



**Evaluation of the Higher Education Active
Community Fund (HEACF) Project in Bournemouth
2005/06**

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Contents

<i>Contents</i>	3
<i>List of Tables</i>	4
<i>Executive Summary</i>	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1. The HEACF Project at the National Level _____	7
1.2. The HEACF Project at Bournemouth University – Links with the Project Evaluation of 2002/05 _____	7
2. Research Methodology	8
3. The Evaluation Findings in 2005/2006	9
3.1. Thehub _____	9
3.2. MAD Days _____	11
3.3. Community Champions _____	14
3.4. Recycling Project _____	16
3.5. Raising and Giving (RAG)/ Bournemouth University Student Community Action (BUSCA) _____	16
3.6. HM Youth Offenders Institution (HMYOI) _____	17
3.7. BA in Leisure Marketing (BALM) and BA Business Studies (BABS) _____	17
3.8. Diversity Day _____	18
3.9. E-Mentoring _____	18
3.10. Sports _____	18
3.11. Additional Staff Support _____	18
3.12. Partner Colleges _____	18
4. Administration – Communication Strategy	18
5. Conclusions	20
<i>References</i>	23
<i>Appendices</i>	24
Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule for volunteers _____	24
Appendix 2: Participant Organisations Questionnaire _____	26

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Higher Education Active Community Fund budget (July 2006)	8
Table 2: Current Statistics about thehub.	10
Table 3: Results of Evaluation Forms on Projects/Events Held through thehub	10
Table 4: Results of Evaluation Forms on MAD Days	12
Table 5: Results of Evaluation Forms on MAD Days	14
Table 6: Results of Evaluation Forms on Community Champions' Programme	15
Table 7: People Reached through Volunteer Office Activities	21

Executive Summary

This report evaluates the fourth year of the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) project's implementation. This is a collaborative scheme across Bournemouth University led by the Students' Union in partnership with the professional service department Partnerships, Access and Community Engagement (PACE). The project is funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in order to develop volunteering activities for students and staff. This report is a continuation of the report that was published in November 2005. For the next three years the HEACF project will be delivered as part of the plan that will support the development of learning and teaching through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF).

The project's aims are to:

- Encourage greater involvement in voluntary and community activities;
- Build links with national, regional and local voluntary organisations;
- Extend the potential for volunteering activity in the sub-region;
- Map current staff and student involvement and develop an appropriate data base of volunteering;
- Develop and disseminate good practice in recruitment, retention and support of volunteers.

The research followed established evaluation techniques. These included quantitative data gathering and analysis, as well as the analysis of qualitative semi-structured interviews. These methods were chosen in order to assess the success of the project activities and to see whether the overall project met its stated aims and objectives. The research methods were: small-scale surveys based on completed evaluation forms; semi-structured interviews with key participants; and collection of secondary data.

The HEACF programme went through a sustainable phase in 2005/06. Examining individual projects, its flagship projects such as thehub, Make a Difference (MAD) days and Community Champions continued to grow. Thehub took a prominent position as 'the project of the projects' and played an important role in the organisation and administering of the other projects within the HEACF programme. Regarding the 'one-off' nature of MAD Days the programme was considered very useful especially for those volunteers who wanted to occasionally participate but not committing themselves in the long run. As for the Community Champions the flexible attendance approach did not work as expected. There were mixed reactions from the students. Some of them thought that the sessions were well organised because they were also involved in other Student Union (SU) volunteering activities. However, others thought that regular attendance and the recording of personal experience and reflective logs in a workbook was preferable.

Recommendations on taking the projects forward include:

- To develop the 'Your Best You', a programme that will have a focus on personal development and will be open to all students;
- Plan a specific campaign to recruit students from Partner Colleges into volunteering through thehub;
- To develop a promotional brochure about thehub, which could include case studies and success stories;
- To establish a volunteer tracking method through thehub;
- To highlight Student Volunteer Week through a week of promotional and awareness raising activities with the Public Relations (PR) Committee;

- To promote volunteering through the Student Representative system and look at the viability of develop a Student Volunteer Rep role;
- To seek project funding for Volunteer Office activities through the Lottery, grant making trusts and business sponsorship;
- To consider a more structured way of running of the Community Champions project;
- To continue to identify and offer a range of different MAD Days in addition to the National Trust;
- To embed volunteering as a key part of Freshers Week (MAD Day during the week);
- To work closely with International Office in providing MAD Days & volunteering information for international students;
- To develop stronger links with Clubs & Societies and develop a MAD Day as a teambuilding event;
- To investigate alternative methods to encourage University staff to volunteer through the Students' Union;
- To ensure that appropriate equipment is available for MAD days and other events;
- To think about the organisational continuation of the Recycling Ronnie Project;
- To support the Learning & Development Team in delivering training to the Aimhigher Student Mentors – this could further enhance the relationships between PACE & the SU.

Additionally, the evaluation found that the impact the project has had upon the university activities and the local community was considerable. Programmes such as thehub through its constant interaction with volunteers, and MAD Days with its flexible delivery were able to reflect on the needs and interest of the community upon volunteering. This was further promoted through the local press and the work by the Student's Union PR Committee. Ultimately, regarding the future of the project the report found that new programmes such as 'Your Best You' that focus on personal development in volunteering could make the difference. In addition, a need for the Volunteer Office to be more identifiable within the local community was suggested.

