Impacts 08 Team
Dr Beatriz García, Director
Ruth Melville, Programme Manager
Kate Rodenhurst, Research Assistant
Sonia McEwan, Programme Assistant

IMPACTS 08
European Capital of Culture Research Programme

Volunteering for Culture
Exploring the Impact of being an 08 Volunteer

October 2008

Report based on research carried out by:
Kate Rodenhurst, Lucy Comerford-Park and Ruth Melville

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

liverpool JMU

Executive Summary and Key Findings

This research seeks to explore the impact of being an 08 Volunteer. In particular the report seeks to identify any changes in volunteers' attitudes to culture and patterns of participation in cultural activity as a result of their experiences. The project forms part of Impacts 08's wider research programme, in particular adding further understanding to our theme of Cultural Participation.[1]

This report is based on a survey completed by 116 volunteers (some recently registered as 08 Volunteers, others who had been volunteering for a while) between late 2007 and early 2008, and also feedback from volunteers through two focus groups delivered in April 2008.

The report provides a baseline analysis of volunteers' feelings about culture, and specifically about Liverpool winning the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2008. It also discusses volunteers' current levels of participation in cultural activities, and their motivations for volunteering.

The cultural lives of volunteers
- Volunteers have a rich and complex understanding of the word 'culture', embodying several different meanings. They define culture in three ways: in terms of 'the arts'; as about how people interact within society; and as part of one's personal development. They also tend to associate culture with regeneration, a linkage which is likely to have arisen from the conflation of 'culture' with the European Capital of Culture title (which is promoted as a regeneration opportunity for Liverpool).
- In defining culture as referring to the arts, volunteers see it as something that broadens the mind and affects the emotions, and as distinct from other forms of entertainment.
- Reasons for engagement in culture are primarily social, with some volunteers also attending cultural events to meet spiritual needs.
- The main barriers to further engagement in cultural activity are ticket costs, lack of time, location, and lack of information. These barriers are closely related to the type of cultural event – for example, price is a major barrier to attendance at festivals, theatre and live music events, while lack of time is more frequently cited as a barrier to attending museums and galleries.

How they view Liverpool 08
- 08 Volunteers have a high degree of civic pride. They were highly enthusiastic about Liverpool's ECoC win, and see the benefits of the ECoC in terms of being an opportunity to regenerate Liverpool and change negative external perceptions of the city. The potential for the development of an improved cultural programme throughout the year is perceived as a secondary benefit.

08 Volunteering – motivations and benefits
- The primary motivations for volunteering are civic pride, a desire to 'give something back' as long term residents of Liverpool, and the will to turn around negative perceptions of Liverpool by providing a high quality experience to visitors. The cultural and social opportunities available to volunteers are secondary, although volunteers are enthusiastic about attending events and experiencing different cultural activities.
- Early feedback suggests that 08 volunteering is having a substantial impact on participants. In particular, they report that they have widened their cultural interests to incorporate different types of event and activity (particularly community based events), and that they are developing confidence and new skills.
- Volunteering is becoming a significant part of the lives and routines of volunteers. It is recommended that an exit strategy is devised for the 08 Volunteers Programme that promotes the ongoing involvement of experienced and trained volunteers in the cultural life of Liverpool after 2008.

---

[1] For an overview of Impacts 08's wider work see www.impacts08.net.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. 08 Volunteers

08 Volunteers were recruited from 2005 onwards to support the delivery of the 2008 European Capital of Culture programme and events in the themed years leading up to 2008. The volunteers are involved in a wide variety of activities, including stewarding events, carrying out evaluations, and providing information to visitors to the city. By May 2008, there were 825 active volunteers and over 4,000 registered volunteers[2].

1.2. Aims of this study

This is the first report from an ongoing study that seeks to explore the impacts of taking part in 08 volunteering on the volunteers themselves. In particular, we wish to identify whether volunteering affects attitudes to and participation in cultural activity, explore reasons for volunteering and understand related aspirations and expectations.

This report is intended to provide a baseline description of the 08 Volunteers' interest in and engagement with culture and with Liverpool 08. Follow-up research will assess changes against the baseline. The report covers:

- Reasons for volunteering and previous volunteer experience.
- Attitudes to culture, and specifically towards Liverpool's successful bid to be the ECoC 2008.
- Current levels of participation in cultural activity and barriers to further engagement.
- The demographic profile of 08 Volunteers.

In addition, the report highlights some emerging findings about changes taking place for individuals as a result of their volunteering.

1.3. Research methodology

The report findings are based on a survey of volunteers, distributed at volunteer training events in at the end of 2007 and in early 2008. Overall there were 116 responses to the survey, of which 21 were from those who had not yet volunteered at any events. In addition, five interviews were carried out with experienced volunteers, and two small focus group discussions were held with both experienced and new 08 Volunteers. These provided additional qualitative data to enrich the survey findings. A further process of data gathering in late 2008 and early 2009 will enable us to identify any changes in volunteers' cultural interests, attitudes and patterns of participation that have occurred as a result of their experience.

Impacts of Volunteering on Cultural Engagement, a literature review attached as Appendix 6.1, outlines approaches to researching the impact of volunteering, and of participation in culture. In particular, this research draws on the work of Morris Hargreaves McIntyre[3] in developing a framework for assessing the depth of individuals' intellectual and spiritual engagement in cultural activity.

1.4. Who are the volunteers

08 Volunteers are more likely to be older people, retired from work, and women. They are more likely to be educated to degree level and to come from socio-economic groups ABC1 than the Liverpool average. Many have lived in Liverpool for over 10 years, and thus have a good knowledge of the city and its cultural offer. Seventy three percent of 08 Volunteers have previous voluntary experience, with 41% of volunteers having previously volunteered in cultural organisations. (See Appendix 6.2 for further demographic information).

---

[2] Active volunteers are those who have passed through the training programme and are able to take up volunteering work.
[3] See http://www.lateralthinkers.com/ for information on Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's ideas and examples of their work.

