities and 44% currently care for relatives

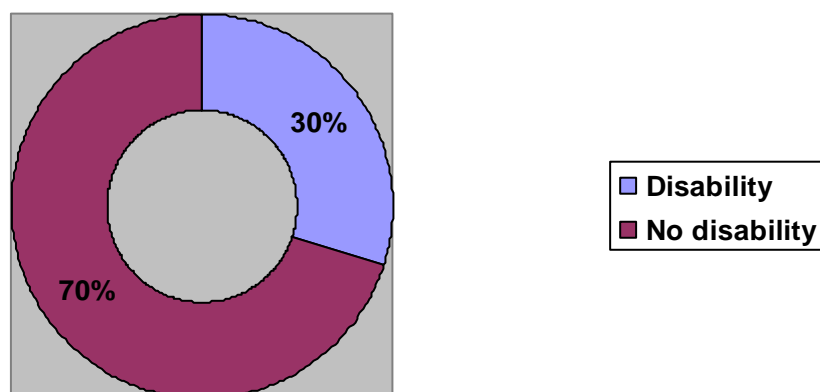


1.4 Residence of volunteers



30% of volunteers came from Strabane and 70% Derry/Londonderry

1.5 Volunteers with and without a disability



The chart above shows that 30% of the volunteers surveyed considered themselves to have a disability where 70% did not.

Part 2 Mighty Oak activities

2.1 The volunteers were asked ~What activities do you carry out as an age friendly Mighty Oak Ambassador and asked to rate satisfaction levels for each

Promotion & awareness activities

	very satisfied	satisfied	neither satisfied or dissatisfied	not really satisfied	not at all satisfied	Not relevant
Conducting and gathering information for surveys	70%	30%				
Communication activities /sharing information	70%	30%				
Participate on engagement workshops	70%	30%				
Participate on steering group meetings	44%	28%				28%

The chart above indicates the range of activities carried out by the Mighty Oak volunteer ambassadors. It is clear from the chart to see very positive satisfaction level from the majority for each activity highlighted in green.

2.2 Number of hours

Number of volunteer hours ranged from 1 hour to 6-7 hours per month. This worked out as an average of 4.2 hours per month for Age friendly / Mighty Oak activities. It is worth noting that the majority of Mighty Oak volunteers are already engaged in other volunteering activities with other projects and some volunteers have indicated that they do 30 hours on average per month volunteering.

2.3 Economical Capital (financial and economic value)

Based on the (ASHE)² Average hourly Wage 2015 for Northern Ireland of £11.97 we can suggest the following with regard to economic capital for the Mighty Oak Volunteers;

28 Volunteers x 4.2 hours per month = 117.6 hours per month

117.6 x 12 months = 1411.2 hours per annum

1411.2 hours x £11.97 = £16,892.06

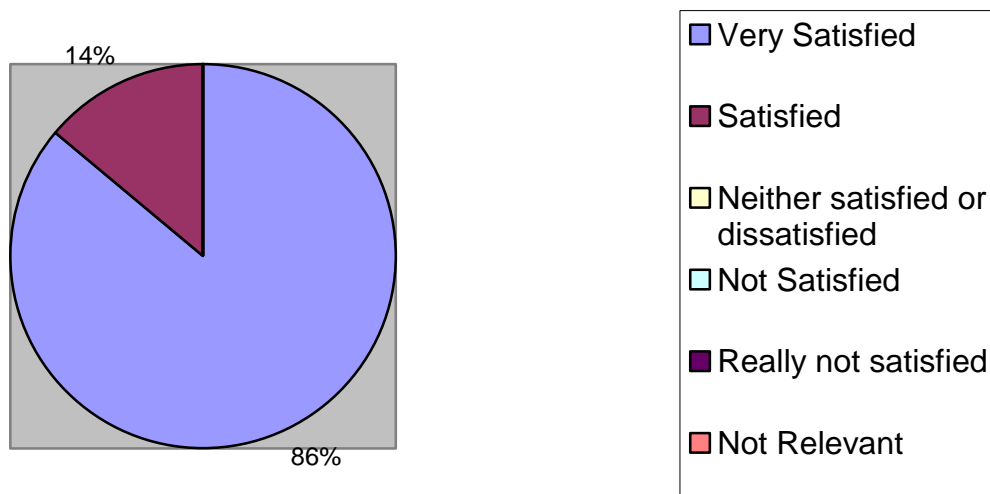
By quantifying the Mighty Oak volunteers' time represents a considerable and valuable contribution to the Age Friendly project and positive economic impact that volunteering generates.