1. Introduction

1.1. The HEACF Project at the National Level

The Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) project is a collaborative scheme across Bournemouth University led by the Students' Union in partnership with the professional service department of Bournemouth University - Partnerships, Access and Community Engagement (PACE). The project is funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in order to develop volunteering activities for students and staff. In addition, other benefits have accrued as the project has provided examples of good practice on how volunteering can be integrated not only within the University but also the local community. Nationally, the HEACF has been part of the government's wider Active Community initiative. It is funded to encourage the involvement of university students and staff in community and volunteering activities. This report refers to the final year of the second round.

The project's aims are to:

- Encourage greater involvement in voluntary and community activities;
- Build links with national, regional and local voluntary organisations;
- Extend the potential for volunteering activity in the sub-region;
- Map current staff and student involvement and develop an appropriate data base of volunteering;
- Develop and disseminate good practice in recruitment, retention and support of volunteers (HEFCE, 2004).

Volunteering in the project's context 'should not be seen as competing with paid student work placements, nor should it be undertaken at the expense of a paid work...rather, volunteering is an additional option for staff, students and the Higher Education Institutions (HEI)' (HEFCE, 2004: 3).

In September 2005, the HEFCE Board approved funding allocations for the quality enhancement of learning and teaching in HEFCE-funded institutions. The funding was built on previous allocations to support institutional strategies and associated activities for learning and teaching. It has incorporated funding for students and staff to gain broader learning experiences through community volunteering, and has provided additional funds to ensure teaching is supported by research. The HEACF will continue up to 2009 (HEFCE, 2005).

1.2. The HEACF Project at Bournemouth University – Links with the Project Evaluation of 2002/05

During the period of 2005/06 the HEACF project at Bournemouth was developed and implemented in the same line as between 2002 to 2005. Consistent monitoring and evaluation of the project was central in order to promote good practice and risk management. An indication of the project's progress was the fact that 'thehub', the university's 'one-stop on-line shop', designed to match student volunteers with community based projects, won the national HEACF Student Volunteering Award 2005. At the implementation level the project continued running some of the last year's successful programmes such as Community Champions, MAD days, and thehub, as well as introducing some new ones e.g. Mentoring by the Young Offenders' Institution and the Recycling Project (HEACF Steering Group, 02 February and 15 June 2006).

In terms of funding Bournemouth University was allocated £39,522 per year for Round 2

(2004-2006). The spending over 2005/06 is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Higher Education Active Community Fund budget (July 2006)

HEACF			
	2005/06 Funding	2005/06 spend to date	2005/2006 Balance
Transfer from 2004/05 to 2005/06	-17,505.00		
HEFCE Income due for the year	-39,522.00		
Contribution from SU	-30,000.00		
Total Income	-87,027.00		
Expenditure			
Students Union staff salaries	-50,989.00	50,989.00	0.00
PACE administration costs	-5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
Evaluation costs	-5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00
Project costs	-12,877.00	12,877.00	0.00
Activities	-9,661.00	9,661.00	0.00
Development fund	-3,500.00	68.96	-3,431.04
Totals	-87,027.00	83,527.00	-3,431.04

Source: PACE, Finance Division, 2006

[**Note:** The amount of £3,431 will be deferred and added to the Development Fund as agreed by the Steering Group at the meeting held on 15th June 2006]

As HEFCE has proposed over the next three years they will support the development of learning and teaching through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF). The aim of the funding is to ensure that learning and teaching strategies, and activities to achieve these strategies, become fully incorporated within educational institutions. Thus, student and staff volunteering activities will contribute to the fulfilment of each participating HEI's mission. Therefore they are required to be consistent with its institutional widening participation, learning and teaching, and most of all community strategies (HEFCE, 2006).

2. Research Methodology

The research followed evaluation techniques that included quantitative data gathering and analysis, as well as the analysis of qualitative semi-structured interviews. These methods were chosen in order to show how successful the project activities were and to see whether the overall project met its stated aims and objectives. This is important because evaluation as a method is used to help reflective decision-making. Following the previous evaluation rounds (2002-2005) the research process took the form of a *summative evaluation*, the aim of which was to determine the impact of the project and make recommendations for the future. The research methods were:

- a) Small-scale surveys based on completed evaluation forms;
- b) Semi-structured interviews with key participants;
- c) Collection of secondary data.

a) Completing evaluation forms was a research method that was extensively used for projects such as thehub, MAD Days and Community Champions. The purpose of using this method was to provide volunteers with the opportunity to comment on the events in which they participated. For example, with regard to MAD Days, seven hard-copy forms from organisations 42 hard-copy forms by individual volunteers were completed. In addition, six forms were completed electronically through thehub. Moreover, the amendments in the presentation of the evaluation forms through the use of the scale of 1-5 responses instead of the old 1-10 ones aided the interpretation of the responses. The template of these forms can be found in Appendix 2.

b) Subsequently, semi-structured interviewing was considered as a particularly suitable research method as key people involved enriched the evaluation by adding not only useful information but also their personal reflections about how the project ran during the year. Thus, two semi-structured interviews were conducted and the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 1.

c) Finally, collection of secondary data proved to be useful. In this light, documents produced by HEFCE about the HEACF project, minutes of the Steering group meetings, governmental policy documents, and project updates were used.

