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VOLUNTEERS IN THE CENTRE  
INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS  
IN EMMAUS SOUTH LAMBETH

HELEEN VAN NISTELROOIJ (CCCP)

Giving people a bed...  
and a reason to get out of it

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# **Volunteers in the Centre**

Involving volunteers in Emmaus South  
Lambeth

West Norwood, London  
June 2006

Fontys University of Professional Education in Communication  
Principal: Emmaus South Lambeth

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## Summary

Emmaus South Lambeth (ESL) is a charity that tries to help homeless people in South London. ESL is building a Community that can house up to 25 companions (ex-homeless people). In return these people will work for Emmaus in the Community. The residential area should be finished in 2007 and the complete Community in 2008.

Presently ESL has two Community shops completely run by volunteers. The first shop opened in November 2004 and the second shop in April 2006. Because of the opening of the second shop ESL needs more volunteers. However the current ESL volunteers are unhappy in the volunteering environment so it is important to improve this before starting volunteer recruitment.

*The central question: In what way can internal communication help to improve the volunteering environment within ESL?*

*The goal: To improve the volunteering environment within ESL by having a better understanding between the volunteers and the management.*

To answer this question I used desk research, conducted interviews, used observation, held informal chats and organised a session party based on the Spiderweb method by Bernstein (Bernstein, 1986, in: van Riel, 2003:54). During this research the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL were chosen. The results of this research are the governing principles action plan and further recommendations to improve the volunteering environment.

Desk research provided me with the following definition for governing principles of voluntary work: Collectively chosen basic attributes of voluntary work within the organisation that have a determining influence on the volunteering environment.

In a session the ESL volunteers and the management choose the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL:

- Appreciation
- Teamwork
- Respect
- Commitment
- Positivity
- Challenge / Creativity
- Internal Communication

These governing principles are used to improve the volunteering environment within ESL. Basic guidelines on how this can be done are provided in the governing principles action plan. This plan describes the situation and provides advice and action points on what needs to be improved per principle. At the end of the plan the budget, time planning and evaluation methods are described. The rest of what needs to be done to improve the governing principles in the organisation should be decided with involvement of the volunteers. The governing principles action plan is all about volunteer involvement.



In the session the governing principles were graded for the actual and the desired situation within ESL. The objective is to improve the principles with 0,5 points within six months and to achieve the desired situation within 1,5 years time.

Governing Principles	Actual situation*	Desired situation*	Difference*
Appreciation	5,5	9	3,5
Teamwork	5,5	8,5	3
Respect	7,5	9	1,5
Commitment	7	9	2
Positivity	6	8,5	2,5
Challenge / creativity	4,5	8,5	4
Internal communication	5,5	9	3,5

The advice in the governing principles action plan only partly answers the central question. The recommended improvements are supported by the following advice: the introduction of a volunteer programme, more volunteer involvement, involving students, recruitment tips and the trustee and volunteer relationship.

This project is the kick-off for improvements in the volunteering environment. Improving the volunteering environment results in more effective volunteer recruitment and successfully retaining volunteers for a longer period of time.

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\* Numbers are rounded of when necessary.



## Preface

London, June 2006

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2006 I left for England to start my dissertation project. A couple of months before, I came into contact with Emmaus South Lambeth. During a visit to the organisation and a meeting with the project director and the shop manager, I became very enthusiastic about the charity and what I could do for them. I was very motivated to start my project and to make it a big success.

This was not easy as the situation turned out to be different from what I had expected. My plans changed and I took a different path. Looking back on the seventeen weeks I spent with Emmaus I can say I succeeded in helping them to the best of my abilities. At all times I kept Emmaus South Lambeth's best interests at heart.

My dissertation project was, above all, a lot of fun. It was not always easy but definitely instructive. I am happy to have done my dissertation project in England, even though this meant doing it without another communication student by my side. At times I did miss the critical view of a colleague student but because of this learnt to look more critically at my own work. I did not have to do it all by myself. I am very grateful to a couple of people for their help.

First of all, thanks to my mentors at Emmaus South Lambeth. I want to thank Majonne van der Bijl for her support. Not only for everything I have learnt by working with her, but also for making it a lot of fun. Also many thanks to Alan Bain for his critical view on my project, his advice, trust and the freedom to be able to finish my project successfully.

Furthermore, I want to thank my supervisor from Fontys, Marianne van den Bosch. Her critical commentary by e-mail was very useful.

I also want to thank everyone else that helped me finish this thesis: family and friends for their help and support and Freshfields for the printing and cover design. Last but not least I want to thank everyone else within Emmaus South Lambeth and Emmaus UK for their cooperation and support. They have made the experience instructive and highly enjoyable.

