

The Senedd Papers

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A real Citizen Service for Wales

An IWA discussion paper by Andy Bevan

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The Senedd Papers

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About us

The IWA is Wales' critical friend. Our role is to act as a catalyst to generate an intelligent debate about Wales' future.

We are an independent charity with a broad membership base. We aim to bring people together from across the spectrum in a safe space where ideas can collide and solutions can be forged.

We discharge this mission by:

Generating ideas

- Providing a platform for people to put forward innovative ideas to improve the wellbeing of Wales.
- Bringing together experts and practitioners to critically examine the evidence in key areas and to suggest improvements.

Discussing

- Holding a diverse series of events across Wales where ideas are explored and challenged.
- Providing a central 'meeting place' for networking both digitally and through regular high quality events to bridge the worlds of politics, business, public service and academia.

Influencing

- Working with policy makers to translate new ideas into workable proposals
- Working with partners to spread best practice

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Introduction to the Senedd Papers

For democracy to work there needs to be an engaged electorate and civil society. One of the core objectives for the National Assembly for Wales's Commission during the Fourth Assembly is to increase engagement with the people of Wales.

That is, we aim to create an environment that encourages interest in the work of the Assembly and facilitates participation in the Assembly's roles of legislating, scrutiny and representation.

We aim to achieve this by engaging actively and widely, and ensure that the Assembly benefits from the creative energy generated by such engagement.

An important part of that process is working with partner organisations to facilitate debate amongst wider civic society and that's why the National Assembly is supporting the Institute of Welsh Affairs in launching The Senedd Papers.

The IWA plays an important role in Welsh civic life in terms of developing Wales's public policy landscape - and by anchoring this series of discussion papers to the seat of Welsh Governance, here in our iconic building, we are highlighting the central role that the National Assembly now plays in developing and scrutinising public policy in Wales.

A discussion about *a citizen service for Wales* looks like an ideal place to start as it looks to bring two sections of our community together to solve the challenges of youth unemployment and how we deal with an ageing population.

I believe that the Senedd should be the focus of this kind of policy debate and it therefore gives me great pleasure to welcome the IWA and to support the launch of The Senedd Papers.

Dame Rosemary Butler AM

Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales

IWA Foreword

In his 1926 novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, about the damage inflicted on the youthful lives of those who had lived through the Great War, Ernest Hemingway popularised the phrase ‘the lost generation’.

The term has been adopted and adapted ever since to describe the casualties of military and economic trauma. Again in our prolonged slump it has been used to evoke the despair faced by a cohort of jobless young people who find themselves without work, or hope of work.

In Greece, youth unemployment stands at a staggering 65% of 15 – 24 year olds; 55% in Spain and 40% in Italy. It is not a phenomenon confined to southern Europe; across the Eurozone the average rate of youth unemployment is 25%.

In the UK, just over one in five young people under the age of 24 are unemployed – close to a million jobless youngsters. In Wales 23% of 19-24 year olds were not in education, employment or training in 2012.¹

And of course this generation faces other profound challenges: a demographic time bomb - one-in-six of the UK population is currently aged 65 and over, by 2050 it will be one in-four; and a changing climate with the potential to unleash a tsunami of economic and environmental turmoil.

It is too easy to resign ourselves to the language of markets and globalisation, to the idea that there is little that we can do to rescue this generation, or devise practical solutions to their challenges. Hemingway’s novel was not about despair, his message was about resilience. Just as the generation who fought World War One were battered, they were not lost – and nor is this one.

Franklin Roosevelt famously forged a New Deal to address the mass unemployment caused across the United States by the Great Depression, and the Peace Corps followed a generation later to extend its spirit into volunteering. JFK’s Peace Corps Volunteers had three founding goals: providing technical assistance; helping people outside the United States to understand American culture; and helping Americans to understand the cultures of other countries.

¹ Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training, National Assembly for Wales Research Service, September 2013

Across the world, governments have put in place formal programmes to encourage young people to be active citizens, and to promote cohesion. Andy Bevan's aim in this paper for the Institute of Welsh Affairs is to draw on international examples of mobilising young people to address some of the challenges we face as a society.

His interest and expertise in citizen service stem from his experience over the last 16 years working on the EU's European Voluntary Service programme in Wales and also from his awareness of national youth service programmes in other countries (including Ghana and Nigeria) when he worked for VSO from 1988-1997.

From this broad experience he has developed an interest in the idea of a citizen service scheme for a broad range of young adults in Wales. His aim is not to create a short-term make-work scheme but to develop a skills-based initiative that tackles some of the longer term challenges we face as a society.

As the Welsh Government's Williams Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery considers a way to re-shape the way the public sector works in Wales, this paper presents a timely chance to forge an opportunity from a crisis.

Lee Waters

Director, Institute of Welsh Affairs

January 2014

Introduction

This Report examines the feasibility of setting up a Citizen Service Wales programme for 18-25 year olds who are willing to give between nine and twelve months full-time paid service, focussing on intergenerational social support.

Since 1996, a small group of young people from across Europe have given 6-12 months service in mental health support and other projects each year in Wales. Through the EU's European Voluntary Service programme, hundreds of young Europeans have contributed to valuable social care projects and gained a lot of new skills in the process. Perhaps we can replicate and scale up these excellent results working with young people within Wales?

There is growing interest across Europe in the concept of a youth citizen service. This is not the kind of scheme currently being canvassed by the UK government. Dressing up three weeks of summer activity in the language of citizenship is a bit like what Nye Bevan once called "putting flamboyant labels on empty luggage". Such initiatives are not only cosmetic, but are likely to be ineffective. Instead I believe that we need to put forward a plan which would promote community cohesion.

In the following pages, there is a record of experience from a number of international comparators, including Germany's Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD), which started successfully in 2011, with 35,000 young Germans per year taking part. There are lessons to be learnt too from as far afield as Ghana's National Service Scheme and the Jamaican Youth Service Programme. We should be open to learning from the South, as well as from Europe. In particular, the Commonwealth examples cited here emphasise an aspect of "national service" which also provides an opportunity for our best educated young people to "give something back" to the society which has nurtured them, almost as a rite of passage to full adult citizenship. While the elements of compulsion and militarisation, which apply to some parts of the Commonwealth examples, will not appeal in our case, there is still much to learn from these countries.

On the basis of this Report, the IWA aims to consult widely with stakeholders to seek their views and find out what could be done if provision was made for a Citizen Service Wales.

Andy Bevan
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The big picture – 21st century demographics in the Welsh political and social context

European societies face two big contemporary problems: an ageing population with growing care needs and, at the same time, a massive level of unemployment among young people. Surely, it isn't beyond our collective wit and wisdom to find a way of putting these two problems together to make a long-term solution?