2. Understandings of culture among 08 Volunteers

We asked survey respondents to write down, in one or two sentences, 'what culture means to you'. A similar question, 'how do you define culture?' was used as a starting point for focus group discussion. Our findings suggest that 08 Volunteers have a complex understanding of culture, recognising that the word can simultaneously embody distinct meanings.

Several ways of thinking about culture emerge through this research, often held simultaneously. In general 08 Volunteers define culture in broad terms. However, some trends in terms of the way volunteers perceive culture can be identified, from the survey responses and further discussion in focus groups.

2.1. Culture as 'the arts'

The largest single identification was of culture as describing 'the arts' – for example, music, art, architecture, heritage sites and drama. Of 102 survey responses, 28 were categorised as such. The following responses are representative of many of the answers given:

> 'T*he arts, literature, history.'*

> '*Culture to me is a mix of art, music, events and history belonging to the city.'*

> '*Diversity, entertainment – be it arts, drama, writing, music, etc.'*

> '*Culture means the history, and arts, architecture of a nation or people.'*

> '*The finer aspects of life, music, literature, theatre, history, architecture and art.'*

It is interesting that within the focus group, when considering culture in these terms, volunteers tend to make a distinction between culture and entertainment. For the volunteers, quality matters. This does not signify a cultural elitism that favours, for example, opera over pop music, and there is little reference within the responses to what is traditionally thought of as 'high art'. Volunteers described participating in a wide range of cultural activities, from a visit to the Lady Lever Art Gallery to going to see Westlife in concert. An event is 'culture' if it stirs the emotions or is thought provoking, and in this context focus group participants gave a range of examples of things that were not culture, including sport and some television programmes.

> '*The World Firefighter Games? I know some people would think so, but that's not culture to me.'*

Volunteers also acknowledged varying levels of cultural engagement, with the experience of performing or creating as compared with the act of being a spectator, resulting in stronger outcomes in terms of the effect of culture to stimulate learning and social engagement.

2.2. Culture as lifestyle

Volunteers also defined culture in a much broader sense, meaning every aspect of life within a particular group or society. Twenty five respondents defined culture as the way of life of individuals or groups within society. The varied answers to this question included:

> '*Various peoples displaying their individual heritage.'*

> '*A common understanding of how we interact with each other.'*

'A sense of shared identity.'

'A traditional and local way of doing things.'

'Culture is people and their way of living, our way of life, habits, beliefs, expression.'

'The artistic expression of a group of people, together with their unique customs and ways of doing things which give them a special character.'

'The friendliness, willingness to help and laughter of the Liverpool people.'

One survey respondent described culture as 'the way we do things around here'. In this construction of the meaning of culture, volunteers referenced Liverpool and their own sense of belonging to the city, for example,

'My heritage, what my parents, grandparents have built and passed on, in the town they chose to live in (Liverpool)'.

Their sense of culture as being the everyday life of their city is thus closely connected to their civic pride. Focus group respondents defined culture as:

'The food, the language, the way of life – you don't think of that as culture, but if you were abroad it would be culture, wouldn't it?'

Focus group participants referenced the cultural diversity of Liverpool to define its cultural offer. Some felt that they were still learning about the diverse history of Liverpool and its communities. For example, the focus group discussed current attempts to preserve a Scandinavian church with links to the Swedish and Norwegian communities that settled in Liverpool, with agreement that this building was culturally significant to the city and should be supported. They also made references to culture happening in the mixing of different cultures and heritages.

'Culture is a common understanding of how we interact with each other.'

2.3. Culture as intellectual and emotional catalyst

Eighteen respondents identified culture by its ability to transform the individual through experience. Responses included the following:

'Everything that lifts the spirit and transports the person giving a sense of wellbeing and joy.'

'Extending and expanding my personal experience of what surrounds me.'

'Intellectual, stimulating experience.'

'Having the opportunity to better yourself.'

'To participate, we can go on to higher things.'

'The chance to enrich your life through knowledge and by being part of a group that enjoys similar things.'

'The ethos that underpins and uplifts our spirits.'

'Culture is an enhancement to my life. It stimulates my senses, giving me a feeling of enlargement.'

Focus group participants similarly defined culture in terms of its ability either to develop knowledge or to stimulate an emotional response. To these volunteers, culture 'makes you think' and 'broadens your horizons'. For the volunteers the measure of cultural quality is in its ability to affect the individual. They describe culture as educational, inspiring, and stimulating.

In conclusion, volunteers define culture in three ways. Firstly, culture is the arts, and can be recognised by its ability to promote learning, stimulate thinking, and provoke an emotional response. Secondly, culture is a way of life in a particular place, and exists in relationships and interactions between people. Finally, culture is a catalyst for improvement, through the development of an individual or the transformation of a city. For many volunteers, culture is a mixture of all of the above, their familiarity and confidence with engaging in the arts, and the civic pride they express, combine to make up what they perceive as culture. Perhaps most expressively summed up by one survey respondent as:

'All aspects of life relating [to] art, education, literature and distinction in a civilised society promoting mutual care and respect.'

2.4. Disentangling 'Culture' and the European Capital of Culture

Twelve respondents defined culture in terms of the potential for Liverpool to regenerate and improve its external image. In these responses it was clear that some respondents were merging concepts of culture generally, and European Capital of Culture specifically.

'A *chance for Liverpool to be reborn.'*

'Opportunity to show the best of Liverpool to outsiders.'

'A chance to show the world that Liverpool has risen from the ashes of mediocrity and is now reclaiming its rightful place upon the world stage of great cities.'

'It means that Liverpool will be back on the map – for good reasons instead of negative.'

'The fantastic chance we have to showcase our city and let others know why we are so proud of it.'

These responses indicate the extent to which the 08 Volunteers see the ECoC in terms of its potential to change Liverpool, discussed in more detail below.