I wish Emmaus South Lambeth the best for the future and truly hope I have made a difference. It is up to Emmaus South Lambeth to continue what I have started and I wish them ongoing success. Hopefully I can return to see how the project has developed.

Heleen van Nistelrooij



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Appendices belonging to this dissertation can be found by following this link:

<http://145.85.7.12/co/com2know/scripities/20052006/FHCB0506137ESL.pdf>



## 1. Introduction

### Meet Emmaus South Lambeth

Emmaus South Lambeth (ESL) is a charity in West Norwood, South London. It is part of Emmaus UK, an organisation that tries to tackle homelessness through a network of self-supporting Communities, offering people a home, work and a sense of belonging.

At the moment ESL has two Community shops in which they sell second-hand goods and work on the rest of the Community has started. This Community will consist of a larger second-hand shop (also called the Warehouse), a residential area and workshops. The residential area will offer accommodation for 25 ex-homeless people. The residents of the Community (companions) will be required to work full time. They will fix furniture and other goods and sell them in the shops. The aim is for the shops and the Community to become self-sufficient.

## 2. The assignment

### 2.1 Cause of the assignment

ESL depends on their volunteers to run their Community shops. This year ESL opened their second Community shop next to the existing shop in West Norwood. For this they need more volunteers and have asked me to assist with the recruitment. They currently do not have the resources to employ a communication specialist and presently there are no volunteers with this speciality.

### 2.2 Definition of the problem

Everyone within the organisation describes ESL in a different way. Therefore I concluded there is no unambiguous view of the organisation amongst staff.

To be able to communicate efficiently, and for professionalizing ESL, it is important to know what ESL is and for the identity of the organisation to be clear amongst the employees and volunteers.

Majonne van der Bijl and Jenny Krijnen started looking at the identity of ESL during their internship in January 2005. They determined the core values of the organisation. These alone are insufficient to establish ESL's identity. They were determined by the Trustees and the management but not by the volunteers. Whilst the volunteers work in the shops daily and really know the culture of the organisation. This is why I wanted to write a corporate story together with ESL volunteers and management (staff). In doing this, all staff can work together to establish a shared, clear picture of ESL that they can communicate to the outside world.

During the first couple of weeks with ESL I noticed things happening that differed from my first impressions. The volunteers were unhappy and the organisation lacked a proper volunteering policy. Because it is important to have a good atmosphere in the organisation to retain volunteers and to successfully recruit new ones, I suggested focusing on what was needed at the moment to improve the volunteering environment. I put the idea of writing a corporate story aside and focussed on improving the volunteering environment.

The volunteers know best what can be improved and needed to be involved with the management in determining the key aspects of voluntary work and creating a plan to improve the volunteering environment.

In November 2005 I visited ESL for the first time. My first impression of the organisation was that it was very small, with a nice group of volunteers and they all seemed very committed to the cause. My interview was held in the basement of the shop, the office for the shop manager and the project director. Immediately I became aware of the situation within ESL, they have to make due with what they have.



### 2.3 Goal

To provide ESL with a plan on how to improve their volunteering environment and to begin this process.

### 2.4 Reading guide

This report consists of four main parts: introduction, preliminary research, main research and recommendations.

You are now reading part one which consists of a brief description of ESL, the cause of the assignment, the problem definition, the goal and the reading guide.

Part two, preliminary research, consists of internal analysis, external analysis and the conclusions and the intermezzo.

The internal analysis focuses on the internal communication and the ESL volunteers. The external analysis focuses on the environment around ESL. The intermezzo consists of a brief description of the process of the preliminary research and the conclusion.

The main research consists of two chapters: the research approach with the central question and sub-questions and the research results. The research consists of desk research, observation, interviews and a session. The results of this research lead to the answers to all sub-questions.

Part four, recommendations, consists of a summary of the governing principles action plan and other recommendations for improving the volunteering environment. Together they answer the central question.

The final part is the evaluation, which describes the process of my project.



## Situation analysis

The first step in my research is to analyse the current situation. This analysis consists of an internal and external analysis. These describe the organisation, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

I used both desk and field research to collect the information needed.

The most important sources of information of the desk research were the Emmaus UK Office, ESL documents and the websites of Emmaus, Emmaus International and ESL. This information gave me a good overview of all the basics and the structure of the organisation.

My field research included observations within ESL, visits to the UK Office, Emmaus Cambridge, Emmaus Bristol and Emmaus St. Albans. Whilst working in the ESL shops and the office I observed the management, the volunteers and the customers. These observations gave me a clearer picture of the less tangible aspects of the organisation.