2.4 Volunteers were asked has becoming a Mighty Oak increased your ability to input to local discussions on issues you find important. **100% of respondents answered yes.**

2.5 Volunteer were asked - Do you think your voice is being heard? **100% of respondents answered yes.**

2.6 Volunteers were asked in regard to age friendly had they notice any changes **70% answered yes and 30% answered no /not yet**

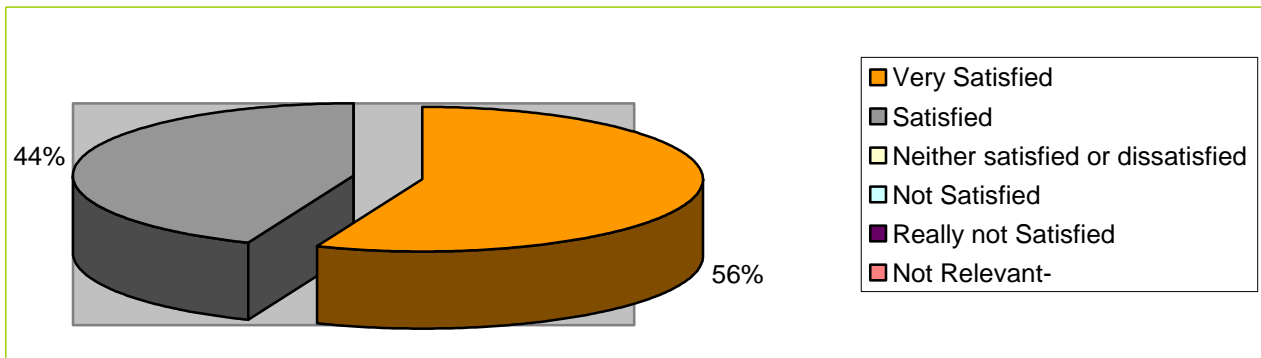
2.7 How satisfied are you with the Mighty Oak Volunteer experience



All of the volunteers responded 100% indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Mighty Oak volunteer experience

² ASHE - Annual Survey of hours and Earnings 2015 (ASHE) at £11.97 for NI;

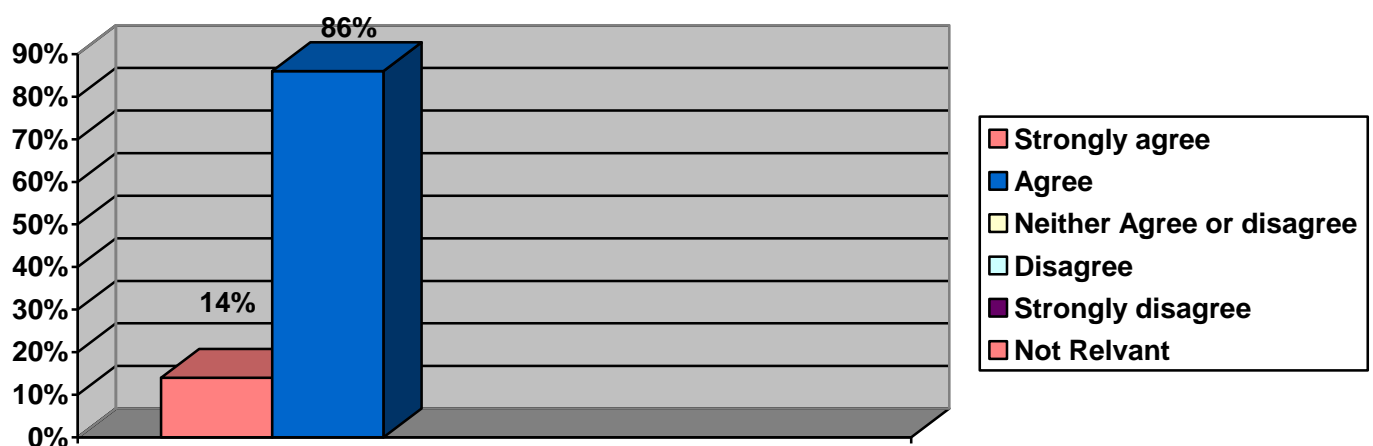
2.8 How satisfied are you with access to training opportunities as a Mighty Oak Volunteer?