The market alone seems incapable of dealing with these issues, which are seen as two distinct social problems. From a more communitarian perspective, however, they can be seen as linked components in a planned adaptation to our ageing society. Given our main political traditions, and a certain degree of consensus in Wales, there is a special opportunity here. Devolution allows us to envisage a way forward which is informed by a European and internationalist approach.

The Welsh Government is already committed to a number of major initiatives designed to improve the chances of young people in Wales who are currently not in employment, education or training, to gain structured work experience, leading to full-time employment. It is notable that Welsh Ministers, and their officials, have stepped beyond the "hands-off" approach of the free market and have begun to accumulate some practical experience of intervention in the economy.

The Jobs Growth Wales scheme, co-funded by the European Social Fund, is providing 4,000 young people with a job opportunity for a six month period paid at the national minimum wage. But, in five years' time, what will be the legacy of these measures? Valid and helpful initiatives like this, and the apprenticeship programme, mean an injection of public funding into the Welsh private sector economy. But what long-term institutional gains will there be for this public investment?

The proposal in these pages for a comprehensive citizen service programme is not for just another job creation programme targeting socially disadvantaged young people – there are already a number of such schemes – though citizen service could fit effectively alongside them. On the contrary, citizen service is promoted here as a new and long-term addition to our social landscape in Wales. It has a wider rationale, a wider appeal and a wider constituency. It should be an opportunity for a comprehensive, wide range of young people from all parts of Wales to work together: young unemployed people, school-leavers over the age of 18 and recent graduates, who all want to contribute to Welsh communities, picking up valuable life skills, training and accreditation in the process. (We should note, in passing, that every young graduate, for example, who takes up a 12 month placement on citizen service is simultaneously leaving a potential vacancy free somewhere else for another applicant.)

In identifying the areas where citizen service placements could be most effective, we are proposing here that there is a “fit” between the large number of our young people whose time and energy has for too many years been undervalued and underused, on the one hand, and the equally chronic and growing conundrum of how to provide adequate high quality social care and companionship for our elders, on the other. The experience of European Voluntary Service (EVS) in many countries, including Wales, since 1996, has shown that young people, motivated by the will to contribute, can make a huge difference to the quality of life of senior citizens especially. EVS has been careful to avoid “job substitution”; essential care has been defined as a role for trained employees. The special contribution of EVS volunteers has been in bringing the “added value” which comes from being able to give time to things like conversation, engagement, recreation and companionship. The young people who have given their time to these things have learnt a lesson for life, preparing them for inevitable issues of ageing within their own circle of family and friends later in life, and have had the opportunity to think about the change in status and respect which the whole of society needs to develop in its attitude towards the needs of our growing number and proportion of senior citizens.

This work can include assistance to senior citizens in accessing online information (including about medical conditions), communication (sometimes with far-flung families) and entertainment. Emphasising work with elders builds on successful EVS experiences with “intergenerational solidarity” and on Germany’s recent transition from *zivildienst* to (BFD) Federal Volunteer Service.²

An initial *emphasis* on placements of this kind, though, should not rule out a broader deployment in all the sectors where EVS has been successful, including conservation, heritage, youth information and youth work, mental health and disability support and so on.

We should also be open, in principle, to including well co-ordinated, high quality citizen service deployments in private sector care for the elderly too. A commitment to trade union rights, decent pay and training is a key part of that approach. Potentially, it can create a new mechanism for raising standards of provision both for our young and old alike.

Public investment in citizen service would lead to institutional gains and the creation of a new tool for democratically planned, social interventions. And, importantly in the Welsh context, these interventions could make an impact across the public sector, as well as providing funding for the private and voluntary sectors.

Certainly, for this approach to be a success in Wales, it is important to win trade union support. We should use this as a positive opportunity to promote workplace education, and employment rights, as a key part of the programme. As a new national service institution, the scheme could provide integral training modules on trade union rights and heritage in Wales, which could, if successful, be scoped out and made available to other vocational training programmes in Wales.

According to the 2011 census, there were 563,000 people in Wales over the age of 65 (approx 18.4% of the total). Of these, 262,000 were over the age of 75 (approx. 8.6%).

Welsh Government statistics, released on 24 July 2013, showed that for the year ending 31 March 2013, 10.2% of 16-18 year olds in Wales were NEET (11,600), compared with 12.2% (14,000) at the end of 2011. At 31 March 2013, 23% of 19-24 year olds in Wales were NEET (59,900), compared with 22.2% (57,400) at the end of 2011. Of those 57,400, 27,000 were classified as unemployed and 30,400 as economically inactive.

² *Zivildienst* was the “civilian service” option to military service in Germany, where conscription was abolished in 2011. See **Germany** and **EVS** in the next section on International Comparators, and in Appendix 2.

International comparators

It is certainly timely to consider the creation of a new programme of active citizenship for young people in Wales. It chimes well, for example, with the EU's "Youth Guarantee", announced in May 2013, which is designed to address youth unemployment and to improve the transitions between school and work³. Based on experience in Austria and Finland, the Youth Guarantee seeks to ensure that all young people up to age 25 receive a quality offer of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The Welsh Government too, as recently as 1 October 2013, has clarified its own framework under the rubric "Youth Engagement and Progression". This gives local authorities a strategic role, working closely with Careers Wales, the youth service, schools and other partners to bring elements of NEET⁴ reduction together in one place, with a two year timetable for implementation.

In this section I highlight four international examples that Wales could learn from, and there are further examples in the appendix.

—Germany

In both East and West Germany there had been large-scale programmes mobilising young volunteers from the 1950s onwards, initially for the clearance of war damage but later focussing more on social care. A new Federal Voluntary Service (BFD) was introduced in 2011 when conscription came to an end.

Some 35,000 young people every year now have placements⁵, usually for 12 months, to support projects considered to be for the 'common good'. The volunteers get full time placements, supported by training, and accreditation at the end of it. Though designed for those under 27 who have completed their education, older adults can also access a placement or training programme every five years.

The placement providers receive a subsidy towards the employment costs from the federal government. Volunteers receive an allowance (approx. €350.00 per month, on average). The scheme runs alongside the long-established Voluntary Social Year and Voluntary Ecological Year programmes, and seeks to promote civic engagement.

3 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-464_en.htm

4 Not in Education, Employment or Training

5 This had risen to 47,000 by the end of 2013 (Source: BFD)

—Canada

The Katimavik programme derives its name from the Inuktitut word for “meeting place”. It provides opportunities for young Canadians to participate in intensive six-month periods of volunteer service. Katimavik volunteers live in groups of 11 young people in one or two different regions of the country, work full-time for not-for-profit organizations, and engage in an educational curriculum in which volunteers improve their second official language, learn about environmental stewardship and Canadian cultures, and develop a healthy lifestyle and leadership skills. Last year 1,150 young Canadians volunteered, living at one of 53 Katimavik houses located across the country.

Each year, more than 500 community non-profit organizations have been assisted by Katimavik volunteers. Katimavik has volunteer projects in all 10 Canadian provinces and three territories. It has signed partnerships with a number of post-secondary institutions in Canada, for participants to receive academic credit for their experiences.

Katimavik has been funded to the tune of \$15 million per year by the Department of Canadian Heritage but last year the Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, announced that this funding will be cancelled. This has prompted Katimavik to find alternative sources of funding.

The goal of the programme’s educational component is to build the capacities of participants to:

- Interact with others in a variety of situations
- Adopt an open attitude towards the diversity of social and multicultural realities
- Communicate in both official languages
- Engage in diverse work experiences
- Apply habits that favour a healthy lifestyle
- Develop an integrated vision of environmental protection and sustainable development
- Engage as a citizen
- Prepare to integrate, as a citizen, into the job market, school or other life event

This programme has a number of resonances with Wales, including its commitment to fostering bilingualism, rural/urban exchange experiences and sustainable living. Over the years, however, it has been a political football, rather identified with the left, Quebec, aboriginal communities and multiculturalism.

—European Voluntary Service (EVS)

EVS was established by the European Commission in 1996 and is now open to anyone under 30 residing in an EU Member State who is willing to take up a voluntary service placement abroad.

From an early stage, there have been two main strands of EVS: long term (2-12 months) and short term (2 weeks – 2 months). In practice, the long term placements have mainly been of 6-12 months duration. The short-term placements have been designed for disadvantaged youngsters who are not yet ready to take on a long-term placement.

Placements have to be in the broadly defined not-for-profit sector, chiefly in social care settings (working with disability, care of the elderly, homeless etc.), youth work and youth information, environmental conservation, heritage and culture.

In each programme country there is a designated National Agency, which is held responsible by the EC for quality control of placement approvals and for funding decisions. In the UK, the National Agency is the British Council. EVS volunteers in the UK get free board and lodging plus a living allowance of about £140 per month. The amounts paid in other countries vary according to the cost of living nationally.

In EVS placements in Wales specifically, young people from a wide range of educational and social backgrounds have been offered the opportunity to share accommodation and to work in related projects (e.g. in mental health support or in conservation) usually for 6 months. The “mix” of backgrounds and the intensity of working together and living away from home with a diverse team of volunteers has been very positive. Many of the volunteers have successfully found employment here after their EVS.

By 2013, about 7,000 young adults per year have been taking part in EVS throughout Europe. Since 1996, there has been an EVS hosting programme in Wales averaging about 40 placements per year, with the biggest group in mental health support roles in Cardiff.

EVS provides a useful model for a framework of quality approval of projects through its national agencies, but it is widely felt that the current model is micro-managed by the EC and the agencies with a narrow focus on financial accounting for each individual volunteer placed. In terms of its relevance to citizen service programmes, the main drawback of EVS is that it provides funding only for activities outside the home country. It could, nevertheless, provide some ancillary funding for elements of Welsh citizen service activity which would take place abroad.

—Belgium

Plateforme pour le service citoyen/ Platform Jongeren voor de Samenleving aims to introduce a national civic service for young people aged 18 to 25 in Belgium. The Platform brings together more than fifty organisations and many supporters around a common goal: to create a legal framework for civic service in all parts of Belgium.

In 2013, for the third consecutive year, the Platform is again delivering a Citizen Service pilot project. The project involves a 6 months volunteer commitment, full-time, in a host organization, with days of group training. Following the support now of the Flemish Community, the third pilot project will unfold in 2013 throughout Belgium and aims to integrate community projects and days of major joint activities in each language community. Around 50 young people from the French, Flemish and German-speaking communities have started their civic service during 2013.

For 6 months, they will be helping out in different areas, such as caring for disabled or elderly people, in environmental projects or in youth work. To ensure the quality of the projects and the value for the participants, each participant spends up to 20% of their time on in-service

training during their civic service.

The Belgian project is an example of a new, “grass roots”, bottom-up initiative by socially aware young people who are concerned to do something effective about social inclusion.

(Further details of these international examples are provided in **Appendix 2**, along with other case studies from Jamaica, Ghana, Nigeria, Italy and France.)

A response to long-term demographic change in Wales

The citizen service model is part of a considered response to the long-term demographic problems facing us. It could help address the growing social care needs of our ageing society, while allowing young people from a range of social and educational backgrounds to work alongside each other. It enables young people, whose contribution to society is currently so often undervalued or rejected, to be part of the solution to the growing needs of an ageing society, promoting solidarity between the young and the old, as part of a community-wide approach.

The experience of EVS in Wales - and Katimavik in Canada - indicates that a citizen service scheme, if it is to be successful, needs to *combine* opportunities for economically disadvantaged young people with opportunities for those who have progressed well through the educational system too as a transition to the world of work.

So, there might be some sense in trying to involve a cohort of Welsh youngsters who are between school and higher education in this programme. Public funds are supporting this group already in terms of subsidising their tuition fees and many of them would respond to an appeal to help with a civic action programme of this kind before or after their higher education studies. The approach would be to seek their support for community initiatives which enhance the understanding of different parts of Wales – north, south, east and west; rural and urban Wales.

A citizen service programme of this type can help many young people in Wales to develop their confidence, to see themselves as a valued part of their community and to acquire good “skills for life” in team working, communication, problem-solving and negotiation.

My interest in sketching out some possibilities here, drawing on what has succeeded in other countries, is to stimulate a discussion with a wide range of stakeholders in Wales. I personally believe that a lead needs to come from the Welsh Government if we are to make real progress, but that needs to be based on thorough consultation with young people, communities, the care sector, workers’ representatives and many others. In particular, the expertise of the specialist youth sector will be invaluable. Citizen service should aim to replicate and implement the tried and tested methods of mentoring and support which are regarded as best practice in that sector. This needs to be combined with well designed and well delivered, accredited in-service training. At the end of the programme, each participant

who requests it should receive careers advice on courses of study and training, and assistance with job applications, with detailed testimonials provided by their citizen service mentor.

I estimate that for £14.79m per year it will be possible to provide a Citizen Service for Wales with 1,250 placements⁶. There are clear opportunities for European match-funding to make a considerable contribution to this cost (up to 50%), and it compares well with the additional £10m per year voted in the 2013 Welsh Government budget, by agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru, for the Apprenticeship programme.

6 There are further details of funding in Appendix 1

Proposals for Citizen Service Wales

The proposal is for a pilot Citizen Service Wales programme, open to 18-25 year olds who would do an approved and accredited⁷ 9-12 months project placement.

This could offer the following aspects of added value, compared with the Welsh Government's existing job-creation and youth training schemes:

- 1 As a new initiative, it includes a fresh opportunity to set up good quality placements in the public sector (especially the NHS and local authorities), as well as in the private and voluntary sectors (which are already well represented in *Jobs Growth Wales* etc.)
 - 2 This scheme would provide the Welsh Government with a comparator and equivalence with other national service programmes in the EU (and Commonwealth). This, in turn, raises Wales' profile internationally and provides a basis for international sharing of experience and peer-learning for key staff etc⁸.
 - 3 It provides an additional and distinctive pathway into qualifications and employment for those who are, for whatever reason, sceptical about the suitability of apprenticeships (e.g. older candidates who think of apprenticeships as an immediate post-16 opportunity, not really "suitable" for young adults who are 18+)
 - 4 It also provides a vocational training route and relevant work experience for people who are intending to study at tertiary level, who are studying at that level and wish to take a "year out" or a "sandwich year" during study or immediately after completing a course of study – particularly relevant to those studying social work, youth work, occupational therapy etc.
 - 5 The "national service" aspect of this scheme lends itself to innovations - subject to further consultation on quality assurance and funding - such as a 3-month component "away from home", where the participant is posted, as part of a team, to a community in another part of Wales (e.g. participants from the South Wales valleys
- 7 The assumption is that each placement would be approved for quality by the Welsh Government or its agent, and fully accredited at Level 2 or 3, depending on length of project (say, 9 or 12 months) and level of attainment achieved.
- 8 Existing EU funds support job-shadowing, staff study visits etc.

posted to north Wales, participants from west Wales posted to Cardiff for 3 months etc.) The added value is in national cohesion, awareness of bilingualism etc.

- 6 Similarly, given the international comparators available, there could be an opportunity for 3 months abroad for some participants (and for reciprocal placements in Wales). The added value is again in international awareness and in raising Wales' profile in Europe. There is also added value in that these innovations increase the distinctiveness and appeal of the programme and strengthen its credibility among the key target audiences.
- 7 Drawing on recruitment from the Convergence Areas of Wales, this scheme should offer a special focus on bilingual training, awareness and attainment.
- 8 There should be a specific element within the programme, offering accredited training in information technology so that participants, as part of their placements, can act as informal trainers for senior citizens and others who are currently excluded from access to the internet and other digital technologies.
- 9 In consultation with other stakeholders, we should aim for citizen service to help promote the concept of "co-production", as advocated by the WCVA, so that people who are currently seen as service-users actually become empowered and involved in designing and delivering community services in Wales, whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors.
- 10 As a new national service institution, the scheme could also provide integral training modules on trade union rights and heritage in Wales, which could, if successful, be scoped out and made available to other vocational training programmes in Wales.

A way forward

A proposed programme of work for 2014:

- A feasibility study examining possible options on scale and costs.
- Comparative research, gathering information from EU states and certain Commonwealth countries. This could be done via Welsh Government's Ministerial channels, seeking information through bilateral contact with Embassies and High Commissions and with assistance from Welsh Government staff in Brussels
- A schedule of focus groups, interviews and consultation with civil society organisations in Wales, including Careers Wales, Communities 2.0, healthcare providers, residential care providers, youth and community sector organisations, WCVA, Wales TUC, NUS Wales etc.
- Presentation of these findings to the Welsh Government in an appropriate way, recognising that the idea of citizen service touches on a number of Ministerial remits, including primarily Communities and Tackling Poverty, Health and Social Care, Youth and Skills, the Third Sector and, of course, European programmes and Finance overall.
- Building cross-party and civil society support in the run-up to the Welsh Assembly elections in 2016.
- Co-ordination with the work currently being undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government by the Williams Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery.

Appendix 1: Operational details

Proposed Target Groups: 18-25 year olds:

- Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) 18-25 (over 75% of programme intake)
- Gap year students 18-19 or 20+ (up to 25%)

The involvement of both groups ensures a comprehensive recruitment base, emphasises the voluntary nature of participation and highlights the combination of *receiving* relevant training/experience and of *contributing* to social cohesion

Duration: 9-12 months (at national minimum wage or above)

Voluntary participation by application, matched to suitable projects (taking location, theme, existing skills and training needs into account; with good quality in-service training and support, fully accredited)

On-line applications and initial “matching” of applications to placements could take place through the tried and tested mechanisms already established by Careers Wales, for example. This would need to be supplemented by good quality systems for the approval and monitoring of projects to be included in the scheme and for the provision of in-service training and skills accreditation.

Two main target areas: The EU Convergence Areas in Wales i.e. West Wales and the Valleys. (NB The West Wales Convergence Area includes Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy and Denbighshire.)

Two main placement priorities:

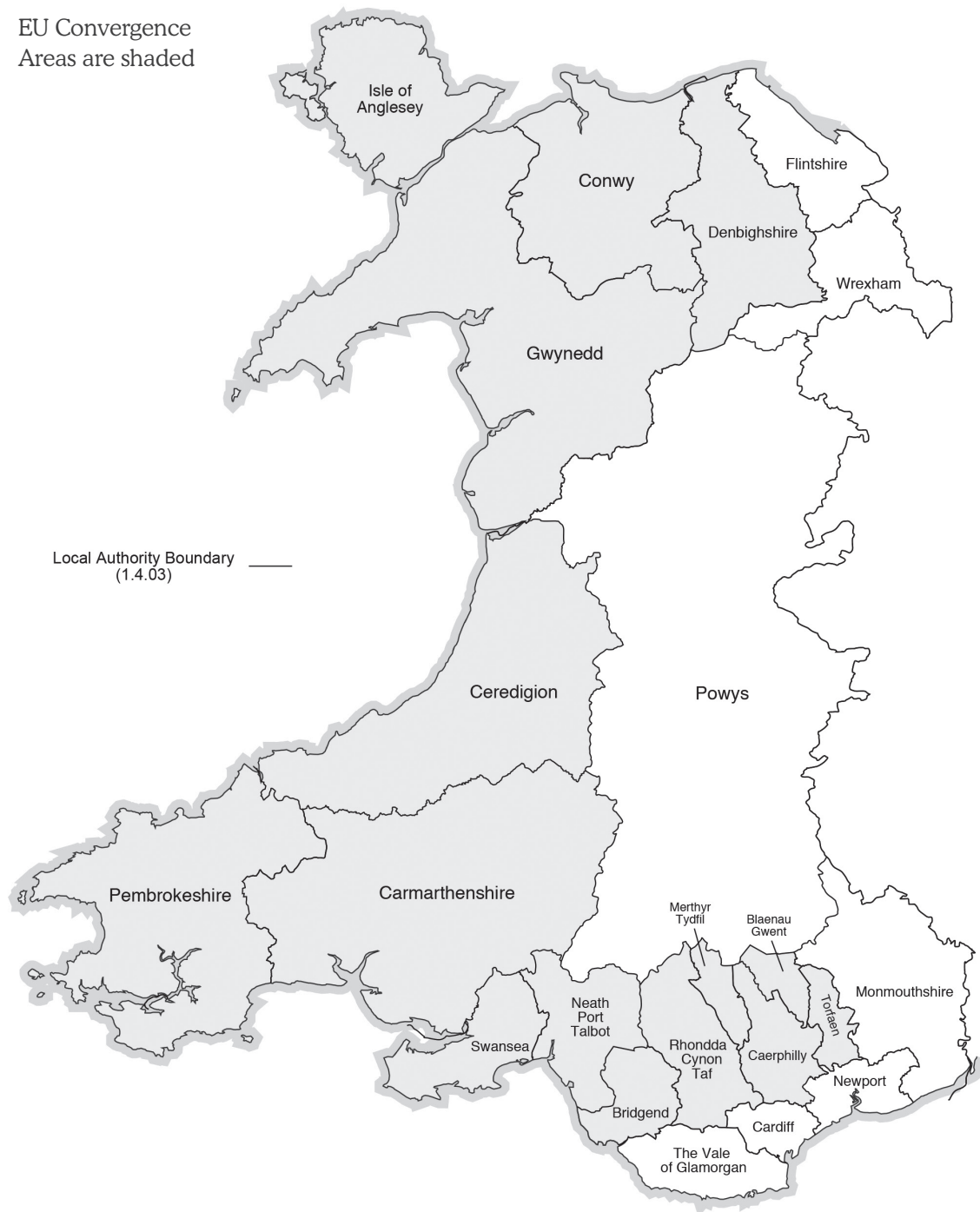
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Digital inclusion (for young and old)

Both of these priorities sit well with current and foreseen EU co-funding priorities.

Wales

Convergence

EU Convergence
Areas are shaded



Costs, scale and funding

Germany's new *BFD*, *Bundesfreiwilligendienst* (Federal Volunteer Service), launched in 2011, in its first two years was 35,000 strong, in a country with 81.8m people. Given Wales' population, a national service scheme here of 1,250 would be on the same scale. A pilot scheme would need to start more modestly.

Potential funding streams:

- 1 Looking ahead (and scaling up), funding by Silk Commission tax yield – as a new, flagship initiative unique to Wales in the UK
- 2 Partners in piloting the programme within local government, NHS, social enterprise and private sector (including care providers and digital sectors)
- 3 Match funding from ESF 2014-2020 for the above

Some calculations on costs:

Currently, the national minimum wage is £6.19 per hour. We assume that this should increase in 2014 or 2015 to around £6.50 per hour. Then, the total wage for a 35-hour week would be £227.50.

Costs for an initial 500 participants on an average of 9 months placements would therefore be $500 \times £227.50 \times 39 \text{ weeks} = £4.436\text{m}$.

Adding employment costs (NI, employers' contributions etc.) and admin., supervision and management costs at a third extra (£1.479m) would amount to a total of £5.915m for an initial pilot phase for 500 participants.

Scaling this up to 1,250 participants would imply a budget of the order of £14.79m per year.

Assuming co-funding at 50% from the European Social Fund would imply costs to the Welsh Government of £2.96m for an initial 500 placements and on-costs of £7.39m per year for 1,250 placements).

This compares with the additional £10m per year voted in the 2013 Welsh Government budget, by agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru, for the Apprenticeship programme.

Appendix 2: International case studies

BFD Germany

The **Federal Voluntary Service (BFD)** is a new initiative introduced in Germany in 2011. It was brought in by the federal government in response to a crisis in the provision of volunteer support in the care sector following the abolition of military conscription, which also meant the end of the non-military civilian service” (*zivildienst*) option, under which thousands of young German males had for many years worked as paid volunteers in the care sector. BFD runs alongside the long-established Voluntary Social Year and Voluntary Ecological Year programmes, and seeks to promote civic engagement. It is aimed chiefly at young Germans up to the age of 27 but is also open to older volunteers.

The central administration is by the Federal Office for Family and Civic Responsibility (successor agency of the Federal Office for Civilian Service).

In both East and West Germany there had been large-scale programmes mobilising young volunteers from the 1950s onwards, initially for the clearance of war damage but later focussing more on social care.

From the late 1990s the national debate about a possible abolition of conscription and the high demand for places in the youth volunteer services prompted the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs to set up in 2003 a commission of experts on “The Future of Civil Society”.

After it became clear in late summer of 2010 that the federal government proposal for the abolition of conscription would be approved, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs on 16 November 2010 presented a bill for a new Federal Voluntary Service, which took effect from 3 May 2011. The new service quickly came to be regarded as a success. Several organizations and institutions, among others the German Red Cross, the Diakonia, the German Association of Cities and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities, are committed to a further expansion of the service. Since 2012 all the available placements (approx. 35,000 per year) have been taken up.

Key features of the programme include the following:

- BFD is a commitment to the common good in social, environmental and cultural areas as well as in sport, civil and disaster protection and in promoting social integration. It is also seen as contributing to lifelong learning goals.

- Potential volunteers are all individuals who have completed full-time compulsory education.
- The work is full-time. Volunteers over 27 years old can work a reduced week of 20 Hours.
- The service period is usually 12 months, with some provision for a range of options for special projects of 6-24 months and an option of 3-month blocks in special cases.
- Adults over 27 years of age may access a BFD placement or training programme every five years.
- Accommodation, food, clothes and pocket money should be paid on a similar scale to those offered by other German youth volunteer services.
- Training Seminars must be attended on similar lines to those offered by the other youth volunteer services i.e. approx. 25 days per year.
- Educational support is provided for all volunteers.
- The volunteers receive the same social insurance as other employees.
- All placements must be approved by the federal government, with all previous civilian service placements automatically considered approved. New placements are approved by the federal government or by one of FSJ (Voluntary Social Year) or FÖJ (Voluntary Ecological Year) providers, with the additional approval of the federal state.
- Each volunteer receives accreditation at the end of their service.
- Services and spending money: The volunteer should receive adequate “pocket money”. The amount is limited to a maximum of EUR 336 per month (as of early 2012) for a full-time placement. In addition, the volunteer’s board, lodging and clothing costs are covered.
- Finance: The placement providers receive a subsidy of part of (and possibly the whole) costs from the federal government. Each BFD space is federally funded with € 250 (up to 25th birthday) or 350 € (from 25 years) monthly. However, only the pocket money and the resulting social security contributions are taken into account (about 40% of the total of all benefits). Food, shelter and clothing costs must be carried by the workplace itself.

Additional services

In addition to spending money and meals / lodging government grants can be obtained as child benefit, housing benefit and unemployment benefit.

Numbers

At the end of 2011, the Federal Office for the Family and Civic Responsibility reported 26,240 federal volunteers (“Bufdis”) in place. The goals set by the federal government target of 35,000 Federal volunteers had been achieved in February 2012 and some applicants were rejected as the programme was already full.

Comment: *This is a good example of a government-sponsored citizenship programme working within a well developed system of voluntary sector and public sector partnerships.*

NYSJC Jamaica

According to its own website, “The National Youth Service Corps programme combines training in specific career skills, re-socialization and work experience to develop positive attitudes and values among participants in the areas of self, work place, community and nation, as well as provide opportunities and orientation for their entrance into the labour force. Recruitment and selection of participants is island-wide and is done throughout the year.

The programme is funded by the Government of Jamaica with contributions from other agencies and the private sector.

From the participant’s point of view, the programme takes place in two phases:

1. **ORIENTATION:** During this phase participants will be involved in a four week orientation course.
2. **SERVICE:** Participants are placed in institutions/organisations to do their service. NYS includes specialised Corps:
 - Education Corps
 - Uniformed Services Corps – (Conservation & Cadet)
 - Social Service Corps– (Health & Clerical Administration)
 - Micro-Entrepreneurial Corps

Volunteers receive a stipend each fortnight. Currently the sum is J\$2,500.00. The programme runs for a period of seven (7) - twelve (12) months depending on the area of specialization. Career guidance and monitoring will be organized through workshops while volunteers are in service.

Post Service Opportunities

- National Housing Trust benefit.
- Recommendations for access to Parish Council Banks and Micro Investment Development Agency loans for Agricultural purposes and Small Business development.
- Assistance to attain matriculation for tertiary institutions.
- Financial assistance for tertiary education. (The NYS provides tuition grants for further education.)
- International Scholarships and participation in International Exchange Programmes.

Private Sector Partnership Initiative

The NYS Private Sector Partnership Initiative (PSPI) was established in 2004. This aims to create strategic alliances among corporate, government and international bodies to maximise the impact and reach of NYS programmes and for a greater number of young people to benefit from training, development and employment opportunities.

The NYS presently conducts three private sector corps namely: the **Customer Care Corps**, the **Sales and Administration Corps** and the **Micro-Entrepreneurship Corps**. Those corps specifically target partnership with private sector companies, strategically seeking their expertise, financial support and job facilitation, while companies benefit from receiving employable entry level personnel.

Training corps target literate high school graduates who possess a minimum of 4 secondary education subject passes and possess partners' specific requirements. Participants are trained in behavioural development and one of the three named special areas. They are then placed for a six month period in a private sector organization for work experience. On completion, participants can be hired as full time employees based on their performance or the availability of positions.

Comment: *This programme has an interesting combination of obligations and benefits for the participant, including the opportunity to earn state funding for tertiary education courses. It emphasises engagement and inclusion in its objectives.*

GNSS Ghana

The Ghana National Service Scheme was established in 1973 with the mandate to mobilize and deploy Ghanaian citizens of 18 years and above, especially newly qualified University graduates, on national priority development programmes that contribute to improving the quality of life of the ordinary Ghanaian for a one year mandatory national service.

The Scheme was later given statutory legitimacy under the 1979 Constitution of Ghana and the National Service Act of 1980. The mandate of the Scheme remained the same and the duration of service was extended from one to two years under this Act. The Act which was brought into force in 1982, further stipulated a six month "military orientation" training for the service personnel.

In 1997, a Cabinet decision reduced the duration of the service to one year following a recommendation from the Ministry of Education. The Scheme, since its inception, has become an institutional option for Ghanaian youth, especially tertiary education graduates, to demonstrate "civic responsibility through service".

The Scheme as currently constituted provides newly qualified graduates the opportunity to have practical exposure on the job, both in the public and private sectors. According to the GNSS website, it also provides user agencies "the opportunity to satisfy their manpower needs and affords communities that would otherwise have difficulty in accessing mainstream development initiatives, access to improved social services through community service".

Comment: *There is currently some controversy over levels of allowance, and transport costs and standards of accommodation. All these things reflect perhaps the relative difficulty and discomfort of rural postings (compared with urban living in Ghana). The military element is controversial too for many – and isn't really applicable to our situation. Nevertheless, GNSS is a good example of a programme where university graduates are expected – and themselves expect – to contribute something back to Ghanaian society, especially in helping to close the gap between the standards of living between rural and urban society.*

Nigeria: National Youth Service Corps

The **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)** is an organisation set up by the Nigerian government to involve the country's graduates in the development of the country. There is no military conscription in Nigeria, but since 1973 graduates of universities and later Polytechnics have been required to take part in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme for one year. This is known as "National Service Year".

"Corp" members are posted to cities far from their city of origin. They are expected to mix with people of other tribes, social and family backgrounds, to learn the culture of the local people in the place they are posted to. This action is aimed to bring about a sense of national unity and to raise awareness of other ethnic groups.

There is an "Orientation" period of approximately three weeks spent in a camp run by military instructors. There is also a "passing out ceremony" at the end of the year and primary assignment followed by one month of vacation.

The programme claims to have helped in creating "entry level" jobs for a lot of Nigerian youth.

Comment: *Even moreso than in Ghana, there is a military emphasis with Nigeria's NYSC and, in recent years particularly, an emphasis on "national goals" and "national unity" in a country where religious and communal conflict has become an increasing challenge.*

Katimavik Canada

The Katimavik programme derives its name from the Inuktitut word for "meeting place". It has provided opportunities for young Canadians to participate in intensive six-month periods of volunteer service. Katimavik volunteers live in groups of 11 young people in one or two different regions of the country, work full-time for not-for-profit organizations, and engage in an educational curriculum in which volunteers improve their second official language, learn about environmental stewardship and Canadian cultures, and develop a healthy lifestyle and leadership skills. During the 2011-12 program year approximately 1,150 young Canadians volunteered, living at one of 53 Katimavik houses located across the country while contributing to the work of one of 545 partner organizations.

Since 1977, more than 30,000 Canadians have participated in the program, staged in more than 2000 communities.

Each year, more than 500 community non-profit organizations have been assisted by Katimavik volunteers doing full-time work for them. Katimavik has volunteer projects in all 10 Canadian provinces and three territories. It has signed partnerships with a number of post-secondary institutions in Canada, including Vancouver Island University, Capilano University, Quebec's public community colleges (CEGEP), and George Brown College in order for participants to receive post-secondary credit for their experiences.

Katimavik has its national headquarters in Montréal, which also serves as regional office for the Atlantic and Quebec region. For the Central region, the regional office is located in Ottawa. For the North, Pacific and Prairies regions, the organization's regional office is located in Calgary.

Katimavik was started by Pierre Trudeau's government in the 1970s. Legally, it was incorporated as **OPCAN**, a non-profit corporation.

In the 1980s Katimavik offered a military option, an opportunity to spend three months on an Army or Navy base learning fundamental skills such as first aid and map reading, as well as basic military skills, such as drills and rifle handling but this was discontinued

The overall program grew quickly in its initial years to its peak in 1985-86, when there were more than 5,000 participants. The program was cancelled that year by Brian Mulroney's incoming Conservative government.

The cancellation prompted founder Jacques Hébert to undertake a 21-day hunger strike in protest, to no avail. He subsequently worked with Quebec region director Claude Raiche to continue Katimavik as an outdoor recreation training centre at Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot.

It continued in this form until 1994 when Youth Service Canada helped Katimavik to offer a new pilot programme involving six projects and 66 participants. The next year, the Government of Canada's Department of Heritage provided the programme with ongoing funding and the number of projects and participants tripled. The size of the programme then continued to increase; during the 2005-2006 programme year there were 1,155 participants in 105 communities across Canada.

Katimavik offers a number of alternative programme models, including:

Second language and cultural identity:

For six months youth volunteer in two Canadian communities: one Anglophone community in Western Canada and one Francophone community in Québec. It gives participants intense immersion in a linguistic and cultural experience while engaging in meaningful volunteer service.

Éco-stage:

This is a three-month programme for young Québécois between the ages of 18 and 35 who want to engage in periods of work experience related to getting professional experience in the environmental sector. Interns in this program receive a \$3000 allowance to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

British Columbia pilot project:

In conjunction with the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Francophone Secretariat of British Columbia, Katimavik has a programme in which British Columbia youth are paired with youth from Quebec in non-profit programs, including World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, with the aim of developing knowledge of sustainable agriculture and increasing employability.

Funding

In 2006, Katimavik was told by the government that its funding was under review and that it was to cease recruitment activities. A letter-writing campaign was organized by Katimavik and funding levels were maintained until October 2010 when the government announced three-year funding in the sum of \$15 million per year, a reduction from its previous funding levels (\$19.7 million).

Katimavik had a funding agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage which ran until March 31, 2013. \$15 million per year was contributed to the programme under this agreement. Katimavik also has the organization the Katimavik Fund which receives donations on behalf of Katimavik, including those donations made via the Katimavik website. The Eco-Internship program is currently supported by a funding agreement with the government of Quebec.

In the 2012 Canadian federal budget, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the program will be cancelled. The stated reason for this in budget documents was the comparatively high per-person cost of the program when compared to other government initiatives targeted at youth. This has prompted Katimavik to find alternative sources of funding, as well provoke protests from opposition parties.

Application process and costs

Youth who apply to the program are randomly selected though groups, based on demographic factors such as mother tongue, sex and province of origin. Selected applicants must submit a completed doctor's examination and criminal record check. The programs run for six-month periods from January to June and from July to December.

A selected group of eleven participants might include, for example, one from British Columbia/Yukon, two from the Prairie provinces, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, four from Ontario, three from Quebec and one from the Atlantic provinces. These eleven youth will be between the ages of 17 and 21 (inclusive).

While participants are in the programme, they will spend a week of their time in each community living with a "host family". This is a family living in the community that has agreed to take on a participant (or two). This allows the participant to take some time off from group life, while living with members of the community, and learning what it's like to be a local.

The goal of the programme's educational component is to build the capacities of participants in the following key areas:

- Interact with others in a variety of situations
- Adopt an open attitude towards the diversity of social and multicultural realities
- Communicate in both official languages
- Engage in diverse work experiences
- Apply habits that favour a healthy lifestyle
- Develop an integrated vision of environmental protection and sustainable development
- Engage as a citizen
- Prepare to integrate, as a citizen, into the job market, school or other life event

Comment: *This programme has a number of resonances with Wales, including its commitment to fostering bilingualism, rural/urban exchange experiences and sustainable living. Over the years, however, it has been a political football, rather identified with the left, Quebec, aboriginal communities and multiculturalism. It's full of ideas relevant to Wales!*

Servizio Civile, Italy

Italian civil service is a type of citizen service in the public or private sectors. It was intended in the past to offer an opportunity to perform *alternative service*, in lieu of military service. Since the abolition of conscription in 2005, it is now a totally voluntary activity, a type of service that citizens can carry out at a number of institutions affiliated with the National Office for the Civil Service, to provide socially useful service, including cultural promotion.

Civil service was introduced in 1972 for those who were declared conscientious objectors. The length of alternative civilian service was initially greater than that of military service (the objector had to carry out eight-months service longer than the standard period of military service) but in the eighties the extended duration of alternative civilian service was declared unconstitutional.

The abolition of the additional period of 8 months of the civil service contributed to an increase, over the years, in the number of conscientious objectors.

In 1998, a specific law clarifying these issues was finally passed. This law also established a National Office for Civil Service, with the task of organizing and managing the recruitment, employment, education and training of the objectors.

As the following table shows, in 1998 the new law led to a significant increase in the number of objectors, up to a record level in 2000, overtaking the number of military conscripts.

— Objectors as% of boys accepted for military service

1972	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
0.2%	2%	3%	5%	12%	24%	53%

The expenses of the volunteers

In 2005-6 the payment to volunteers, was €433,80 net per month to cover a minimum of 1200 hours of activity throughout the year.

The available places over the years has dropped from 57,119 in 2006 to 35,840 in 2008, before moving to 20,701 in 2011 with 20,123 planned for 2012 (including 4450 overseas). The funds have declined from €299 million in 2008 to €110 million in 2011 and € 68 million for 2012.

Unarmed and Non-violent Civil Defence (DCNAN)

By Prime Ministerial Decree in 2004 a committee for unarmed and non-violent civil defence (DCNAN) was set up.

The various fields of intervention of peacekeepers, also known as “*peacemakers*” are:

- prevention of conflicts (*conflict prevention*)
- building peace (*peacemaking*)
- maintenance of peace (*peacekeeping*)
- humanitarian assistance (*humanitarian aid*)
- consolidation of peace (*peace building*).

Comment: *Servizio Civile is an example of a nationwide, government-funded citizen service programme, which originally developed as an alternative to compulsory military service for young males. Threatened by the general funding crisis in the Italian public sector, it has not been able to adapt to post-conscription conditions as well as BFD in Germany.*

Unis-Cité, France

Unis-Cité is a non-governmental organisation created in 1994. The primary objective of the association is to ensure that it becomes natural in France that all young people, whatever their social origins or their level of education, devote one period in their life to the community.

During 1994, Unis-Cité started its activities in the Ile-de-France region with 24 young participants. Since its inception, Unis-Cité has set two objectives: to mobilize young volunteers in the field and contribute, through this experience, to building a movement for the creation of a civil service much bigger than the association itself i.e. as a kind of model or multiplier. Together, young people from different backgrounds, (possibly living just a few miles apart sometimes) learn to know and respect each other, while working together in solidarity, with those in need, such as the elderly, homeless and disadvantaged children. In doing so, their participation challenges racism and intolerance and helps to create a greater sense of individual responsibility, citizenship and solidarity.

— By 2008, Unis-Cité was active throughout France. In 14 regions and fifteen cities, the association now hosts nearly 2,000 youth each year. Unis-Cité mobilises young people aged 16 to 25 years, with emphasis on the social mix within teams.

Specifically, Unis-Cité offers people between 16 and 25 years old the chance to carry out a civic service project for a period of six to nine months. Selected solely on motivation, each young person joins a full-time team of several young people. The projects are carried out in close collaboration with other associations, both national and local, such as Catholic Relief Services, Emmaus etc. The programme promotes awareness of various issues: sustainable development, support for the elderly, the fight against discrimination and against social exclusion, neighbourhood sport etc. Each volunteer receives a monthly allowance of €573 euros, including pension contributions and social security.

8500 young people have completed a community service with Unis-Cité since 1995.

Comment: *With experiences spanning just under 20 years, Unis-Cités is one of the existing vehicles which has received support and funding from the French government in recent years as part of the response to the need to tackle problems of social exclusion in the aftermath of the urban riots of 2010.*

Plateforme pour le service citoyen, Belgium

Plateforme pour le service citoyen/ Platform Jongeren voor de Samenleving continues its efforts to introduce a national civic service for young people aged 18 to 25 in Belgium. The

Platform brings together more than 50 organisations and many supporters around a common goal: to create a legal framework for civic service in all parts of Belgium.

Objectives

In 2013, for the third consecutive year, the Platform is again delivering a Citizen Service pilot project with the active support of its many partners.

The pilot project for Citizen Service involves a 6 months volunteer commitment, full-time, in a host organization for young people aged 18 to 25 years, with days of group training. Following the support now of the Flemish Community, the third pilot project will unfold in 2013 throughout Belgium and aims to integrate community projects and days of major joint activities in each language community. A total of around 50 young people from the French, Flemish and German-speaking communities have started their civic service during 2013.

For 6 months, they will be helping out in different areas, such as caring for disabled or elderly people, in environmental projects or in youth work. To ensure the quality of the projects and the value for the participants, each participant spends up to 20% of their time on in-service training during their civic service.

Comment: *This is an example of a new, “grass roots”, bottom-up initiative by socially aware young people who are concerned to do something effective about social inclusion. Still at the pilot stage, they are trying to establish a citizen service tradition in all three of the recognised language communities of Belgium.*

EVS

European Voluntary Service (EVS) was established by the European Commission in 1996, initially as a pilot programme (1996-1999). In 2000, it became a “multi-annual” programme, part of the EU’s suite of youth mobility programmes under the Directorate General for Education and Culture.

From 1996-2006, it was open to 18-25 year olds legally resident in an EU Member State, who were willing to take up a voluntary service placement abroad. From 2007, it became available to 18-30 year olds. By 2013, programme countries included all 28 EU Member States, plus accession states Croatia and Turkey, and EEA states Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. By special arrangement, EVS volunteers can also be sent to placements outside the EU/EEA area.

From an early stage, there have been two main strands of EVS: long term (2-12 months) and short term (2 weeks – 2 months). In practice, the long term placements have mainly been of 6-12 months duration. The short-term placements have been designed for disadvantaged youngsters who are not yet ready to take on a long-term placement.

Placements have to be in the broadly defined not-for-profit sector, chiefly in social care settings (working with disability, care of the elderly, homeless etc.), youth work and youth information, environmental conservation, heritage and culture.

In each programme country there is a designated National Agency, which is held responsible

by the EC for quality control of placement approvals and for funding decisions. In the UK the National Agency is the British Council, London.

EVS volunteers in the UK get free board and lodging plus a living allowance of about £140.00 per month. The amounts paid in other countries varies according to the cost of living nationally.

In EVS placements in Wales specifically, young people from a wide range of educational and social backgrounds have been offered the opportunity to share accommodation and to work in related projects (e.g. in mental health support or in conservation) for 6 months. The “mix” of backgrounds and the intensity of living and working together (away from home) with a diverse team of co-volunteers has been very positive. Many of the volunteers have successfully found employment here after their EVS.

By 2013, about 7,000 young adults per year have been taking part in EVS. Since 1996, there has been an EVS hosting programme in Wales averaging about 40 placements per year, with the biggest group in mental health support roles in Cardiff.

Comment: *EVS provides a useful model for a framework of quality approval of projects through its National Agencies, but most EVS stakeholders reckon that EVS is micro-managed by the EC and the National Agencies with a narrow focus on financial accounting for each individual volunteer placed, rather than providing for a more strategic approach to reporting and accounting for approved programme funding. In terms of its relevance to citizen service programmes, the main drawback of EVS is that it provides funding only for activities outside the home country. It could, nevertheless, provide some ancillary funding for elements of Welsh citizen service activity which would take place abroad.*

There are also other countries which have citizen service programmes. A number of these are affiliated to the *Volonteuope* network. CSV (Community Service Volunteers) currently provides the international secretariat for the European federation, *Volonteuope*, from its London office.

Appendix 3: References

The following websites provide good background on national youth service/civic action schemes in Commonwealth countries:

Canada: Katimavik: www.katimavik.org

Ghana: National Service Scheme: www.nssghana.org

Jamaica: National Youth Service Programme: www.nysjamaica.org

Nigeria: www.nysc.gov.ng

In Europe, the following websites are of interest:

France: www.uniscite.fr

Belgium: www.service-citoyen.be

Germany: www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de

Volonteuropa: www.volonteuropa.eu

Other references:

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training,
National Assembly for Wales Research Service, September 2013

Other studies:

Youth Civic Service in Europe, ed. AVSO (Association of Voluntary Service Organisations),
Brussels, 2005, Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press: ISBN 88-8492-202-X

This is a comprehensive study of citizen service provision in France, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland and at EU level as at 2004/5 (i.e. 8 years ago).

AVSO, the Association of Voluntary Service Organisations, is a European umbrella organisation of voluntary service organisations: www.avso.org



Andy Bevan:

Andy has promoted full-time volunteering programmes for over 25 years. He was for 9 years with VSO (1988-1997), supporting technical development projects in Africa and providing pre-departure adaptation training for skilled, community-based personnel. From 1997 until 2013 he worked on the EU's European Voluntary Service programme (EVS). In 2000 he co-founded ICP Partneriaeth specifically to promote EVS activity in and from Wales.

In the 1980s he was active in campaigning for trade union rights for YTS trainees.

An internationalist since his youth, he takes a keen interest in the ideas of localised economy, co-operatives, workers' rights and the self-determination of small nations.

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