Combining what I heard from staff members with my own observations helped me to get a comprehensive image of the organisation. The most important results of this research are described in this situation analysis. The complete situation analysis can be found in appendix B.

### 3. Internal analysis

The internal analysis provides the most important information on the internal organisation. This analysis starts with an introduction of Emmaus in general, followed by an introduction of Emmaus in the UK and ESL. Some aspects of ESL are described more in depth because they are prominent for my research.

#### 3.1 Organisation description

Emmaus is an international, secular organisation with 442 member associations in over 44 countries (including partner associations). Emmaus tackles the problems of homelessness through a network of self-supporting Communities, where people are offered a home, work and a sense of belonging (found on 25-02-2006 on: [www.emmaus-international.org](http://www.emmaus-international.org)).

Emmaus Communities offer a supportive 'family' environment and welcome people as they are now, accepting them for who they are, asking only that they agree:

- to sign off primary benefits (income support/ job seekers allowance);
  - to play a full participating role in the life of the Community and to work to the best of their ability;
  - not to bring alcohol or drugs into the Community and not to behave in an antisocial or violent manner.
- (Found on 21 February 2006 on: [www.emmaus.org.uk](http://www.emmaus.org.uk))

Emmaus Companions each have a room of their own and work together, refurbishing and selling donated goods. Each Emmaus Community aims to become self-sufficient through raising income in this way. Until this time Communities require support from donations and grants. Groups working to set up a Community (like ESL) also rely on fundraising for the money to acquire a site, build accommodation and set up the business (Emmaus UK, n.d.). In return for their work the Companions get a weekly allowance of £33.00 spending money and holiday and leaving allowances put aside weekly. All Companions are entitled to stay for as long as they wish and may return whenever they wish (Emmaus South Lambeth, 2005).



Year	Event
1947:	In France, Abbé Pierre laid the foundation for Emmaus by opening a international youth hostel in Neuilly-Plaisance which he names 'Emmaus'.
1949:	The first Emmaus Community was founded with its first member, Georges.
1969:	The first world assembly of Emmaus groups from all over the world in Switzerland. 70 groups from 20 countries adopted the Universal Manifesto of the Emmaus Movement, the start of Emmaus International.
1992:	Opening of the first Community in the UK in Cambridge.
1996:	Start of Emmaus South Bank (now called Emmaus South Lambeth) project by Nicholas Kittoe. From here on it took 5 years to find a piece of land where people are allowed to live, trade is allowed to take place according to the development plan and that is big enough to build a Community on.
1997:	Founding of the Emmaus UK Office.
1998:	Official registration of Emmaus with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as ESL.
2001:	Because the found piece of land was eventually sold to someone else the South Bank project is moved to South Lambeth.
2002:	The land in South Lambeth is acquired.
2004:	Opening of the Emmaus Community shop in South Lambeth.
2006:	Opening of the second Community shop in South Lambeth and start of the build of the residential area of the Community.

Table 3.1: Important dates in the history of Emmaus International, Emmaus UK and ESL (*The History of Emmaus, Emmaus UK*).

Emmaus UK

Emmaus UK represents the Federation of Emmaus at a national and international level and is made up of Communities and Groups. There are 13 Communities and 8 Emmaus Groups in the UK. The Emmaus UK Office, based in Cambridge, is a central organ for the Emmaus organisations in the UK. It is not the Emmaus UK headquarters but they provide advice and coordination. Communities and Groups have the final say in their own strategy.

Emmaus International has set up some basic principles for all Emmaus Communities. These principles are described in appendix C.

Because these are the only 'rules' for Communities they have a lot of freedom to determine their own strategy. This is why the Emmaus Communities in the UK have different views and ideas on how a community should look and be run. For example the Bristol Community has 18 companions, one shop and one workshop. The Emmaus Community in Brighton has 40 companions, an internet café and they sell plants.

Emmaus South Lambeth

At the moment ESL has two Community shops, located on Knight's Hill, off a busy shopping street in West Norwood. The first shop opened in November 2004 and sells books, videos and DVDs, CDs and records, toys, clothes, glassware and small household items. The second shop opened in April 2006 and functions as an office and showroom for small furniture. The turnover is about 250 pounds per week\* (van der Bijl, 2006).

At the moment there are 15 volunteers, a shop manager and a project director that help run the ESL Group. The build of the future ESL Community has recently started. The Community will provide 25 single bed en-suite rooms, community living areas including a kitchen, dining room and recreation space and two separate self-contained flats for residential staff. There will also be a workshop, training, customer display, café, storage and recycling space.

\* Before the opening of the second shop in April 2006.



