

**Session: Leadership and the Big Picture - Inspiring Involvement**  
*direction and influence inhelpping the group meet its goals*

**Katherine Peet**

Chairperson, Volunteering Canterbury

### **Introduction**

My basic assertion is that Leadership in Volunteering, from my Pakeha (those of European ancestry) understanding, requires attention to the "Big Picture".

We heard this morning, from Rev Gray, of how recognition of *aroha* in its widest context provides the basic principles for both Maori and indigenous Leadership.

My hope is that Tauwiwi (all those who do not have Maori ancestry) can learn to be more confident about what we want, as basic principles of Leadership. This will no doubt require recovering some of what has been lost during the years when Volunteering has been the victim of a culture of contempt. Attention to the Big Picture will enable us to reclaim those things that really matter.

A dozen facets of the Big Picture are explored in this paper, and a view of Leadership in Volunteering developed. In particular, I hope to demonstrate that Leadership by individuals and groups will emerge out of processes that take account of the range of Volunteering in the Big Picture, rather than being only a matter of getting qualified. Perhaps we should beware of suggestions that, just as the business Sector has a MBA, we should have an MVA (Masters of Volunteer Administration)!

As it is not possible to do justice to the range of material reviewed in this paper in the short time available, some of the references I have used are attached.

### **The future of Volunteering**

Kenn Allen, World President of the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE), in his recent address [1] challenges us to not only celebrate the work of [already recognised] Volunteers, important though this is. He suggests the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) is a time when

- We can learn about, reflect on, and hold up for public recognition the traditions of helping, services and Volunteering in our societies, particularly by indigenous peoples
- We can learn about the current nature and scope of Volunteering, identifying the potential for growth and increased impact and the barriers that stand in the way of such development - and develop action plans to create a new future for Volunteering
- We can capture the attention and build support of leaders in all Sectors - government, business, the media, religion, education, philanthropy, NGOs - by reminding them of the important roles they can play in making Volunteering an integral and useful part of society.

He concludes by arguing that Volunteering is about how people work together to envision and make real their shared futures.

This summary statement gives a framework for considering the Big Picture and poses the need to address the above matters as they relate to this land.

What follows are some reflections on topics that I believe need attention, and on which those committed to the recognition of Volunteering might seek agreement.

### **Definition of Volunteering**

The definition of Voluntary work being upheld by Members of Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) is that it is done of one's own free will, unpaid, and for the common good.

This has been given expression in Maori, to Volunteering Canterbury, by Rev Maurice Manawaroa Gray, Upoko of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu, as *Aroha ki te Takata a Rohe* [2]. The definition was shared in the context of the Vision, Purpose, Values and Beliefs of VNZ (referred to below). We understand that the expression in Maori stems from the recognition that our vision is consistent with the vision of Te Runaka. This was born out of the relationships people in Volunteering Canterbury have with members of Te Runaka and other people of Maori descent. Along with our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi this gives a framework for further work.

### **Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

Many people are confused about how to continue with any commitment to Te Tiriti, as they do not know to which Maori they should relate. Also, Te Tiriti has been interpreted in various ways, and is currently often replaced by "Principles" (Partnership, Protection and Participation). Other people believe it is about giving up much of what they hold dear.

Moving on from our monocultural past means we must not throw our baby out with the bath water. Our relationships with Maori will then be more fruitful and the definition of Volunteering (or whatever emerges as the term as our relationships develop) will be seen in the Big Picture of what we discover. All will feel included. This is the exciting process which could give direction and influence to the future of Volunteering in this land.

Critical to being part of this process is to really understand Te Tiriti. Pakeha will then want to liaise with each other and other Tau iwi. We will be clearer about what we want to hold on to - our bungy cord as we take some leaps into the future, within a framework based on Te Tiriti.