3. Attitudes to Liverpool as the ECoC

3.1. Attitudes to Liverpool winning the bid

We asked survey respondents how they felt when they heard that Liverpool had been awarded the title of ECoC 2008. Given that the sample consists of people who have chosen to give up their free time to support the delivery of the Liverpool 08 programme, a positive response to this question is to be expected, and indeed at least 90% of the comments were positive, with some of the negative comment framed as concerns within a wider response of enthusiasm about 2008. Negative comments were all linked to concern about the extent to which it would benefit ordinary people and to Liverpool's capacity to deliver. Of 110 responses, 72 used words such as:

'elated' *'delighted'* *'overjoyed'* *' excited'* *'ecstatic'* *'made up'*

to describe their feelings on hearing about the win.

In addition to this clear sense of excitement and pleasure at Liverpool's win, other feelings and opinions emerge from the responses. Across 110 responses there were 30 uses of the words *pride* or *proud* to define people's attitude to the Liverpool win. The sense of civic pride among volunteers is very strong, perhaps because as discussed above, the majority have lived in the area for over 10 years and feel a strong sense of connection to the city. These feelings of pride link closely to a sense throughout the responses that Liverpool's recognition as a cultural city is overdue.

'Over the moon. It was about time people realised what Liverpool had to offer.'

'Tremendous pride in one's own city [having] the opportunity to show the rest of Europe and the rest of the world what a great city it is.'

'Absolutely fabulous. Liverpool has always been under-estimated in the past, now we can share our beautiful city with everyone.'

Twelve respondents specifically framed the success of the ECoC bid as an opportunity for the city to turn around negative perceptions of Liverpool. From both the focus group respondents and the surveys it was clear that some volunteers felt personally affected by negative media portrayals of Liverpool.

'Surprised and excited at last Liverpool can show itself positively and not as the media portrays it.'

'A golden opportunity to dispel the negative images.'

'Very pleased, it gives the city a great chance to change many strange perceptions outsiders have of our city.'

The volunteers identify themselves strongly with Liverpool, and there are 24 references describing Liverpool as *my city* or *our city*, or using of the words *we* or *us* when discussing Liverpool. Sometimes Liverpool and the people of Liverpool are interchangeable, or effectively the same thing, for example:

'At last Liverpool could show the world what we have to offer.'

'I felt proud, excited that Liverpool would show Europe what a great and fascinating city we are.'

8

> *'Over the next twelve months our people, our history, our architecture, our culture, our city, will be given the chance to shine.'*

Other respondents recognised a need for Liverpool to change and improve, and felt that the success of the bid would enable this change to take place.

> *'A fantastic opportunity for Liverpool to look outwards and realise its potential to become a world city with a thriving, diverse cultural life, fully recognised and admired.'*

> *'I thought this was Liverpool's chance to pull itself out of its past. I hope it will attract new businesses.'*

> *'Huge thrill that the potential of my city and its people was being recognised and was being offered the opportunity to turn around its future.'*

> *'Liverpool has been in the doldrums for a long time now, getting the award the new build done to the city means we can go on and promote Liverpool in 2008.'*

It would appear that many respondents see the bid and denomination of Liverpool as ECoC 2008 as a tool for regeneration. Their excitement about the ECoC is grounded more in the potential for Liverpool to turn around negative external images of the city and to attract investment than it is in the cultural opportunities that will be on offer throughout 2008. Mentions of the 2008 programme are limited in comparison with mentions of regeneration and press impacts. The responses suggest that Liverpool's cultural offer is already seen as strong, as there are plenty of references to the existing culture of the city. The 08 programme is understood by volunteers in terms of highlighting Liverpool's existing cultural offer, rather than as an opportunity to enhance the city's cultural infrastructure. The Liverpool 08 programme is therefore framed by the volunteers in terms of its civic, rather than its cultural impact, reflecting the rhetoric around the ECoC by Liverpool City Council and the Liverpool Culture Company as a catalyst for city and community regeneration. The next phase of this research will identify whether this view shifts as volunteers respond to the cultural activities they participate in over the year.

Eleven respondents express scepticism, which is always framed in terms of doubts about the ability to deliver an effective Capital of Culture year, rather than any feeling that Liverpool as a city is undeserving of the award.

> *'Elated, but doubtful that we could stage such an event because of our lack of facilities like an arena and big name department stores.'*[4]

> *'Very pleased, and hope that its organisation can live up to what is needed to make it a success.'*

There was some concern expressed about whether the 08 programme would be inclusive and how much it would benefit the people of Liverpool.

> '*I didn't feel much at the time [of the bid], felt it was more for visitors than locals.'*

> *'Excellent, but will Liverpool City Council cope? And without overdoing parochial pride too – and how inclusive?'*

> *'Unimpressed and sceptical. There are many areas of Liverpool which should benefit from this scheme and so far do not appear to have done so.'*

---

[4] NB This is likely to be a reference to the fact that, by the time they were filling in the questionnaire, Liverpool DID have a new Arena and shopping centre.

3.2. Motivations for becoming an 08 Volunteer

Focus group participants reacted strongly to questions about what they hoped to gain from their 08 volunteering experience. Those who had volunteered over a longer period of time were clear that:

> *'It's not about what we can get from it. It's about giving something back.'*

Findings from the survey responses similarly suggest that volunteers' motivations are altruistic:

> *'Liverpool has given me many years of employment, both in the public and private sector, this is my way of putting something back.'*

> *'To give something back to the city and be an ambassador for my city.'*

> *'To be able to practise the skills in French, Spanish and German I have picked up over the years and put them to community use.'*

Survey respondents were asked what primarily affected their decision to volunteer and their responses also suggest that their volunteering is mainly motivated by the desire to promote and contribute to the regeneration of Liverpool. Respondents ticked as many answers as they felt appropriate, and the most popular responses were 'to show people how great Liverpool is' (85%), 'to contribute to the local community' (61%), and 'to learn more about the Capital of Culture' (54%).