The chart above indicates that 56% of respondents were very satisfied and 44% were satisfied with access to training opportunities as a mighty Oak volunteer.



2.9 I am aware of what is expected of me in my role as a mighty Oak



14% of volunteers strongly agreed and 86% agreed that they knew what was expected in their mighty oak role

2.10 Human Capital (acquisition of skills and personal development)

	Increased Greatly	Increased	Stayed The Same	Decreased	Decreased Greatly	Not Relevant
confidence in own abilities		56%	44%			
Sense of Self Esteem	28%	28%	44%			
Sense of making a useful contribution	14%	72%	14%			
Willingness to try new things	14%	72%	14%			
Sense of physical health		44%	56%			
Sense of Mental health	14%	28%	58%			
Overall well being		56%	44%			

Ability to communicate with others		70%	30%			
Ability to encourage others		58%	42%			

2.11 Social Capital (creating a more cohesive community through building relationships, networks and bonds of trust between people)

	Increased Greatly	Increased	Stayed The Same	Decreased	Decreased Greatly	Not Relevant
From being a volunteer my range of friends has...		70%	30%			
Support and information networks	14%	70%	16%			
Trust in others		56%	44%			
willingness to look out for other people	16%	42%	42%			
Feeling that this is a safer place to live	16%	70%	14%			
Sense of being part of the community	28%	56%	16%			
Willingness to get involved in local activities		100%				
Interest in doing more volunteering		56%	30%			14%
Opportunity to take part in local campaigns		70%	30%			

2.12 Cultural Capital (community identity and participation)

	Increased Greatly	Increased	Stayed The Same	Decreased	Decreased Greatly	Not Relevant
Understanding of people from different backgrounds/culture		70%	14%			14%
Contact with people from different backgrounds/culture has..		70%	14%			14%

2.13 Volunteers were asked – How can we encourage more people to participate in volunteering?

“A million Dollar question – people can be lazy and disaffected but volunteers like myself can influence and encourage others”

“My Participation with the Mighty Oaks is something I will devote more time to this year, I value its intentions and feel and hope I can contribute to its aims

By covering travel costs and engaging with others from different communities

“By Highlighting in the news – local radio stations and newspapers – what we are at, what we are doing, why we are doing it and what is the end product we hope to

“Highlighting individual progress we have made in different targets”

“By showing them the end product to prove and show it can be done”

“Match people up with things that not only interest them, but they can contribute to and benefit from being part of the group”

“Emphasise the benefits to young people”

“Publicity, talks to groups, schools, reporting on and photographs of current work in community magazines and local papers”

Summary – key findings

This report indicates that the Mighty Oak /Age Friendly Volunteer ambassadors carry out a range of activities in their role as Mighty Oak Volunteer ambassador and are very satisfied with carrying out these various tasks and activities.