3. The Evaluation Findings in 2005/2006

3.1. Thehub

As referred to above, thehub achieved major recognition in December 2005 winning the HEACF “Outstanding Project of the Year” Award. Regarding the value of thehub the Milestones Mentor Co-ordinator, provided a supporting statement on this award:

...I have to say that the co-operation and support we have received from thehub has been far beyond our expectations, and more effective than any other agency. The response from students has been tremendous but I am sure that this is largely because of the efficient nature of the system, the enthusiasm of the staff there, which contacts students, refers them to us and then most importantly follows them up.

During 2005/06, thehub was implemented and this included provision for future training opportunities. Regular newsletters were sent to all volunteers and organisations registered, highlighting new opportunities and interesting stories. Statistics on thehub are presented in Table 2.

In addition, there were 161 ad hoc volunteer cases not registered on Hub as follows:

- MAD Days 23;
- Public Relation Committee 20;
- BA in Leisure Marketing students 60;
- Duck Race 25;
- BUSCA Sleep out 11;
- Community Champions Interview Skills workshop 22.

Table 2: Current Statistics about thehub

Usage of thehub		
	As in January 2006	As in June 2006
Total number of organisations	101	116
Total number of current opportunities	38	35
Total number of volunteers	231	282
Volunteers approved on opportunities	110	63
Total number of Opportunities still recruiting	31	32

Source: HEACF Steering Group, 2006

Table 3: Results of Evaluation Forms on Projects/Events Held through thehub

Responses on thehub's Performance					
N=20	1 – Very poor	2 – Poor	3 – Average	4 – Good	5 – Excellent
How would you rate the success of the volunteer project?	0	0	1	2	2
How far the task was achieved?	0	0	1		4
How would you rate the suitability of the volunteers to the project?	0	0	0	3	2
How would you rate the collaboration between the Volunteer Office and your organisation?	0	0	0	4	1
How many volunteering opportunities activities were filled as a result of the project?	17				
Would you be interested in working with the Students' Union in the future?	Yes:3 No: 0 No answer: 2				

Source: Completed evaluation forms by volunteer organisations in 2005-2006

It was noted that the most popular way of finding out about thehub was by word of mouth, closely followed by the SUBU website. Presentations about volunteering were given during Freshers Week and a stand was erected at the Freshers Fair. The Student Union Vice President Representation Officer sent e-mails to student representatives on weekly basis. Moreover, the importance of the Spring Newsletter was stressed in attracting volunteer registrations. Opportunities were also advertised apart from thehub via Student Union representatives' newsletter and notice board in Poole House. In addition, specific opportunities were targeted at groups of students for e.g. designing a website sent to Design Engineering and Computing students, befriending a young man with cerebral palsy to Institute of Health and Community Studies.

As can be seen in Table 3 the level of satisfaction by the participating organisations to volunteering projects organised through thehub is significantly high. 18 out of 20 rated the activity either good or excellent. Furthermore, three out of five organisations stated that they would participate in a future volunteering activity.

Summarising thehub's function one of the programme's coordinators suggested that:

I think thehub has been a major success. [However] part of the difficulty with thehub is tracking which volunteers are doing what and where. The success is we've placed hundreds of volunteers within organisations, which has gone really well. We know it's robust because of the testing. The area for improvement is we need to be tracking more. Where those students are? How long they have been with their organisation? Because we don't necessarily find out until we do the evaluation. So we are currently working how we might do that better.

(Programme coordinator)

3.2. MAD Days

The Volunteer Office organised ten 'Make a Difference' days during this period with a total of 61 students, eight staff and three partners participating. However, two planned days at Studland and Sheiling School had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Talking about the project a coordinator stressed its importance by saying:

MAD days just continued to grow really. They are always popular, they sell themselves because they've been developed as these one-off volunteering opportunities and how they are marketed to staff and students. So people who feel they don't commit themselves to a weekly volunteering have got something they can say 'I'll do one of those'.

(Programme coordinator)

The projects below are listed in chronological order.

Brownsea Island-1

The Volunteer Office worked closely with the International Office to provide a MAD Day as part of the International Students Orientation Programme. Ten international students participated travelling to Brownsea Island and helping the National Trust warden to clear rhododendron bushes. As a result of this day, a core of international students were recruited who regularly attend MAD Days. One of them also became a Community Champion and was nominated for an International Shine Award – an award given to International students for their participation in extra curricular activity.

Butchers Coppice Scout Camp

Seven students and one staff & and their partner helped Scout Leaders clear fencing, shrubs and trees from an area in which a bouldering wall was to be built. This event led to two further opportunities for Community Champions who were involved in erecting fence posts and hanging fencing.

Wimborne First School

As a result of seeing the press release in the local newspaper, The Daily Echo about Butchers Coppice, the Volunteer Office were approached by the school to paint a wall. Four students managed to paint a vast area of wall covered by a mural in less than 5 hours.

Hod Hill

This was the first event of the year in partnership with the Bournemouth National Trust

Volunteers (BNTV) as the day at Studland in December had to be cancelled. Six students and one staff & and their partner cleared scrub land using the slash and burn technique. The BNTV organiser commented on how well the team worked, even inspiring BNTV volunteers. Future MAD Days were planned with BNTV at Corfe Castle, Studland and Brownsea Island.