**3.2 Structure**

Every Emmaus Community is led by a Trustee Committee. They translate the Emmaus UK strategy into concrete plans. At ESL, the Committee provides leadership to the project director. The Trustee Committee consists of 8 Trustees, most of them successful business people. The Trustees are also volunteers, they are responsible for the progress of the project. It is voluntary but not without engagements.

The Trustee Committee also leads the Fundraising Committee. They raise funds for the start of the Community and are mainly selected because of their network (Alan Bain, personal communication, 23-03-2006).

The management supports the Trustee Committee. The management consists of the project director (Alan Bain) and the shop manager (Majonne van der Bijl), they are the only two paid employees within ESL.

The main task of the project director is starting up the Community and advise the shop manager. The current project director, Alan Bain, has been with ESL since September 2005.

The shop manager leads the volunteers, organises the daily shop routine and plans events to raise awareness for ESL. The position of shop manager is new and Majonne van der Bijl is the first person to fill this position within ESL. She has been with ESL as a shop manager since November 2005, but has been involved with ESL as an intern since January 2005 (Majonne van der Bijl, personal communication, 20-02-2006).

Most of the volunteers help run the Community shops. Everyone who can be of any help as a volunteer is welcome. The volunteers clean donated goods, decorate the shops and help the customers. There are also some volunteers that have more specific tasks within ESL, for example pr, marketing and fundraising.

In total the ESL team consists of 25 people.

Trustee Committee	Fundraising Committee	Project director	Shop manager	Volunteers
Bennett, Mike Grieves, John Heron, Michael Joyce, Thomas Kittoe, Nicholas Ogden, Cath Sheehan, Melanie Vincent, Robbert	Grieves, John Hashemi, Pippa Heron, Michael Howard, Michael Fitzalan Joyce, Thomas Kittoe, Nicholas Vincent, Robbert	Bain, Alan	Bijl, Majonne van der	Brooks, Ann Colston, H-J Frith- Wright, Phyllis Habtegiorgis, Ermias Hashemi, Pippa Houssay, Carine Marshman, Violet Morales, Jenny Oliveira Pegado, Maria Suarez Ferradens, Paula Tan, Elaine Vadgama, Nitesh Val-Macauley, Jonathan Williams, Jenny Wright, Denise

Table 3.2: Current ESL volunteers and employees

**3.3 Vision**

The Emmaus vision, as described in the Emmaus International Movement Commitments, is:

*The world is divided by poverty and inequality. People suffer from exclusion, oppression and exploitation. In Emmaus we believe that the world must change. Ours is a worldwide movement committed to showing that it is possible to work together in harmony, sharing a life where every one is treated equally and can live in dignity (Mackechnie-Jarvis, 2001:53).*



### 3.4 Mission

The Emmaus UK mission statement as described in the Emmaus UK Objectives in 2005 is:

*The establishment and maintenance of successful Communities for socially excluded people enabling them, through the provision of accommodation and work in self-supporting social enterprises, to recover their dignity, regain control of their lives, and generate the wherewithal to help those less fortunate than themselves* (Emmaus UK Objectives, 2005, Emmaus UK).

### 3.5 Objectives and strategy

The ESL objectives are described in an extract from the Central Register of Charities:

*The alleviation and relief of poverty, hardship and distress arising therefrom to those in need without distinction by:*

- 1. The provision of accommodation, or assistance in such provision, for the poor and homeless in the Southbank area of London and such other places as may seem appropriate from time to time.*
- 2. The provision of education, training and employment training for such persons with the purpose of developing skills to enable them to gain employment.*
- 3. The support of the work of other Emmaus Communities or other agencies in the relief of poverty and homelessness whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the world and in particular (without limitation) by the exchange of resources, information and expertise with other Emmaus Communities worldwide.*
- 4. The fulfilling of such other purposes as may from time to time be recognised by English law as being charitable and which the charity shall from time to time determine* (found on 21-02-2006 on: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/registeredcharities/showcharity.asp?remchar=&chyno=1069610](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/registeredcharities/showcharity.asp?remchar=&chyno=1069610)).

A strategy to reach these objectives is imbedded in this statement. They try to reach their goal by setting up a Community, providing education, training and work experience, supporting other Emmaus Communities or other agencies with the same objective and other charities.

The main objective is to teach the homeless to manage on their own in society, so they can function without the help of Emmaus (Alan Bain, personal communication, 08-02-2006).

Furthermore, ESL wants to help other people in need. They do this by:

- making the Community a home for volunteers and customers;
  - involve the neighbourhood and be involved in the neighbourhood;
  - offering small items of furniture for low prices;
  - becoming financially independent and help others with any surplus money.
- (Emmaus South Lambeth, n.d.)