### **Hopes and Aspirations**

Several years ago I was responsible for coordinating replies to an in-depth household survey on adult learning needs and activities in the south-east of Christchurch [3]. To cut a very long story short, we organised the responses in categories and one category emerged that we were not expecting. It was a category which recorded the responses from people wanting to deepen their understanding of an area of interest. Of the 748 households surveyed 362 had people wanting activities in this category. Only 22 could find a way of meeting that need.

On further examination, we reached the conclusion that by far the biggest gap between what people in this part of Christchurch wanted and what they could access was in this area. Their deep learning aspirations were not being met.

Since that time I have done many workshops with a wide range of people. I give two examples - those dealing with alcohol and drug dependency, those working in early childhood education. I have asked them what I want to ask you now:

- What really matters?
- What keeps you going when you are down in the dumps?
- What do you want to pass on to the next generation?

Please record three responses for yourself and if you are happy to do it, share one of them with your neighbour. In your opinion are these "things that matter" currently providing direction to our future as a society?

- **Now please try to articulate the value of the Maori language with respect to Volunteering.**
- **Was that easy?**
- **As with the responses to the survey, this exercise can serve to remind us what underpins "Volunteering" - work that is done of one's own free will, unpaid and for the common good.**
- **Aroha ki te Takata a Rohe**

In promoting ethical and effective practice in Volunteering.

- That Volunteering is an activity of free will.

**New Insights** That members have the right to autonomy, including the right to disagree with the Association, while operating within the national policy framework.

Leadership which takes into account this Big Picture of peoples' hopes and aspirations works with people as peers and gives encouragement to look at each other as persons with gifts to offer, thus allowing people to retain and regain their dignity [4].

Thus, Leadership will be both from individuals and from groups and will come out of processes involving Volunteering. This will challenge us to look for new insights as to what is needed to complement already existing possibilities for Volunteering, in Volunteer Centres and in Voluntary Organisations. Dr Virginia Hodgkinson's [5] recent seminars highlighted the range of Volunteering and raised important issues to be taken into account in the current Government Discussion paper on Tax and Charities. What counts as a charitable act is closely related to an appreciation of the range of Volunteering.

Being open to new factors is in no way to undervalue existing practices in Volunteering. All the ways Volunteering is currently promoted and supported e.g. organising Award Ceremonies for Volunteers, providing learning opportunities, running Recruitment and Referral Services, are basic and vital. The heart of the work can still be maintained as new insights are sought.

### Volunteering New Zealand

Volunteering NZ offers an opportunity to develop a framework for such Leadership. Setup by six Volunteer Centres as an Incorporated Society, it is a national association of autonomous and independently organised Volunteer Centres and national organisations strongly committed to Volunteering. The Association declares together its

VISION - supportive interdependent communities where Volunteering is recognised and respected, and advances the common good

DEFINITION - Voluntary work as done of one's own free will, unpaid, for the common good

BELIEFS

- In supporting the rights of Volunteers through advocacy and the monitoring

of the political and social issues which affect them. VALUES

- Inclusiveness

s

- Active involvement by all Members in the agreed consultative process

- Active consultation by Members with the Community

- Recognition of the unique contribution of each Member and each individual

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It is really encouraging that the Government has both recognised and resourced Volunteer Centres and VNZ. The challenge now is to develop more generic bases on which to develop support for the future of Volunteering, more inclusively. This process has begun. The following priorities have been proposed for VNZ:

- the social, cultural, political, environmental links.

- Diversity

ty

- To extend opportunities to participate in Volunteering across Aotearoa New Zealand.
- To clarify and put in place processes for upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- To be representative and inclusive.
- To develop relationships with key organisations at both national and local levels.
- To promote the vision, definition, purpose, beliefs and values of VNZ.
- To promote and encourage the development of new and existing locally initiated Volunteer Centres.
- To pick up and continue Ministerial Reference Group initiatives.