Sheiling School-1

Sheiling School was a residential and day school for children and young adults with learning disabilities. The initial contact was made with a view to organising an activity for Community Champions but this was finally extended to two additional MAD Days open to everyone. Four students (including one from Bournemouth & Poole College) and one staff member cleared brambles from large clusters of rhododendron bushes creating pathways around the area.

Corfe Castle

Six students (including one from Bournemouth & Poole College) and two staff took part in gorse clearance on Corfe Common. A linear area of gorse was tackled with all volunteers, including BNTV working together as a team.

Sheiling School-2

The second visit to Sheiling School proved to be a good example of diversity. Six international students participated with one each from Norway, England, France, Vietnam, Finland and India. They rebuilt a path through the forest grounds of the school, digging out the old steps and struts and replacing with new wood, gravel and cement. Physically, this was the most demanding MAD Day to date.

Table 4: Results of Evaluation Forms on MAD Days

	Organisations					Individual Volunteers				
	1 – Very poor	2 – Poor	3 – Average	4 – good	5 – Excellent	1 – Very poor	2 – Poor	3 – Average	4 – good	5 – Excellent
How would you rate the success of the project?	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	13	29
How would you rate the information received from SU Volunteer Support Office?	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	2	11	29
How would you rate the suitability of the volunteers?	0	0	0	1	6	N/a				

Source: Completed evaluation forms by volunteer organisations in 2005/06

Brownsea Island-2

13 students, one Bournemouth and Poole College student, one staff member and their partner went to Brownsea Island in March to remove invasive rhododendron from an area of the island. The group was split into three and the volunteers used the slash and burn technique. They were supervised by a National Trust (NT) warden. The warden also provided detailed information regarding the history and wildlife of Brownsea Island.

Brownsea Island-3

Another trip to the island was organised by four students including one from the Bournemouth and Poole College, one staff and two partners. Again the activity was rhododendron clearance as part of the ongoing clearance programme. Only one NT volunteer was present.

Sheiling School-3

The MAD Day at Sheiling School involved four volunteers (one BU student, one Bournemouth & Poole College student and two BU staff members) working with the Volunteer Coordinator and the school's Head groundsman. The aim was to remove overgrown bushes and gorse from a large area in the forest grounds.

As it can be seen in Table 4, 42 volunteers and seven organisations expressed opinions about the level of volunteering that was offered through MAD days. Regarding the success rate of the organised events participants thought that it was either excellent or good (29 and 13 responses respectively – see also Chart 1). Similarly, participants regard the information given by the Student's Union Volunteer Support Office mainly as excellent and good (29 and 11 responses respectively). However, there were two responses of an average rating (see also Chart 2).

The following comments by some of the participants are indicative of their views:

- *Kept informed all the way through about what was going on;*
- *Guidance was given as to the sorts of work that needed to be done which I felt showed good organisation and support;*
- *The organisers were extremely pleased with the result and comments from parents and children have all been very positive [comment on the painting at Wimborne First School].*
- *I think it is really important that for these MAD days to be really successful we need to have good equipment. There is nothing worse than volunteering to help out and then not have proper equipment to achieve the object of the day;*

Additionally, participants expressed unanimously their wish to volunteer again by repeating the project they participated in and working with the Volunteer Office in future projects. 36 volunteering opportunities were identified. Comments by some of the participants were:

- *I'm happy to help out clearing bush and old fences any day, it was the best work-out I have had in a long time!;*
- *I would love to work with you all!*

Table 5: Results of Evaluation Forms on MAD Days

	Organisations	Individual Volunteers
Would you repeat the project? YES: NO:	6 1	42 0
Would you be interested in working with the SU on future projects? YES: NO:	6 1	42 0
Was the project delivered in accordance with the proposed timeline? YES NO	7 0	n/a
How many volunteering activities?	36	n/a

Source: Completed evaluation forms by volunteer organisations in 2005/06

3.3. Community Champions

The Community Champions programme was run differently in 2005/06 to earlier projects. It followed a more flexible approach than in the previous year. This partly was due to the change of the coordinator which resulted in some delay of the programme's start. It was decided that the programme would run without a core of students signing up as it was the case in 2004/05. Instead, a wide range of activities was offered each week ranging from one up to three. Consequently, the programme had varying group attendance. Some weeks it had just two or three participants but other weeks it had participation of around 25 people. The numbers of participating students were greatly reduced towards the end of the programme due to pressure of study and exam revisions (From the interview by one of the programme's coordinators).

This year activities included:

- Myers Briggs Type Indicator & Global Citizenship;
- Two sessions at Butchers Coppice;
- Police briefing on Personal Safety;
- Painting the girls' changing room at Kings High School;
- Lifestyle choices;
- Vision workshop;
- Interview Skills;
- Recycling workshop (See Recycling Ronnie Project below);
- A trip to Streetwise, the safety centre which is also a RAG Charity for 2005/06;
- Relationships & Assertiveness led by Jon Bowmer;
- Pay it Forward – a DVD about doing a good deed for someone, followed by group discussion;
- Diversity Day trip to Sheiling School;
- First Aid training;

Further activities included:

- Visit to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) Advice Centre and Night Shelter
- Relationships, Assertiveness and Debating Skills
- Follow up session on Personal Safety

- Arts Field Trip with Community Arts Co-ordinator
- Two sessions at Sheiling School to include Diversity Day which was open to all students
- First Aid training

The diversity of the programme and its ethos and nature was appreciated by the participating students. Initial feedback from students who participated showed that they would have preferred more regular attendees to foster more of a team spirit. However, others reported that they appreciated the flexibility. Following the Interview Skills session that was organised for Community Champions and attended by 29 students, two further sessions were organised. These sessions addressed the need of students and the work that was done by the facilitator was praised.