There is no long-term strategy for the Community shops and the project at the moment. A short term strategy and objectives are described in the Shop Report, made by the shop manager. There is also no strategy for when the Community is up and running. There is an Emmaus South Lambeth Business Plan and Funding Proposal, but this plan is out of date, last revised in August 2005, and not in use.

### 3.6 Core values

Core values are qualities of the organisation that are part of the organisation identity. In the beginning of 2005 Majonne van der Bijl en Jenny Krijnen researched the ESL identity. They held a meeting with 2 Trustees, the project director at the time (Kate Burman) and a marketing volunteer. Together they constructed a list of 8 core values for ESL. These values are: home, work, movement, community, recycling, self-supporting, respect and welcoming (van der Bijl & Krijnen, 2005<sup>9</sup>). These core values are determined and described but ESL does not actively use them. Some of them are present in the organisation, but they do not do anything with them in their communication.



### 3.7 Culture

The organisation culture determines the atmosphere in the organisation, which influences the employees, the quality of their work and therefore the image of the organisation. It also plays a big part when there are changes in the organisation.

ESL is an organisation where people are the most important aspect. The volunteers are appreciated because they contribute something to ESL. Because ESL depends on its volunteers it is important that they feel appreciated and feel at home. The volunteers are independent and the management tries to give them responsibilities and involve them in the decision-making. People are very friendly towards each other within ESL.

I spent a lot of time working in the Community shops. By doing this I got a better understanding of the organisation, the volunteers and the customers. Visiting Emmaus Communities in the UK was a nice experience as well. I learned what a Community looks like when it is up and running, what kind of people live there and what their lives look like. This was important in learning what Emmaus is all about and understanding the motivations of the volunteers.

There have been some changes in the organisation. There is a new project director since September 2005 (Alan Bain), before this Kate Burman led the project. She was very open in her approach and let the volunteers run the shop because she was preoccupied with the fund raising part of the project. She did not have time to arrange the day-to-day activities.

Alan Bain is more structured and less chaotic. He hired a shop manager (Majonne van der Bijl) in November 2005. Because of this the volunteers receive proper supervision and have less freedom. The organisation is more structured, the activities are planned and the volunteers have more rules. Even though there is still a minimum amount of rules and procedures. These are changes that some of the volunteers still need to get used to and it is one of the reasons for their unhappiness. Some of the volunteers left because of these changes and this changed the atmosphere as well.

To identify the organisation culture I used the double-S model by Goffee and Jones (Goffee & Jones, 2003). It is a two-by-two matrix that identifies four cultures, depending on high and low solidarity and sociability: networked culture, communal culture, fragmented culture and the mercenary culture.

The organisation culture of ESL is a combination of the networked and the communal culture.

The organisation is people based, this means that there is a high sociability. The people that work at ESL are there because of what Emmaus stands for. They have reasons of their own to volunteer, but they all have one common goal, which is to get the ESL Community up and running. Volunteers care about each other and decisions are based on their emotion and social concern. People talk a lot and socialise during work hours and can identify with each other. This is similar to a networked culture.

Communication happens mostly face-to-face. The physical spaces are very open. The office of the management does not have doors and is based in the middle of the volunteer work place. People move freely in and out of the different areas.

Volunteers can be occupied with work when they are at home. They can identify with the values and mission and when they leave they continue to be supporters of the organisation. This is similar to a communal culture.

		Solidarity	
		Low	High
Sociability	High	<b>Networked Culture</b>	<b>Communal culture</b>
	Low	<b>Fragmented Culture</b>	<b>Mercenary Culture</b>

Figure 3.4: Double-S model by Goffee & Jones 2003



### 3.8 Volunteers

The ESL volunteers are the face of the organisation. They talk to the customers and ESL depends on them to run the shops. ESL has a diverse ethnic group of volunteers.

There are some 'new' and some 'old' volunteers. The old volunteers are the minority and have been with ESL since the previous project director (Kate Burman) was leading the project.

Many new volunteers have joined the organisation.

Because old volunteers left and new volunteers arrived, the group of volunteers do not know each other as well as before.

There are not enough volunteers and therefore volunteers often work alone. Because there is not much contact and teamwork volunteers do are not that involved in the organisation and there is not much team spirit. Some volunteers are also not very committed to the organisation, they turn up late or do not show up at all. Some of the volunteers are unhappy in the current volunteering environment and think about leaving because of this.

In the beginning I experienced that there was not one close group of volunteers. Over the months many new volunteers joined ESL and this changed the atmosphere within the organisation. The new volunteers were like a breath of fresh air giving the organisation new ideas, fresh support and making volunteering fun. This was the perfect moment for ESL to improve the volunteering environment to be able to retain their volunteers.