In addition, 32% of respondents stated that they volunteered 'to get out to more events', and 27% wanted 'to meet and make friends'. This suggests that beyond the desire to promote the city, volunteers' motivations are largely social. Motives of self-improvement rated poorly, with 8% volunteering 'to improve their job prospects' and 5% volunteering 'to find out about something specific (for example, a hobby)'. However, one respondent in a focus group drew attention to the quality of the training:

> *'I always look at it as an opportunity to learn more. If somebody's going to train you for free….you're in a win-win situation.'*

The responses also suggest that the volunteers enjoy the opportunity to attend events through their volunteering. When asked what type of event they tended to volunteer in, 'venue based events' was the most popular answer (chosen by 89% of volunteers), followed by 'meeting, greeting and giving directions' (74%) and 'festivals/carnivals/processions/fireworks' (73%). These responses suggest that the desire to welcome new visitors to the city and improve their perceptions of Liverpool is a key motivator, but also that volunteers value the opportunity to attend events.

> *'Whatever helps our city to show it's best side for longer than 5 minutes, so that they want to come back and they'll recommend other people to come here.'*

It is clear that the opportunity to attend events is a significant motivator for volunteers. Focus group participants stated that:

> *'I wanted to be part of the year and be able to say "I was there!"'*

> *'I don't mind what I do for volunteering. And if that means seeing something I wouldn't have seen before that's a bonus to me because I don't have to pay to see it.'*

It can therefore be seen that 08 Volunteers are motivated by high levels of civic pride, and their primary motivation is to contribute to Liverpool's regeneration and the improvement of its external image. As discussed

10

above, volunteers view the ECoC positively as an opportunity to improve the city, and therefore by contributing to the success of the ECoC, volunteers see themselves as contributing to the regeneration and rehabilitation of Liverpool. However, they are also motivated by the chance to enhance their own social lives, through the opportunity to attend events and meet new people.

4. Cultural participation by 08 Volunteers

4.1. Levels of interest in cultural activity

We asked volunteers to tell us what kind of cultural activity they participate in, and how often. The highest levels of interest expressed by respondents were in historic buildings and heritage events (78% were very interested), followed by events and festivals (71%) and theatre (69%). The lowest levels of interest were in nightclubs (38.5% were not at all interested), followed by sports (15%) and pubs and bars (12.5%).

In comparison, data from a study of cultural participation in four Liverpool neighbourhoods suggest that levels of interest in cultural activity across the general population are much lower, with 29% of respondents stating that they were 'very interested' in museums and galleries, and 24% very interested in events and festivals. 33.5% were not at all interested in sport, and 28% expressed lack of interest in pubs, bars and clubs. This suggests that the 08 Volunteers have a much more positive attitude towards participation in cultural activity than the wider population of the city.

4.2. Levels of attendance

Across our categories of cultural activity the most frequent response given to the question 'how often do you attend each of these?' (that is, different types of cultural event or attraction) was 3–4 times a year. Levels of interest did not entirely correlate with levels of attendance. For example, pubs and bars were attended most frequently even though levels of interest were lower.

Respondents are attending a variety of cultural events 3-4 times a year – including 3-4 trips to the cinema, 3-4 gallery visits, 3-4 outings to heritage venues and 3-4 concerts. This adds up to a pattern of regular attendance at a diverse range of arts events. Alternatively some types of cultural activity may be seen as something additional to everyday life, a treat for special occasions. Evidence from the focus groups seemed to support both interpretations. Participants were asked how they had spent their spare time in the past month, and indicated a range of cultural activities they had participated in, including trips to FACT, Empire Theatre and Lady Lever Art Gallery. However, they had also visited family, done the gardening, cared for grandchildren, been to church, played sports and done other volunteering outside of their 08 Volunteers' role. Clearly cultural activity is one element in a busy life. In this context, it will be interesting at the next stage of this research project to see whether volunteers have chosen to become more culturally active as a result of their experience of volunteering.

4.3. Reasons for attending cultural events

According to the Hierarchy of Visitor Engagement (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2005), visitors to cultural attractions attend for reasons that are:

- Social – for entertainment or to spend time with friends;
- Intellectual – because of an academic interest or to stimulate children;
- Emotional – to develop a sense of cultural identity; or,
- Spiritual – for contemplation or to stimulate creativity.

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre see cultural engagement as a hierarchy in which participants progress from the social – a superficial level of engagement, to the more meaningful – spiritual engagement. Without necessarily

applying the value judgement of seeing this as a hierarchy, this work does provide a valuable way of categorising different reasons for attendance and participation. The survey asked who volunteers attended cultural events with, and why they attended cultural events. It may therefore be possible after the second wave of surveys to identify whether reasons for cultural participation change during 2008 and whether volunteers gain different outcomes from their participation.

The responses indicate that 53% of volunteers attend events with friends, 50% with family, and 43% with their partner (volunteers were offered the opportunity to tick more than one box to indicate their answers). This suggests a strong level of use of culture as a form of social activity, as Morris Hargreaves McIntyre suggest that emotional and spiritual engagement, specifically in museums and galleries, is more effectively experienced without the distraction of others. However, 32% of volunteers also attend alone. This could be interpreted as an intellectual, emotional or spiritual engagement with cultural activity (see below for further discussion). Attendance in organised groups was lowest, with only 6% stating that they visited as part of a school or college party and 16% as part of a community group or club. This suggests that the volunteers are confident and independent in accessing cultural opportunities, can find information about venues and specific events they may be interested in, and are happy to plan their own visits.

We also asked volunteers why they attended cultural events. Again, these responses suggest that participation in culture is for reasons which are primarily social. The answers that received the most responses were 'to see a specific event (art/theatre)', which was ticked by 66% of respondents, 'to have fun/be entertained' (51%), and 'to see a major attraction' (47%). Some of the respondents demonstrated a desire to attend cultural events for emotional or spiritual reasons. 46% stated that they attended cultural events to see beautiful things in inspiring settings, with another 30% seeking 'to escape my daily routine/worries and recharge my batteries'. These figures suggest that social and spiritual reasons are more significant than intellectual ones in driving cultural participation among the 08 Volunteers.

4.4. Barriers to participation in culture

We were particularly interested in understanding barriers to cultural engagement, and asked survey respondents to give their reasons for not attending different types of cultural event.