Overall, volunteers were asked to express their opinion about different aspects of the programme (Table 6). In terms of how they would rate the whole experience, the majority of them rated the experience as excellent or good. Some of their comments included:

- *Some sessions were very good, some not so very useful for me;*
- *Of those sessions I attended, I enjoyed the interview skills and vision workshop.*

Table 6: Results of Evaluation Forms on Community Champions' Programme

Participant Responses on the Community Champions' Programme					
	1 – Very poor	2 - Poor	3 – Average	4 – Good	5 - Excellent
How would you rate the overall volunteering experience?	0	0	1	3	4
How far the task was achieved?	0	0	2	2	4
How would you rate the information given by the organisation leading the activity?	0	0	0	3	5

Source: Completed evaluation forms by volunteers in 2005/06

Moreover, regarding how far the task was achieved the responses were 'average', 'good' or 'excellent' – see Table 6. Volunteer comments included:

- *Some events were cancelled due to lack of people attending. But from a broad aspect it was successful and it fulfilled more than what I expected prior to attending;*
- *My overall experience was very valuable and helpful but due to the fact that I wasn't able to attend every session, I didn't achieve everything available.*
- *Plenty of notice. Had a timetable. Informative e-mails;*
- *All volunteering staff were brilliant, very helpful and supportive*

Summarising the volunteering experience of the Community Champions programme one of the programme's coordinators pointed out that:

‘‘Community Champions this year was run differently. We had to take a more flexible approach than the previous year due to logistical problems at the beginning really...it didn’t work particularly well because it was a weekly programme. It needed to have activities planned well in advance so to sign up people for the commitment. Due to the fact that the programme was late in being developed – although we had a wide range of different activities for them to do each week, which they appreciated – we didn’t have that core group of students signed up for it as they did the previous year. [Also] we also didn’t run the workshop scheme this year because of the different nature of the types of activities we were doing. We had varying groups attending. Some weeks we had two or three but some weeks we had 24 to 25 people. ‘‘

(Programme coordinator)

3.4. Recycling Project

The pilot of the Recycling Ronnie workshop took place on 18th October 2005 at St Marks School, Swanage. It was extremely well received by two classes in Year 6 and 7. Feedback from the school indicated that the presentation had been pitched at the right level. JP Morgan provided funding for t-shirts to be purchased for the presenters to wear plus children’s sizes to give away as competition prizes. Some of the comments on the event included:

- *It was good that all presenters did a bit each. There was good interaction with children. Pace was good to keep behaviour issues in control;*
- *Good to have breaks for children to take part in an activity.*

The Recycling Ronnie workshop was taken into Rossmore Community College in February 2006 at their request to launch their Duke of Edinburgh Environmental module. Rossmore students were encouraged to develop a similar presentation for their own peer group. The workshop was also delivered during May half term to a group of 13 children at Southbourne Library. It was well received and the organisers were asked to return during the summer holidays. The project was further highlighted at JP Morgan’s Eco Day on 14th June with an information stand and the opportunity to buy recycled pens and key rings. A possible collaboration with Bournemouth Borough Council was discussed as they are interested in the presentation and content of the workshop to work alongside their Green Schools scheme).

As a coordinator pointed out:

Recycling Ronnie Workshop has gone really well. However the relationship with JP Morgan has started to evaporate. So the challenges are now to maintain a steering group, which originally was developed in conjunction with JP Morgan. But the people who are part of that group are under pressure from JP Morgan and it’s starting to crumble slightly. So the charity has to find a new organisation group to take over and keep it moving because it is successful. One idea is to integrate it within the Aimhigher so we don’t lose any of the good work that’s been done. .

(Project coordinator)

3.5. Raising and Giving (RAG)/ Bournemouth University Student Community Action (BUSCA)

The annual Duck Race raised £488 for The Children’s Trust charity. No formal RAG Committee was in place this year and the PR Committee have taken over the promotion of RAG Nights and The Old Fire Station. 25 volunteers acted as organisers and marshals for the event. The annual BUSCA Sleep Out to raise money for the Salvation Army was as successful as to with 11 students taking part raising over £160.