From the start there has not been a decent volunteering policy within ESL. This has caused some problems and misunderstandings in the organisation. It has never caused any problems before because the volunteers were left to do their own thing without much interference of the management. The shop manager wants to introduce a proper volunteering policy but does not have enough time to do this (Majonne van der Bijl, personal communication, 08-03-2006).

### 3.9 Communication

ESL does not have a full time communication professional. The shop manager executes this task when she has time to do this. Because of this communication is used ad hoc and there is no unity in the communication instruments. Some of the communication outings can be designed by the UK Office, but even they use different styles. ESL does not have a budget for communication, they try to spend the least amount of money possible.

External communication does not happen much and is often ad hoc. There are no basic procedures for external communication. ESL profits from external communication from the UK Office.

Internal communication happens more frequently but is not very structured either.

#### Internal communication

The formal communication within ESL happens through:

- Trustee Meeting: once a month the Trustees, the project director, the shop manager and some of the volunteers meet to discuss the progress of ESL.
- Fundraising Meeting: once a month the members of the Fundraising Committee meet to discuss the process and possibilities of fundraising.
- Volunteer meeting: once a month the shop manager meets with the volunteers to discuss the shops.
- Teleconference: every Thursday the project director has a conference call with the Trustees.

The shop manager directs the internal communication. She sets up the volunteers meetings, posts news on the notice board and keeps in touch with the volunteers. She tries to keep these activities structured but because of lack of time this is often not happening.



Information is shared with the volunteers through a notice board in the basement. The volunteers do not check this notice board regularly because the information is often out-of-date. The Emmaus newsletters are distributed through this board.

Volunteers communicate with each other through the shop book (about practical things) and through informal chats. The shop manager and the volunteers also communicate with each other through informal chats, telephone and e-mail. The informal chats are used often to share information with the volunteers. But because these chats are not structured it is hard to tell which volunteer knows what.

Once a month there is a volunteer meeting to catch up with the volunteers and hear their opinion(s). In reality this meeting is used to inform the volunteers about decisions and progress more than to involve them. There are often not many volunteers present at these meetings because volunteers have limited time available. Therefore not all volunteers know what was said and decided. The shop manager makes minutes of these meetings and posts these on the notice board but they are hardly read.

Volunteers are not aware of what is discussed in the Trustee meetings and are not involved with what goes on in these meetings. They have no contact with the Trustees.

There is no relationship between the Trustees and the shop based volunteers. If anything from the Trustees has to be shared with the volunteers this happens through the shop manager during the volunteer meetings.

The shop manager and the project director often have informal chats because they share the same office. Furthermore, the shop manager, the project director and the Trustees keep in touch through telephone and e-mail.

An overview of the internal communication instruments used within ESL, Emmaus UK and Emmaus International can be found in table 3.6.

Internal Communication	
Emmaus South Lambeth	Emmaus UK and International
E-mail	E-mail
Telephone	Telephone
Monthly fundraising meeting	Annual meeting with all the Communities
Monthly Trustee meeting	Emmaus UK members visit meetings of other Communities
Monthly volunteer meeting	Emmaus UK e-mail 'News brief' every quarter of a year
Weekly teleconference with Trustees and project director	Emmaus UK internet forum on <a href="http://www.emmaus.org.uk">www.emmaus.org.uk</a>
E-mail update from the project manager to the Trustees	Emmaus UK newsletter 'Federation News' every quarter of a year
Notice board and shop book	

Table 3.6: Internal communication instruments within Emmaus

#### External communication

Majonne van der Bijl and Jenny Krijnen wrote an external communication strategy for ESL during their internship in January 2005. In this plan they distinguish two phases: starting up the Community and the Community up and running. A communication strategy and objectives were drawn up for both phases and the plan is very elaborate. But because there is no communication employee nothing is done with this strategy.

The most important groups for ESL to communicate with are: donors, residents of West Norwood, potential volunteers and customers.



An overview of the external communication instruments used by ESL, Emmaus UK and Emmaus International can be found in table 3.7.

External Communication	
Emmaus South Lambeth	Emmaus UK and International
E-mail	E-mail
Telephone	Telephone
Shops	Emmaus UK website
Website	Emmaus UK news brief 'New Lives' three times a year
Press Representative (one of the volunteers)	Emmaus UK cd-rom 'New Lives Appeal'
Emmaus South Lambeth website as a part of the Emmaus UK website	Emmaus International Newsletter 'Tam-Tam' 10 issues per year
Brochure to introduce ESL and how the Community works	Emmaus International news brief 'Newsletter' every quarter of a year
Emmaus South Lambeth news brief every quarter of a year	Emmaus international Annual Report
Talks at meetings by the project director	Emmaus International sell on in Paris
Flyers and posters	Different brochures and leaflets
Other community events (e.g. tickle show)	

Table 3.7: External communication instruments

### Conclusion

Here is an overview of ESL's strengths and weaknesses that are important for my research. The complete overview of strengths and weaknesses can be found in appendix B.