For events and festivals, theatre and live music, price was the leading factor that prevented people from attending more often. These were also the cultural events in which volunteers demonstrated the highest levels of interest, suggesting therefore that price is the main factor limiting volunteers' levels of cultural engagement.

For museums, galleries and cinema, lack of time was the main reason for volunteers' lack of engagement. As these activities were less popular, it seems that the lack of time to attend is because volunteers do not prioritise these activities because of their lower levels of interest in them. Survey respondents also specified that location was a key reason for lack of attendance at heritage events and historic buildings, and events and festivals. This could possibly be because respondents associate historic buildings with National Trust properties such as stately homes, which tend to be inaccessible without a car, and also because events and music festivals also tend to be hosted in more remote locations rather than in the city centre.

Only community events were unattended because of a lack of information, supporting the assumption that volunteers are well informed about cultural activities. When respondents were asked what prompted them to go to cultural events, the most popular answers were word of mouth recommendations (80%) and newspaper/TV reviews (76%). This explains why volunteers do not know about events in the community. Community events tend to be one-offs rather than repeated, limiting the opportunity for word of mouth recommendations, and often struggle to attract advance press coverage. The use of such reviews and recommendations by volunteers also supports the earlier finding that they value high quality in cultural provision.

5. Outcomes of 08 volunteering

This report sets out the baseline, and the next phase of this research will seek to compare volunteers' experiences with the expectations and motivations for participation we have outlined here. However, the delivery of a focus group with experienced volunteers (that is, those who have volunteered at six or more events) as well as the return of 95 questionnaires from experienced volunteers, did suggest some emerging findings about the impact of taking part in 08 volunteering. These findings suggest that volunteers' expectations and hopes for volunteering are being met:

- 58% stated that they had 'shown visitors how great Liverpool is'.
- A further 41% felt that they had contributed to the local community.
- 47% said that one of the things they had primarily gained from volunteering was attending events, 51% had learned new things, and 42% had met and made friends.

In addition to these benefits, focus group participants described other significant outcomes that had resulted from their volunteering.

Firstly, volunteering is encouraging volunteers to extend their cultural participation and attend new events and activities. However, this does not translate into increased attendance at 'highbrow' cultural events. Instead the volunteers are becoming more confident and developing an interest in attending community events, which were rated lowest in terms of interest levels in the survey.

> 'I've been to ethnic events. I went to the Anthony Walker Foundation event and I didn't know what to expect but they made us feel so welcome. This year I've put my name down for Slavery Remembrance Day and Africa Oye.'

Secondly, volunteering is developing the skills and confidence of volunteers, even where this was not a motivation for volunteering.

> 'I've been really stretched, and done things I didn't know I was capable of.'

> 'I went along to an event at the Town Hall and it was a prose competition for schools. I ended up on stage introducing all the children!'

> 'I'm rediscovering a city I thought I knew.'

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly in terms of future planning, participation has become a central part of volunteers' lives. This may reflect the fact that older, retired volunteers have the time available to take part in 08 volunteering on a regular basis.

> 'My neighbours say, "Are you going out again? We never see you!"'

> 'I'd be lost without it.'

They also demonstrate a strong desire to maintain their involvement, both in general and specifically, in cultural volunteering.

6. Appendices

6.1. Impacts of Volunteering on Cultural Engagement[5]

Introduction
This research uses 08 Volunteers to explore some of the impacts of volunteering in Liverpool 08 on cultural engagement, on perceptions of culture, on self-confidence and life chances. The primary focus of the project and this literature review is to research how specifically the 08 Volunteers' attitudes towards culture may change and develop through the process of volunteering in cultural events. It also explores the philosophy/policy behind the 08 volunteering programme and seeks to draw conclusions that could be of value to the programme itself and to other culture-related volunteering programmes. This literature review analyses and discusses some of the similar cultural engagement research that has been carried out to date.

Reasons for Volunteering
The government is increasingly expressing a strong interest in promoting volunteering as an aspect of social inclusion, citizenship and community regeneration (University of Liverpool, 2007, p.1). This is not simply because volunteers offer a service of free labour but because of the wider impacts volunteering has on the community. But what is a volunteer? The UK Volunteering Forum describes volunteering as 'the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community... It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain" (1998, cited in Voluntary Arts Network's 'Increasing Participation in the Arts', 2007, p.1).

This research also points out that there are many forms in which people volunteer. This Impacts 08 research specifically looks at those who have chosen to volunteer for 2008 in cultural events. Cultural volunteers often help out at music festivals, arts programmes, raise awareness of their organisation by putting on cultural events themselves, run young peoples dance/acting/sports clubs and generally support their local community by encouraging others to take part in these and similar activities. The 08 Volunteers have done all of these things and more since Liverpool was awarded the ECoC and are trying to raise the understanding of residents and tourists of all that Liverpool has to offer. The 08 Volunteers have a vested interest in securing Liverpool's status as they are residents themselves. However, this study suggests that initially the 08 Volunteers' priority was to promote the city of Liverpool and that their secondary priority was to focus on promoting culture. This study focuses on the secondary and increasing focus of the 08 Volunteers' attention on culture, and the forms/levels of engagement that occur through this relationship. Future research will map volunteers' changing engagement with culture, and any changes in their perception of where they live, and what culture means.

Voluntary Arts Network argues that a number of people volunteer in the arts specifically because:

> 'The vast majority of opportunities for people to be involved in arts and crafts activities locally
> are provided by cultural volunteers in the voluntary arts. As in the community sector (small,
> local community organisations/volunteers), many of the volunteers are themselves
> beneficiaries of their efforts' (*ibid.,* pp2-3).