## **Volunteering in Sectors**

Volunteering can occur in any Sector of the community and it is vital that its integrity is preserved as work that is unpaid, of one's own free will and for the common good *Aroha ki te Takata a Rohe*.

"The Community" includes everyone - government (national, regional and local), business/commerce, the Voluntary Sector and the household Sector. There can, of course, be communities of interest and locality. It would be helpful if the word "community" were not used to refer to the Voluntary Sector, as putting them together draws attention away from the key elements of what Volunteering means, and can cause confusion about the meaning of Volunteering.

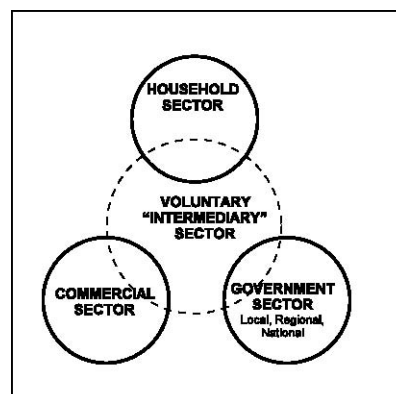
Another issue in naming of Sectors lies in referring to the Voluntary Sector as the "third" Sector. This is inaccurate (at least historically) as it is really the "first", having been there before either government or business! However, the way that Voluntary Sector is currently placed within what is known as the Third Sector analysis gives the opportunity to highlight the essential role of the Voluntary Sector. It emerges in response to the power of the statutory (Government) and commercial (Business) constraints. It is the place where creativity and justice can emerge and is thus critical to understanding ways to the future. VNZ's Vision, Values and Beliefs (listed above) give clarity and focus to these issues of creativity and justice.

Volunteering by employees or employers is being referred to in various ways, for example Employee Volunteering, Business in the Community and Corporate Volunteering. It needs to be seen as offering employees/employers work experience in a Sector that is distinct from that of their employment - in a project or organisation in the Voluntary Sector. Some will take up the option by company agreement within office hours, others in their own free time but with company support for the project of their involvement [6]. In order to preserve the integrity of Volunteering, these developments need to be addressed within the framework established by VNZ.

Volunteering in the government, whether local, regional or local, must also be clearly established as a project in the Voluntary Sector - independent but alongside any statutory requirement. This will avoid any possible coercion due to statutory requirements, making it clear that there is always the possibility either for the person to not continue as a Volunteer or to organise to change such requirements through legal means.

Where Volunteering is related to the household Sector, a clear distinction needs to be made to uphold the definition of being for the common good and not for personal (financial or similar) benefit.

A useful way of looking at the sectors has been developed by the Finnish writer Hilikka Pietilä [7]. She uses the term "Intermediary" to indicate the dynamic place of the voluntary sector in societies where government and commerce have become so powerful (see Figure).



### **Voluntary Agencies and Projects**

In addition to identification of the vision, definition, beliefs and values and the above priorities established by Volunteering NZ, Leadership in Volunteering will need to distinguish Volunteering in Voluntary agencies or projects from other activities such as those of Government (local, regional or central) or of consultancies and other activities in the Commercial Sector.

Leadership roles in these agencies and projects in the Voluntary Sector will need to be acknowledged overtly. Otherwise they will inevitably happen covertly or indirectly.

Leadership can be defined as a willingness to think about the group as a whole and to offer some direction and influence in helping the group meet its goals [8]. Leadership for the Big Picture in Volunteering requires plural accountability beyond a single group, agency or project. It certainly will go beyond management / governance standards and the economic discourse [9].

### **Accountability**

In order to address the direction and influence such a Big Picture could have we need to acknowledge the broader framework for accountability. This will challenge us to work together [10] for the purpose of strengthening Volunteering, hopefully by refining the work of Volunteering NZ.

Some key indicators [11] which best reflect values and organisational capacities that distinguish a Voluntary agency or project are addressed by posing the following questions:

- Is there any indication that it has been involved in genuinely participative planning, monitoring or evaluation process within the community [of interest or locality] it is working with?
- Does it have the ability to learn from past experience and think critically about itself?
- Is it accountable and transparent in its dealings with the community [of interest or locality]?