The four RAG charities chosen for this year are:

- SWOP – Sheltered Work Opportunities Project (Cherry Tree Nursery in Northbourne)
- Streetwise Safety Centre in West Howe
- BCHA/HyPed
- Macmillan Cancer Relief

£40 was raised for RAG at the Chocfest promotion by charging for the Chocolate Tasting Game and encouraging donations. Additionally, the PR Committee organised a St Patrick's Night party in March for RAG charities, raising over £1,250. The event was attended by over 400 students. In total £10,000 was raised for charity with £7,000 allocated between the four RAG Charities, (Cherry Tree Nursery, Macmillan Cancer Relief, Streetwise and BCHA/HyPed) totalling £1,750 per charity. Representatives from Streetwise and Macmillan Cancer Relief were presented with their cheques at the Student Volunteer Awards.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator and BUSCA Officer attended the National Student Volunteers Conference in Coventry in March. Of particular interest was the workshop on Investing in Volunteers and also networking with colleagues from neighbouring higher education institutions (HEI's). Collaboration through a regional MAD Day with Southampton University's Students' Union was discussed.

3.6. HM Youth Offenders Institution (HMYOI)

The Young Offenders Institution at Portland recruited and trained seven BU students as Mentors through thehub. The Volunteer Office arranged training facilities for the team. The office also introduced the HMYOI team to representatives from the Institution of Health and Community Studies (IHCS) to discuss possible support from IHCS staff for the Mentors. A joint Christmas buffet was held for HMYOI Mentors and Befrienders from the Refugee and Asylum Seeker project. The received evaluation from HMYOI showed that six students from Bournemouth University were recruited to the Milestones Mentoring Project.

3.7. BA in Leisure Marketing (BALM) and BA Business Studies (BABS)

BA Leisure Marketing

The Leisure Marketing charity events involving 60 students, was supported by the Volunteer Office who provided budget facilities, advice on risk assessments, insurance cover. These events were completed with a total of £1,083 being raised for RAG charities. Events included:

- A fashion Show;
- A skateboarding event to coincide with the opening of the new skate park in Kings Park;
- Screening of Ladies in Lavender;
- A golf Day;
- An It's a Knockout competition for corporate teams;
- A school Disco;
- A pub Quiz held in Dylan's;
- A DJ Competition.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator met weekly with team leaders and the course tutor to oversee the organisation of the events, the completion and submission of the required paperwork (including Project Overview, Budget Forecast and Risk Assessment) and facilitate CRB checks where necessary. In addition, Liz Gordon offered marketing support and advice together with a presentation on public relations and press releases. Bournemouth University hosted the Event Management Educators Conference on 21st & 22nd June and the Volunteer

Co-ordinator presented a session with the BALM Course Leader on the “Win-Win Collaboration between Bournemouth University & the Students’ Union”. BALM events were supported by the SU with the provision that 50% of the profits will be given to RAG charities. Some teams chose to give 100% of the profit.

With regard to BA Business Studies eight students were supported with advice and practical help with their Business Simulation Exercise. They were offered advice about fundraising and developing business contacts.

3.8. Diversity Day

The Volunteer Office co-ordinated attendance of seven charities over the two Diversity Days. The first day was unsuccessful due to the lecturers strike and bad weather although a performance by the St George Foundation who brought two African students to dance in Chaplaincy. This was attended by 20 staff and students. Feedback from the charities suggested that location was a prohibitive factor in attracting interest as they were located in the main reception of Poole House rather than the Atrium (Poole House) area.

3.9. E-Mentoring

Recruitment for Aimhigher e-mentoring was placed on thehub and to date details of three students have been forwarded to the E-mentoring contact.

3.10. Sports

The Volunteer Office sponsored T-shirts quoting thehub web address for community sports events.

3.11. Additional Staff Support

The Volunteer Office supported a team of staff participating in the Playtex Moonwalk 2006 which took place in Hyde Park, London on 20th May. They paid the entry fees for four volunteers who successfully completed the walk to raise money for breast cancer research.

3.12. Partner Colleges

The Volunteer Co-ordinator attended a meeting of the HE Council at Bournemouth & Poole College to give a presentation about volunteering. Consequently, Trevor Harris has become a regular MAD Day volunteer and won the Partnership College Student Volunteer of the Year Award at the recent ceremony. It is planned to contact all partner colleges with a view to being invited to similar meetings to give the presentation.

4. Administration – Communication Strategy

Administration

In terms of how the project was administered, Sarah Harrison commenced maternity leave in October 2005 and was covered by Liz Gordon, who was on secondment from PACE until October 2006. Sophie White continued to provide administrative support to the office for a few hours a week. The department continued to facilitate CRB checks for student volunteers and Aimhigher Mentors.

Charities and student volunteer projects were able to book table space through the office in the Poole House Atrium on Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes to promote their organisation/events. This facility has been used by the Public Relations Committee as part of the Chocfest campaign to raise awareness of volunteering through thehub. The same facility has been used by students from Bournemouth University and the Arts Institute at Bournemouth (AIB) for raising awareness and funds for their courses.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator continued to attend meetings of the Poole Council for Voluntary Services to be informed about changes in volunteer law, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) procedure and to raise awareness amongst other members of thehub. In addition, the Volunteer Office paid for room hire for the Poole Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) Conference in March held at Bournemouth University. The Volunteer Office organised a highly enjoyable celebration of volunteers achievements by hosting the Student Volunteer Awards & Dinner on 2nd June. The event was supported financially by the SU President and Scolarest who provided their Fine Dining menu at cost. 43 staff and students attended including representatives from the RAG charities who were invited to receive their cheques preceded by awards to outstanding volunteers.