To calculate economic value - The number of hours gifted to Age Friendly/Mighty Oak Activities per month averaged at 4.2 hours per month which equates to an economic contribution of £16,892 per year when we use the NI average hourly wage.

The report highlights that 100% of volunteers felt that, since becoming a Mighty Oak Age Friendly Volunteer has increased their ability to input into local discussions, and similarly 100% of volunteers also felt that their voices were being heard.

70% of volunteers noticed changes with regard to the North West becoming an Age Friendly city and region.

100% of volunteers were either very satisfied or satisfied from their Mighty Oak volunteer experience.

100% of volunteers have been very satisfied or satisfied with access to training opportunities.

In terms of the Mighty Oak role – 100% of volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that they knew what was expected of them.

In terms of Human Capital – (table 2.10) shows positive indications or an increase in the following for the Mighty Oaks;

- Confidence
- Sense of making a useful contribution
- Willingness to try new things
- Overall well being

The majority of volunteers surveyed felt that their ability to communicate with others and the ability to encourage others increased by being a Mighty Oak Age Friendly volunteer.

From the Social Capital (table 2.11) shows that the majority of volunteers indicate positive impact / increases across the 9 areas which include;

- From being a volunteer my range of friends has...
- Support and information networks
- Trust in others
- willingness to look out for other people
- Feeling that this is a safer place to live
- Sense of being part of the community
- Willingness to get involved in local activities
- Interest in doing more volunteering
- Opportunity to take part in local campaigns

In terms of Cultural Capital table (2.12) the majority of volunteers all indicated an increase in the following areas;

- Understanding of people from different backgrounds/culture
- Contact with people from different backgrounds/culture has..

Conclusions

This impact assessment on the Mighty Oak Age Friendly volunteer ambassador programme attempts to illustrate the range of impacts experienced from volunteers involved on the project. Overall, evidence shows that the majority of volunteers' answers were tagged 'green' - very satisfied or satisfied, increased or greatly increased, and agreed or strongly agreed; - a strong indication that the volunteers were happy and satisfied in their role as a Mighty Oak Age Friendly volunteer ambassador.

It is stated in the Volunteer Strategy for Northern Ireland that "Volunteers should have an enjoyable, rewarding and effective volunteering experience. Volunteers should be engaged in meaningful activity – responding to their passions and interests". On reflection of this report it is evident that 100% of the Mighty Oak Volunteers who took part in the research were satisfied with their role, experience and access to training

opportunities. 100% of volunteers strongly agreed or agreed that their contribution they make is valued and similarly 100% of the Mighty Oaks knew what they could expect from being a Mighty Oak Age Friendly volunteer Ambassador which is a very positive impact of the project.

There is considerable research and literature that focuses on the impact of volunteering on the health of the older age group³. The information collated the Human Social and cultural tables would suggest that volunteering has a positive impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing. However it is worth noting that all the volunteers who took part in the research have been engaged in volunteering for long periods of time before stepping into the role of Mighty Oak. It could be said that the volunteers who took part on the research already believe that volunteering is a positive life choice and a way of life, - beneficial to maintaining health and well being reflected in the report. That being said perhaps it would have been interesting to carry out the same research with volunteers who have not volunteered previously to becoming a Mighty Oak.

The overall report indicates a positive representation of the Mighty Oak/Age Friendly volunteer ambassador programme. Volunteers have experienced positive impacts from the activities involved with the project to date and hopefully this continues with Age Friendly going forward.

With the changing demographics the pool of older people is widening and people aged 55 and over are well placed to volunteer in a wide range of opportunities with the time they have available. Older people who volunteer is something that benefits everyone and the North West Volunteer Centre endeavours to encourage and support in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

For further information please contact Julie Connolly or Marirose Cunningham at North West Volunteer Centre on 028 71 271017 or email strabane@volunteeringnorthwest.co.uk
www.volunteeringnorthwest.co.uk

³ For further information - <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/over-50s-volunteering>