This is not an argument to jettison performance criteria or evaluation tools, nor to lose ideas of accountability or cost effectiveness. It is, however, to suggest that these key indicators should be given the same weight as, for example, financial accounts or social audit data or impact measures. It is, also, to raise some concern about simplistic management/ governance splits [12] which have resulted in some disturbing [13] for elected committees / boards. One useful shift is to emphasise the need for allocation criteria to be established before accountability is addressed. Then accountability can be more transparent to all involved.

### **Volunteering and Paid Work**

As conditions of paid work for many people have deteriorated and employment has become more precarious, part-time and lacking in meaning or satisfaction, it is critical that Volunteering has a strong commitment to ensuring that fair wages and good conditions of employment of paid staff in all Sectors are upheld.

Also there are many reports that people both in paid employment and as Volunteers are in situations of overwork. It is encouraging that the Government's Future Work programme is now established [14]. Issues of income maintenance [15] and the distribution of wealth [16] should also be included in any consideration of Leadership in Volunteering in relation to the Big Picture.

There are roughly 3.8 million people living in this country. About 1.75 million of us are in paid jobs. A further 120,000 are actively looking for paid jobs. Around 1 million others of working age are not in paid employment or actively seeking paid employment. They may be in Voluntary work, domestic labour, caring for children, the sick, or engaged in training and education. To leave these people out of the definition of "work" would be to ignore their contribution to our economy and communities, as well as their needs and rights [17]. A wider definition of work is needed.

Upholding the distinctive contribution of Voluntary work is not to diminish the value of paid jobs. It is just to acknowledge the reality of the way our communities are held together by the generosity inherent in gifting [18]. Social statistics need to be collected in the full context of relationships and never be seen only in the context of market transactions [19]. One practical example is John Ralston Saul's [20] argument that employment agreements should include time for democracy.

We know from the last Census and the 1999 Time Use Survey that we are a nation of Volunteers. In the four weeks before the census 1.1 million of us did some sort of unpaid work outside the household [21]. A key question becomes, how we can ensure that people work the combination of paid and unpaid hours they want to [22].

Making the links between Volunteering and employment is complex yet achievable. To do this will require acceptance that a particular Volunteering opportunity may not necessarily lead to an employment opportunity. There is also a need to separate considerations of income from employment [23].

### **Third Age**

A commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi draws attention to the roles that older people play. Pakeha have tended to "retire" older people from responsibilities whereas Maori expect to pay due attention to the contribution these older people make.

There are moves to address this tendency in mainstream society by developing Third Age projects. If we are to recognise and value Volunteering we will also require the painting of the Big Picture. Otherwise the richness from giving due weight to the contribution of elders may remain limited.

### **Volunteering and Unpaid Work**

In stating the obvious, that unpaid work and Volunteering are not the same thing (e.g. slavery was unpaid work), questions are raised about The Time Use Survey follow-up.

If we are to learn how to properly "see" the needs in our communities we will need to ensure that the Big Picture is not limited to paid / unpaid activities.

Valuing everyone's contributions to building a better world can no longer be done by adding up hourly wage or equivalent time-use data on the paid and formal unpaid work that people do. This will require us to move well beyond the market approach to social planning. Even though cost/benefit analyses, opportunity costs and benefits and considerations of externalities may sometimes be helpful in demonstrating the limitations of a narrow market approach they do not describe the complex reality which recognises Volunteering.

Similarly, the current emphasis on promoting Social Capital rather than on rebuilding the Common Good, limits the Big Picture. It is also dehumanising. If the term Social Capital is used to refer to "stock", meaning all that is held in trust for our communities [24], we may end up with the situation that was the case in Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) where long-term unemployed were referred to as "long term stock"!

The Big Picture which includes considerations of Volunteering can give us new opportunities to navigate new waters and thereby provide Leadership to catch a glimpse of a new society [25].

### **Entrepreneurial Activity and Volunteering**

There is much to be explored in the relationship between entrepreneurial activity and Volunteer involvement. Ensuring that the Big Picture of Volunteering is promoted will assist such exploration. An important caveat is that Volunteers be safe from exploitation by unscrupulous employers who take up an entrepreneurial activity without a commitment to good employment conditions and fair wages.

Exploring this relationship will, however, allow new employment options to emerge. Maori entrepreneurs are showing how whanau involvement gives them a greater purpose to strive for, knowing that everyone is watching them, but also receiving tremendous support from them [26]. Upholding a bigger picture invites awareness of core values and a deeper understanding of people's needs.

There is growing recognition that values are the same across cultures, though the way they are honoured will be different [27]. An understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi gives this nation a particular basis for addressing the problems we face while ensuring that we no longer require Maori to be limited to past monocultural responses. We can then engage with each other so that Treaty-based development focuses on the values that underpin the responses we are making. In this way there is more likelihood that people's hopes and aspirations will be met and employment will become part of the Bigger Picture.

My hope is that entrepreneurial activists, those in paid employment and those working in the world of Volunteering will recognise and respect each other's contribution.

### **Cross-Sectoral Approaches**

Currently, there is much debate in the Commercial Sector about whether a business "should" meet a social [or environmental] responsibility apart from its responsibility to shareholders [28]. Legal realities and some acceptance of the (social, economic and environmental) "triple bottom line" require some shift. Recognition of the Big Picture perspective (of Reciprocity and Generosity) described above could create a situation in which this is automatic rather than imposed.

Seminal international work on this has been done in this context, developing a Systems approach to painting the Big Picture [29]. Particular references as to how we can work with human needs within the wider picture are usefully and practically presented by Manfred Max-Neef [30]. We also need to consider the value of unpaid work supporting paid employment [31]. Ivan Illich, writing as long ago as 1981, provides essential understanding in his exposure of "Shadow Work" [32].

As we learn to see a bigger picture than the one obtainable through a Labour Market



lens we will feel empowered to resist the commodification of everything and move from a politics of self-interest to a politics of generosity.

This will assist in working out how to value the Commons, replenishing that which has been depleted by several centuries of colonisation [33].

We will think of people not as self-interested individuals but as people-in-community, capable of reciprocity. Furthermore where mutuality reaches beyond exchange to create more enduring bonds of interdependence, caring and commitment, a transition occurs. No longer is reciprocity experienced as an exchange. There is a shift to solidarity and from there to genuine human mutuality [34]. Rituals may be needed to acknowledge the relationships in community, ensuring give and take. In this way it is possible to address the question about whether the logic of rationality and self-interest actually leads not to human satisfaction but to the loss of humanity itself [35]. This is particularly important as we move on from a monocultural approach to one based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi [36].

### Value of Volunteering

Volunteering is undoubtedly valuable to people and the causes they support [37]. It is an invaluable act of citizenship and is as diverse as society itself [38]. Just about everyone is a Volunteer (including those in paid work), though they may not name themselves as such.

A question to be addressed is whether there is a danger in claiming the definition and the naming of people as Volunteers. If the direction such a process takes us is opened and underpinned by transparent criteria I am convinced the value of doing so is greater than not doing so. We desperately need lenses to widen our view of the Big Picture. The tools which act by remote control and depersonalise (like standards and accounting) need to be complemented by those that focus on inter-personal relationships, moral purpose and a vision based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Topics which need reflection and action have been suggested above.

Leadership that both inspires involvement and recognises the inspiring involvement of people in the Big Picture of our communities will be necessary if we are to direct and influence the direction of the future of Volunteering in a coherent way.

Has Volunteering NZ made a useful start?

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