This suggests that a proportion of volunteers are interested as much in volunteering to gain access/involvement with the arts and craft community and to attend cultural events as they are in contributing to their local community. As one 08 Volunteer states in relation to why she became a volunteer; 'It's great fun being involved and meeting people, I'm going to events that I wouldn't otherwise go to' (Julie Brown; quoted in Liverpool 08 Volunteering Programme, 2007, p.1). Julie's statement supports Ruiz's research (2004) into the

---

[5] This literature review was carried out by Lucy Comerford-Park, work placement researcher for Impacts 08

impacts of culture, the arts and sports on policy, as she argues that people partly volunteer their time freely as volunteering in the arts gives people the chance to participate in cultural events that they may not have been able to access beforehand. The reasons, such as above, that Liverpool residents give for volunteering is of interest to this project and it is a question that is asked in a number of different ways in the Impacts 08 questionnaire, and will be discussed in more depth later in relation to Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants' theory of visitor engagement (May, 2005).

Impacts of volunteering
This research also focuses on the impacts of volunteering. The impacts of volunteering on and within a community are numerous, ranging from economic (bringing in investments and services), educational (more investment in education as businesses increasingly employ local residents), to structural (better housing conditions in a regenerated area) but the largest and intrinsically linked impact on citizens is social. Ruiz (2004) believes that the primary evidence base for culture, the arts and sports policy is to look at the social impacts of culture and the arts (p.1).

'The social impacts can cover many different aspects of life, whether the impact is personal (for example, increased confidence, self-esteem, enhanced skills), structural (more pleasant area to live in) or a combination of both, where, due to participation in a particular cultural or arts activity, a more confident sense of self is developed, leading to increased social networking, employment or a better job, more activity in the community leading to the creation of a better place to live, improved health and well-being, leading to a better quality of life, civic pride etc' (Ruiz, 2004, p.1).

It is interesting to note how all these 'social impacts' are actually largely individual. Ruiz's list is mostly about self-development, increased confidence self-esteem and enhanced skills, which are primarily individual attributes as compared with social ones. This research has influenced Impact 08's decision to map volunteers as individuals through issuing self-completing questionnaires in two waves, with a mixture of closed and open questions so as to allow volunteers to not only fill them in on their own but also tell us what they really think on a personal level.

Impacts of cultural participation
The effects on the individual participants in the arts is an under-researched area and is in its infancy as generally the focus is on the social/community impacts. On the other hand, there is a consultancy and research company in England that has made the study of individual's interactions with culture their specialty. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants have conducted a number of studies for large cultural organisations and particularly museums to understand visitor behaviour such as in 'Never mind the width, feel the quality' (May, 2005) in which they queried and studied visitors' motivations, expectations, behaviour and experiences of cultural engagement at museums, art exhibitions and heritage sites. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's research is of great relevance to the Impacts 08 project because they examine how visitors voluntarily engage with these events, and Impacts 08 is examining how 08 Volunteers voluntarily engage with culture. The primary theory to emerge from Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's research is the 'hierarchy of visitor engagement' model, which examines visitors' stated motivations for attending an event/exhibition against their actual experiences and the needs that were met through their attendance. This mapping of what visitors originally cite as their expectation/reason for attending against what they actually get out of the event (outcome) is ranked in a hierarchy, starting with the lowest expectation/reason for attending to the highest. These are listed as:

- Social – came to meet/spend time with friends, family, etc; for entertainment.
- Intellectual – self-improvement, academic/professional interest, to stimulate children.
- Emotional – personal relevance, aesthetic pleasure, sense of cultural identity.
- Spiritual – escapism, contemplation and/or stimulate creativity (*ibid.,* pp9–10).

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre found that expectations of engagement often change from when visitors arrive at an event to when they have engaged, as often their experience has developed up the scale; for example, it was expected at first that only 24% of people attended to engage and have their emotional needs met, but at the end this had raised to 41% and, the visitors spiritual interaction with the exhibit/event went up from 2% to 18% (*ibid.,* 2005, pp9–10) far surpassing the original expectations. Therefore, Morris Hargreaves McIntyres's research suggests that visitors have a low expectation of the extent to which they can engage with art but, as they actually attend and participate in events such as art exhibitions, plays, theatre, etc, their confidence and meaning making capabilities grow. The increased (or decreased) confidence and extent to which 08 Volunteers relate to culture is a key concern in Impact 08's project too. The extent to which people engage and actively seek out/attend particular events and what they get from them, the type and levels of confidence they demonstrate in attending certain events compared with others – for example, someone may have no fear of attending a play but be reluctant to watch dance – are all under analysis. Questions such as 'Who do you usually attend cultural events with?' will enable Impacts 08 to develop an insight into why volunteers engage in culture (social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual) and repeat surveys will allow us to map any changes.

The investigation of cultural engagement on the individual primarily relates to attitudes. This research is looking at changing attitudes, for example, confidence in attending different cultural events, the time and regularity 08 Volunteers attend, and so on. Similar studies have been conducted in the UK in recent years as cultural impact is becoming an increasingly researched topic (Scottish Executive Research, 2005). The Scottish Executive Research's 2005 study has conducted a wide review of such research from qualitative studies into music making and its impact on nursing home residents, to quantitative postal questionnaire studies of how people use and spend their leisure time. However, the leaders in this field at present are Morris Hargreaves McIntyre who in February 2005 carried out research among residents of Shropshire for Shropshire County Council into 'The Value of Culture' in order to review the local authority's policy of introducing community arts/theatre, etc, projects in the local area. Their findings on social, housing and economic regeneration were extensive but they remind the reader that not all the measurements of culture are external or about how the arts contribute to other agendas although they do this significantly (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2005, p.20). Instead they address the influence of arts and cultural participation on behaviour and individual's perception of culture in and of itself. The research states that:

> 'Culture is what defines us – as individuals, as communities, as a nation. It helps us understand who we are, it shapes our identity – and only culture does this' (*ibid.,* p.20).

The effects and importance of culture/cultural engagement on the individual's sense of identity and internal behaviour then, is an important area of research by itself and not just as a means of measuring external social, economic or educational impacts. In this context, the Impacts 08 project has specifically chosen to examine the effect of cultural participation on volunteers' perceptions of culture. Although this is a micro study it is intended to make a positive contribution to the debate around cultural engagement research.

Emerging concerns in cultural engagement research
The interest in volunteering and cultural engagement research is growing in the Western world, as discussed earlier but there are a number of emerging problems with this type of research that the Impacts 08 project has tried to address.

- **Measuring multiple cultural impacts.** In Francois Matarasso's (1997) influential study 'Use or Ornament? The Social Impacts of Participation in the Arts', which specifically focuses on the participation of a group of volunteers in an art project/with an artist, he concludes that the outcomes of participation in the arts are highly complex due to the multi-dimensionality and sustained outcomes of this kind of research (*ibid.,* p.86). Social impacts are not instantaneous, they overlap and it would take constant analysis to truly measure all of these, which, sadly, most research projects are unable to do. Impacts 08

do have the opportunity to carry out longer term research, but it will not be possible to chart all the impacts of the 08 programme on volunteer and this will be addressed in the study.

- **Standard classifications.** A lack of standard classifications of social impacts make comparison between similar studies very difficult. Reeves (2002) has studied cultural indicators in detail and states that there are:

'…difficulties of producing robust data on the creative industries due to problems of outdated Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) … (which) are widely acknowledged (.)… (and what is needed is) comparable cross-service data to enable the estimation of the number and nature of all cultural services' (*ibid.,* p33).

The need for cross-service data is important in order that micro research projects into cultural engagement (which most are) can be used to speculate about the participation of volunteers and participants in the arts on a wider scale. Although this will be extremely hard to achieve, Impacts 08 have studied and implemented Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants primary theory of the Hierarchy of Engagement (May 2005, p.9), and asks volunteers some similar questions so that at least some (not all) of these findings can be cross-referenced and compared with Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's numerous publications and primary findings.

However the development of a standard set of cultural indicators to be imposed upon all cultural engagement research projects is in itself problematic. In nearly all cases it is the researcher, not the participant, who decides what these indicators are, potentially disempowering the subjects and risking missing unexpected outcomes through the research process. The Scottish Executive's 2005 literature review and thinkpiece on measuring the benefits of culture/sports participation argues that this may be exactly where this kind of research is going wrong. The Scottish Executive's review suggests instead that:

'An alternative approach is to investigate individual's views about the things that contribute to their QOL (Quality Of Life, or the impacts they think have occurred due to their participation in the arts), and derive QOL domains through this process' (*ibid.,* p.38).

As discussed above, the impacts of cultural engagement are multidimensional (Francois Matarasso, 1997, p.86) and partly down to interpretation, which is why the subjects should be asked what their opinions of these impacts and indicators are as they have an inside knowledge that the researcher does not have as a simple voyeur. The Impacts 08 research therefore asks a number of open questions such as 'Please write below what culture means to you' and 'What have you primarily gained out of your time as a volunteer?' in two waves, to permit 08 Volunteers decide and vocalise how their perceptions of culture and the volunteering process have changed in their own words. Through doing this volunteers can express what they think is important and make their own definitions instead of adhering to the researcher's pre-conceived definitions of how volunteers/their attitudes towards culture have changed. The inclusion of open questions, and the 'if other, please specify' option alongside closed questions means that the Impacts 08 questionnaire, although largely retaining the use of closed questions, can also develop an understanding of the impacts on 08 Volunteers from engaging in the arts on a personal and individual level; a methodology that The Scottish Executive's (2005) study 'Quality of Life and Well-being' advocates strongly.

Barriers to participation in culture
The impacts 08 project seeks to identify why people are discouraged from attending certain cultural events. The question of which residents of Liverpool are the least represented of the 08 Volunteers and/or why volunteers do not attend certain events is almost as important as understanding who does and what events they attend. This is because it has been discussed in a number of cultural engagement projects that certain groups are ostracized from volunteering at certain events. The types of people discouraged from becoming volunteers at all is generally due to the '…perception amongst certain groups (e.g. LGBT (lesbians, gays,

17

bisexuals and transsexuals), disabled people, elderly people) that their 'culture' and needs are not catered for by cultural and leisure facilities' (Ruiz, 2004, p.3).

The Impacts 08 survey has captured demographic information about the 08 Volunteers surveyed, in order to identify whether any groups are over or under-represented within our research or the volunteer team itself. The questionnaire also asks questions concerning 'psychological barriers' to volunteering at certain events. The commonest reported constraints people cite for not being able to volunteer are time, cost implications, location (of event), and travel problems but they also cite 'perceptions of eligibility' as an issue of concern (ibid, p3). These perceptions of eligibility may stem from people feeling they are not cultural enough, that it would be a risk attending at all and/or certain events, that it is too arty or young, that they cannot afford to, or simply that because they live in certain, possibly under-privileged areas they just do not receive information about volunteering. The above are all questions that are asked in the questionnaire so that Impacts 08 can map who does/does not take part and why, while also examining if this changes over time.

In conclusion, although the Impacts 08 project is primarily measuring qualitative indicators of cultural engagement, centring upon changing perceptions, attitude and behaviour, which are notoriously hard to measure, there are a combination of quantitative prompts such as demographic classification questions, and closed cultural attendance questions, which, combined with the qualitative questions, should result in both rich and demonstrable data. The research will be of value to the 08 programme itself and to other culture-related volunteering programmes.