The categories and winners were as follows:

- Thehub Student Volunteer of the Year – Vegard Engen
- International Student Volunteer of the Year – Vegard Engen
- Outstanding Contribution – PR Committee
- Student Volunteer Commitment – Kiran Norman
- Special Achievement – Simon de la Mare
- Partnership College Student Volunteer of the Year – Trevor Harris
- Junior Volunteer of the Year – Lara Heinrich

Each winner was presented with a jade crystal engraved award and certificate. In addition, Roger Colmer was awarded the International Student Volunteer with £50 in sports vouchers in honour of his late son.

Communication Strategy

The PR Committee numbered 23 including two members of the Students Union executive. The Committee supports the activities of the Students Union by providing promotional ideas and materials and press releases. These included articles published in the Daily Echo about Recycling Ronnie, the RAG Duck Race, MAD Days and the BUSCA sleepout. In addition it provided regular articles for the Nerve magazine covering the different types of volunteering activity available and a standing article called “Who’s in the hub?” which features a volunteer profile in each issue. In addition, it featured articles on the St Patrick’s Day party, BUSCA Sleepout and Community Champions working at Butchers Coppice Scout Camp.

As a gesture of thanks for their efforts, the Volunteer Office recently covered the cost of six first year students attending a PR session on how to write press releases and sent seven students to Bristol for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) seminar for Young Communicators. Both events were very much appreciated by the students. Each group was asked to prepare a report of each event which will support their Personal Development Plan.

Comments received from students on the committee included:

- *The fact that I am on the committee and put it on my CV was a definite plus at my placement interview – they wanted to know all about it;*
- *Although I was a 4th year and didn’t know anybody on the committee, we all had a part to play and I really felt part of a team;*
- *Organising the St Patrick’s Night party has given me great events management experience and I think that’s what I want to get into;*
- *I’m so grateful to the SU for the opportunity to put the theory into practice;*
- *Thank you for paying for our travel to the CIPR conference – the networking was so valuable;*

Assessing the communication strategy of the Volunteer Office a coordinator pointed out that:

Communication wise I think we are still weak. I think we've done a reasonable job but we are still weak. Not enough people know about the things we are doing. This year we've recruited a recruitment team with three or four people of freshers that were going around telling everybody about the activities we are doing. That's part of the reason why students have much better involvement.

The results of the First Year Survey (2005), carried out by members of the PR Committee, showed that awareness of thehub, Community Champions and BUSCA was poor although students were aware of RAG.

5. Conclusions

The HEACF programme went through a sustainable phase in 2005/06. Its flagship projects such as thehub, MAD days and Community Champions continued to grow considerably. thehub took a prominent position as 'the project of the projects' and played an important role in the organisation and administration of the other projects within the HEACF programme. The 'one-off' nature of MAD Days the programme was considered very useful especially for those volunteers who wanted to occasionally participate but not committing themselves in the long run. As for the Community Champions the flexible attendance approach did not work as expected. There was mixed reaction from the students. Some of them thought that the sessions were well organised because they were also involved in other SU volunteering activities. However, others thought that regular attendance and the recording of personal experience and reflective logs in a workbook was preferable.

Future plans on taking the projects forward include:

- To develop the 'Your Best You', a programme that will have a focus on personal development and will be open to all students;
- Plan a specific campaign to recruit students from Partner Colleges into volunteering through thehub by presentation and personal contact;
- To develop a promotional brochure to send to organisations / charities about thehub – to include case studies and success stories;
- To establish a way that it could track volunteers through thehub in a more sufficiently;
- To highlight Student Volunteer Week through a week of promotional and awareness raising activities with the PR Committee;
- To promote volunteering through the Student Representative system and look at the viability of develop a Student Volunteer Rep role;
- To seek project funding for Volunteer Office activities through the Lottery, grant making trusts and business sponsorship;
- To consider the running of the Community Champions project and if necessary to return to a more structured way of doing things;
- To continue to identify and offer a range of different MAD Days in addition to the National Trust;
- Research Alumni and staff team building volunteering (MAD Days);
- To embed Volunteering as a key part of Freshers Week (MAD Day during the week);
- To work closely with International Office in providing MAD Days & volunteering information for ISOP students;
- To develop stronger links with Clubs & Societies and develop a MAD Day as a teambuilding event;
- To investigate alternative methods to encourage University staff to volunteer through the Students' Union;

- To ensure that appropriate equipment is available for MAD days and other events;
- To think about the organisational continuation of the Recycling Ronnie Project;
- The Learning & Development Team will be delivering training to the Aimhigher Student Mentors in December to further support the link between PACE & the SU.

In Table7 the numbers of people who reached the Volunteer Office activities as in June 2006 can be seen:

Table 7: People Reached through Volunteer Office Activities

People Reached through Volunteer Office Activities	
Freshers Fair	89
Thehub	282
MAD Days	80
Community Champions	16
PR Committee	20
Interview Skills Workshops	74
CRB checks	56
First Year experience survey (PR committee)	70
BA Leisure Marketing	60
BA Business Studies	8
BUSCA Sleepout	11
Duck Race	24
Recycling Ronnie workshops	178
National Student Learning Programme	3
RAG St Patrick's Night Party	405
Diversity Day	30
Chocfest	100
TOTAL	1,506

Source: HEACF Steering Group, 2006

Referring to the impact the project has had upon the university activities and the local community in general one of the coordinators stressed:

I think we've done very well this year. And the reason for that is that thehub is consistently delivering... We are getting people coming through which means we are having an impact in our local community. Because of the focus of things like MAD Days we've been able to go out and make a difference in specific localities. And now we are going to make a bigger impact by spreading the focus away from just conservation which is the point of where we've been. We've been [also] impacting the local community through the local press, which the PR Committee are very good in doing... Internally, it's worked because people know that if it is volunteering they talk to us. And what we are able to do is share with other people at the university that we are developing volunteering. A great example of this kind of collaboration it's been with the International Office. With them we are heavily

involved with the International Student Week and we run a MAD Day specifically for international students.