#### Strengths:

- Recently many new volunteers have joined ESL. They are a breath of fresh air by providing new ideas and enthusiasm.
- ESL volunteers are from different backgrounds, ethnic groups and ages. This creates a very diverse group of people that can learn a lot from each other.

#### Weaknesses:

- There is not much team spirit in the organisation, volunteers do not feel part of the ESL team.
- There are not enough volunteers and therefore, volunteers often work alone.
- Internal communication is not structured and does not happen enough.
- There is no clear volunteering policy within ESL.



## 4. External analysis

The external analysis provides the most important information on the external organisation. Because my research is internally focussed only the most important external aspects are mentioned here. The complete external analysis can be found in appendix B.

### 4.1 Influential parties

The most important external parties are:

- Potential volunteers: At the moment ESL relies on their volunteers. Potential volunteers are people from the West Norwood area with spare time.
- Customers: ESL depends on their customers. Most of them are regular customers but there are also some antique and book dealers.
- Donors: They are people donating money or goods. ESL needs donations to sell in their shops. The turnover depends on the (quality of the) donations they receive. Donors can be individuals from the West Norwood area or local shops. Furthermore, the local recycling centre saves goods for ESL.
- Competition: There are three other charity shops located nearby ESL and there are about 15 others in a parameter of 10 Kilometres (van der Bijl & Krijnen, 2005<sup>b</sup>). This competition is not favourable for the turnover of ESL and because they also work with volunteers they are competitors on this level as well.
- Media: The South London Press is the most important local newspaper to report on important issues.
- Government: There is general legislation that is important for ESL. There are environmental rules and guidelines and rules for charities. ESL also deals with politics when tackling the problem of homelessness.

Other parties involved are: the general public (individuals, schools, sports teams and churches, people for or against the building of the Community and people that participate in ESL events), homeless people who will be the beneficiaries once the Community is up and running, the ESL lawyers (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer), the housing cooperation (Ujima) and the bank (Charity Aid Foundation) (van der Bijl & Krijnen, 2005<sup>b</sup>).

### 4.2 Influential aspects

The most important influential aspects are:

- Demographical trends: In the Norwood area the amount of people over 45 is decreasing (OACE, 2003). This is not positive because people aged 45 and over are most likely to volunteer (Ruston, 2003).
- Economical trends: The area in which the ESL shops are based is one of the poorer areas of Norwood (OACE, 2003). This is good because ESL offers good quality goods for low prices.
- Social trends: The great British time survey asked people why they do not volunteer. 68 percent said shortage of time and 44 percent think they do not have the right skills (National Statistics, 2005).
- Technological trends: People buy goods via the internet more and more. Because of this new opportunities for ESL arise. ESL has recently started to sell goods on E-bay and this seems to be the way forward. ESL is registered as a charity on E-bay so other people can order for a part of their E-bay sales to go to ESL.
- Ecological trends: ESL recycles goods to help reduce the household waste. Over four fifths of adults support the provision of more recycling facilities (found on 05-03-2006 on: [www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6448&Pos=2&ColRank=2&Rank=240](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6448&Pos=2&ColRank=2&Rank=240)).
- Political trends: The government has set an overall target to recycle 25 percent of household waste in England by 2006 (found on 05-03-2006 on: [www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6480&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=240](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6480&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=240)).



### **Conclusion**

Here is an overview of the most important opportunities and threats for ESL. The complete overview can be found in appendix B.

#### Opportunities:

- Almost half of the people that do not volunteer think they do not have the right skills. ESL can use communication to take this doubt away and recruit more volunteers.

#### Threats:

- Three other charity shops are based nearby ESL, they compete with ESL on volunteer level.
- The amount of people over 45 in Norwood is decreasing.



## Intermezzo

After analysing the situation it was time to determine the central question and the research approach. This chapter describes my deliberations to determine the problem and the right research approach.

The initial problem of the organisation as presented to me was the recruitment of new volunteers. The organisation depends on its volunteers, therefore it is important to recruit enough but also the right volunteers.

During my first visit to the organisation I noticed there was not one unambiguous view of the organisation amongst the volunteers. To be able to communicate efficiently, and for professionalizing ESL, it is important to know what ESL is and for the identity of the organisation to be clear amongst the staff. Therefore I planned to write a corporate story with help of the staff members.

This plan was based on the idea that the volunteers are a unified group, however lacking a clear picture of the organisation identity. But during my research I noticed the situation differed from my first impressions.