References

Matarasso, Francois (Comedia, 1997). *Use or ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts.*

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants, Sep 2002. *So many galleries, so little time – the impact of evening gallery openings*

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants, Feb 2005. *The value of culture.*

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre Consultants, May 2005. *Museums and heritage show – never mind the width feel the quality.*

National Museums, 2007. *From access to participation: cultural, policy and civil renewal.*

Reeves, Michelle, 2002. (Arts Council)*Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts: a review.*

Ruiz, Janet, For the Scottish Executive Research. Aug 2004. *A literature review of the evidence base for culture, the arts and sport policy.*

Scottish Executive Research, 2005. *Quality of life and well-being: measuring the benefits of culture and sport – literature review and thinkpiece.*

The University of Liverpool, Undated. *Vascnet – volunteering resources.*

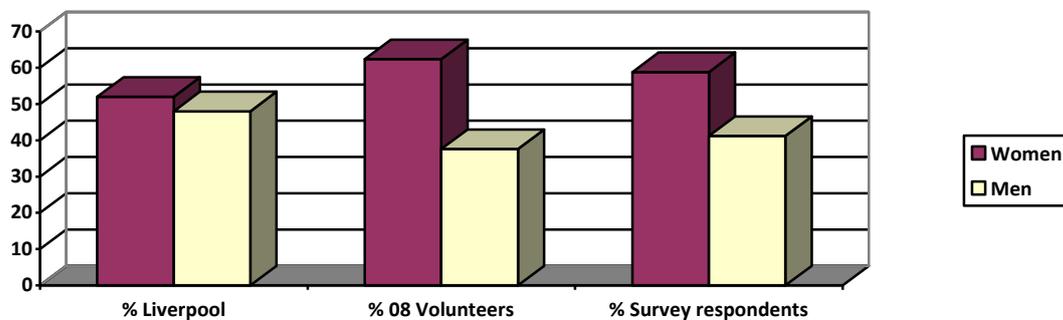Voluntary Arts Network, Undated. *Increasing participation in the arts.*

6.2. Demographic information

To assess how representative volunteers are of the Liverpool population, information about the respondents to our survey of volunteers has been compared with figures from the National Statistics 2001 census data for Liverpool. Where available, we have also compared our cohort of survey respondents with available data for the entire 08 Volunteer team.

Gender
Fifty nine percent of our survey respondents are female, compared with 52% of women in the Liverpool population and 62% of 08 Volunteers who are female. This suggests that women are under-represented in this survey, but over-represented in the 08 Volunteer team as a whole.

In comparison, men are under-represented in the 08 Volunteer team compared with their representation in the Liverpool population. However, they are slightly over-represented in our survey, compared with the whole cohort of 08 Volunteers.
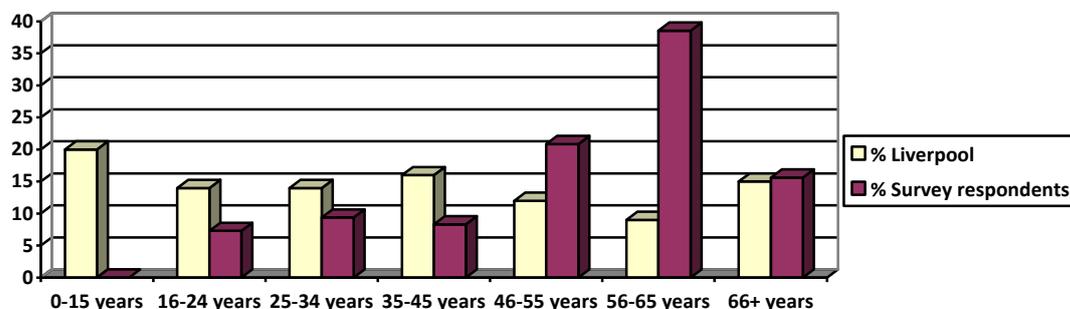

This female bias is not unexpected as it often occurs within the voluntary sector (RTI International, July, 2006), and may also reflect the higher numbers of women in older age groups.

Age
 The mean age of respondents to our survey was 52, and the median age of survey respondents was 58. In contrast, the median age range for the Liverpool population is between 35 and 45 years.

As the chart below shows, 08 Volunteers have a significantly older age profile than the Liverpool population as a whole. This is perhaps reflective of the fact that older people are more likely to have retired and therefore have time available for volunteering activity.

No figures were available detailing the ages of the entire 08 Volunteer team, so it has not been possible to judge whether our sample is representative of the wide volunteer team.

Household tenure
Seventy two percent of respondents to our survey were owner occupiers, with 11% renting from social landlords and 10% renting privately. These figures contrast strongly with figures for the wider Liverpool population, where 52% own their own property, and 15% rent from social landlords and 12% from private landlords. These figures therefore suggest that 08 Volunteers' financial circumstances may be better than the Liverpool average.

Our survey also found that 56% of 08 Volunteers had lived in the same house for over 10 years. This reflects the number of retired professionals who have become 08 Volunteers, and also indicates that 08 Volunteers are in the main highly committed to the Liverpool area, and are also likely to be knowledgeable about the city.

Ethnicity
Ninety one percent of respondents to the survey are white British. This correlates closely with the figure for Liverpool as a whole of 92%. However, figures provided by the 08 Volunteers team suggest that 14% of 08 Volunteers categorise themselves as being part of a minority ethnic group, and therefore black and ethnic minority volunteers are under-represented in our survey.

Education and work
Forty three percent of survey respondents are retired, contrasting strongly with 13% of Liverpool residents. Figures for part time workers are also slightly higher within our survey respondents (11.5%) than in the general Liverpool population (9.6%). This is to be expected as retired people and part time workers are more likely to have the time available to be active volunteers.

This finding is confirmed by the fact that the number of volunteers who are in full time work is slightly lower in the survey group (23%) than in the wider population (31%).

When asked 'Which of the following best describes the main wage earner in your household?', 38% (compared with 15% in Liverpool population) stated that the main wage earner was a manager/professional. These figures illustrate that the majority of volunteers fit into the higher social economic grouping of AB (manager/professional). 08 Volunteers also appear to have higher level educational qualifications than the Liverpool average. For example, in the total Liverpool population 10.5% have undergraduate or postgraduate degrees whereas among our sample 30% had undergraduate degrees and 21% had gained postgraduate degrees. We can therefore build a picture of the average 08 Volunteer as an educated, middle class and older citizen of Liverpool who has the economic and personal freedom to volunteer.

Previous experience of volunteering
Seventy three percent of survey respondents had volunteered before, with 41% of these specifically volunteering in the cultural sector. This suggests that many of these individuals are confident and committed volunteers who would be volunteering for other organisations if they were not taking part in the Liverpool 08 programme. It also supports the finding that volunteers tend to be culturally aware and confident, as so many have volunteered within cultural organisations before.