(Project coordinator)

Finally commenting on the future activities regarding the HEACF project the same coordinator pointed out:

This year is all about 'Your Best You' and personal development. It is about developing people, give them skills and then get them volunteering. [For example] we've got a group of guys who call themselves Seize the day. They are part of the Your Best You team. They are looking at a similar conduct to MAD Days whether going out and do just random acts of volunteering. That's initiating that student-led is the future, project leaders that aren't staff is the future, I think. In terms of the volunteer coordinator and thehub a much stronger visible face in the community is what we aim for. We are going to be having a lot more collaboration with Millennium Volunteers from accreditation and also during funding. The aim is to make sure that anybody in the locality realises that it's possible to access students through a reasonable on line system. And also the more organisation we've got the more opportunities we can do. I think our future is one-off volunteering hits like MAD Days, Seize the Day partnered with a programme of personal development. .

(Project coordinator)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule for volunteers



EVALUATION OF THE BOURNEMOUTH HEACF PROJECT 2005/2006 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Note for interviewees: We are currently evaluating the delivery of the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) in Bournemouth for 2005/06. HEACF has funded the project you have participated in. Taking part in this evaluation is voluntary however your views will offer us invaluable insights into how the project has run in order to plan activities for the future.

The interview will be approximately twenty minutes long and with your permission, will be recorded for transcription purposes only. Your identity will be kept confidential according to research conduct rules.

QUESTIONS

The following questions are linked to the type of issues we will cover in the interview, but any other views you may have can also be discussed.

Question 1: Which project have you been involved in and what was your role within it? How long have you been involved in the project?

Question 2: Have the objectives of the project been translated into tangible outcomes (e.g. variety of volunteering choices offered; numbers of volunteer opportunities created; numbers of potential volunteer opportunities; increase in volunteering activity; targeting non-participating students, staff, and other volunteers; increase in inquiries; positive coverage in local media)?

Question 3: What in your opinion have been the strengths and weaknesses of the project?

In particular, please make a brief assessment on the following:

- Do you feel that volunteers have been adequately motivated in finishing the project/activity?
- Have the tasks allocated been clearly identified for every volunteer?
- Has the project had the ability to meet training needs for its volunteers?
- Could you see evidence of sustainability in running the project in the future? And how?
- Has there been any type of dissemination of good practice regarding the project (e.g. sharing experience with other universities)?

Question 4: In your opinion what has been the impact, if any, of the project to university and local community? Can you give any specific examples?

Question 5: Could you consider alternative ways for funding the project?

Question 6: How would you see future evaluation of the project being implemented?

Question 7: Any other comments/suggestions about the project(s) will be more than welcome.

Thank you for agreeing to take part

October 2006

Appendix 2: Participant Organisations Questionnaire

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING EVALUATION FORM
AFTER THE VOLUNTEERING EVENT OR PROJECT**

ORGANISATION NAME:	
---------------------------	--

PROJECT TITLE OR VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY:	
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1. Using the scale of 1-5 below, how would you rate the success of the volunteer project or activity?

Please circle the appropriate number

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Do you have any additional comments? :

.....

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.....

.....

2. Using the scale of 1-5 below, please think about what the volunteering project or activity aimed to do and rate how much of the task was actually achieved:

Please circle the appropriate number

1	2	3	4	5
Did not achieve any of task	Achieved less than half of task	Achieved about half of task	Achieved over half of task	Achieved all of task

If the volunteering did not achieve all it aimed to on the day, please say why you think that was below:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Please list the objectives for your volunteering project or activity and indicate to what extent they were achieved below:

OBJECTIVES	ACHIEVED
.....	
.....	
.....	YES / NO
.....	
.....	
.....	YES / NO

Please reflect on the objectives that were achieved or not achieved. Are there any changes to future volunteering projects or activities that you would like to recommend?

.....

.....

.....

4. How many volunteering opportunities were filled as a result of the project? _____

5. Using the scale of 1-5 below, how would you rate the suitability of the volunteers to the project?

Please circle the appropriate number

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Do you have any additional comments? :

.....

.....

.....

6. Using the scale of 1-5 below, how would you rate the collaboration between the Students' Union Volunteer Support Office and your organisation during the volunteering project or activity?

Please circle the appropriate number

1	2	3	4	5
Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

Do you have any additional comments? :

.....

.....

.....

7. Would you be interested in repeating this particular project? YES / NO

If NO, please share your reasons:

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8. Would you be interested in working with the Students' Union in the future? YES/NO

If NO, please share your reasons (your feedback is important to us so that we may continue to develop and improve our volunteer programme):

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation.