

## Volunteering impact

Have you ever thought about analysing the difference your volunteers make?

As volunteer managers we spend a lot of time improving the volunteering experience in our organisations, but often fail to analyse the impact of our volunteering programme.

A volunteer impact assessment is the process of evaluating your organisation's volunteering programme as well as identifying and measuring the differences that have come about as a result of volunteering.

### The value of volunteering

Volunteering could make a difference to your volunteers, the organisation, your service users and the wider community. It can be considered as five different types of capital:

**Physical capital:** The goods and services received or what the volunteers have produced. For example, an allotment project or school reading service.

**Human capital:** The knowledge, skills and health benefits brought about by volunteering. For example, learning skills to improve job prospects, improved mental health or increased confidence.

**Economic capital:** The financial benefits of volunteering. For example, the value of work done by volunteers, cost savings to the organisation, increased employment prospects for volunteers.

**Social capital:** Better relationships, networks and co-operation among individuals and groups. For example, self-help groups, people working together for a particular cause.

**Cultural capital:** Understanding of one's own identity as well as a recognition and appreciation of others. This could be assessed by levels of community participation and cohesion.

This article is based on NCVO's *Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit*.  
[www.ncvo.org.uk/component/redshop/1-publications/P78](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/component/redshop/1-publications/P78)