Firstly, there was a change in the organisation structure. In September 2005 Alan Bain replaced Kate Burman as project director. Two months later Alan Bain recruited Majonne van der Bijl as shop manager.

Kate Burman was preoccupied with fundraising and the volunteers were left to deal with the day-to-day activities. Because of the new shop manager volunteers receive more supervision, there are more rules and they have less independence. Furthermore, the new project director is more structured and less chaotic. These changes created a different atmosphere.

The change in the atmosphere caused unhappiness amongst the volunteers, some were so discontented that they left. Because they left and some new volunteers arrived, the group of volunteers do not know each other as well and there is not much team spirit.

More than once I witnessed a volunteer getting upset because of the changes in the organisation. One volunteer started shouting at the other volunteers and the management for not doing things the way she thought was best. One of the volunteers was really hurt by this and talked about it for a long time afterwards.

Secondly, there are not enough volunteers to do all the work and as a result the volunteers often work alone. There is not much contact and teamwork between the volunteers. Because of the lack of team spirit and teamwork the volunteers are not much involved in and committed to the organisation.

Thirdly, the internal communication is poorly structured and infrequent. Furthermore, there is no volunteering policy.

The above-mentioned problems cause a tense atmosphere in the organisation and are important components of the volunteering environment.

ESL needs all the help they can get and cannot afford to lose any of its volunteers. Therefore they need to make sure that their volunteers are happy and provide a positive volunteering environment.

A good volunteering environment is not only important for current volunteers but also for volunteer recruitment. If a volunteer does not feel at home within 60 days they will most definitely not stay (McCurley, n.d.).

Furthermore, word of mouth is one of the best recruitment tools. Volunteers who feel good about their time with ESL are likely to tell their friends (National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>a</sup>).



Improving the volunteering environment is the most important action to take. My initial plan of writing a corporate story is not the answer.

To find the answer I need to know what a good volunteering environment is and how this can be created within ESL.

It is important to know what the volunteers find important in their volunteering environment. They have to be involved in the process because they need to make an effort to change the volunteering environment, together with the management.



## 5. Research Approach

This chapter describes the research approach, which consists of the central question, the goal of the research and sub-questions. How the answers to these sub-questions were found is described in the research outline. The results of the research can be found in the next chapter.

### 5.1 Central question

In what way can internal communication help to improve the volunteering environment within ESL?

### 5.2 Research goal

To improve the volunteering environment within ESL by having a better understanding between the volunteers and the management.

### 5.3 Sub-questions

To be able to answer the central question it was important to gather the right information. Therefore I needed to find answers to several sub-questions.

1. What is the current volunteering environment within ESL?
  - a. What is a volunteering environment?
  - b. What is the current volunteering environment according to the volunteers?
  - c. What is the current volunteering environment according to the management?
2. What are the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL?
  - a. What are governing principles of voluntary work?
  - b. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the ESL volunteers?
  - c. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the management?
3. In what way can internal communication help the implementation of the governing principles of voluntary work in the organisation?
  - a. In what ways can and will the governing principles of voluntary work be introduced in the organisation?
  - b. What steps need to be taken by the organisation to ensure that the governing principles are adhered to?



## 5.4 Research outline

Per sub-question is described what research method was used to answer this question.

### 1. What is the current volunteering environment within ESL?

The following criteria were important when researching this question:

- getting a balanced view of the volunteering environment: involving both volunteers and the management and using my own observations;
- all parties speaking their mind and giving their honest opinions without holding back;
- all parties answering without the influence of others.

#### a. What is a volunteering environment?

This question is answered by desk- and field research. Firstly, I searched for definitions in literature and on the internet. Secondly, I used my own observations to get the right definition for ESL and my research.

#### b. What is the current volunteering environment within ESL according to the volunteers?

This question is answered by field research. Interviews were the best way to gather this information.

In an interview each volunteer can be asked the same questions with the possibility to ask for further explanations or motivations. Furthermore, speaking with the volunteers gives meaning to their words. This is important because a volunteering environment is defined not only by practical things but also by feelings.

An interview is the best way to gather information about attitudes and opinions. Furthermore, I have the most control over the process, it is the best method for a possibly sensitive subject and it is the best way to ask open and more difficult questions (Baarda & de Goede, 2000:143). I conducted interviews with five volunteers.

#### c. What is the current volunteering environment within ESL according to the management?

This question is answered by field research using the same method described in question 1b. I interviewed both the shop manager and the project director.

I used the results in combination with my own observation to determine the current volunteering environment.

### 2. What are the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL?

The following criteria were important when researching this question:

- involving both the management and the volunteers in a discussion because they need to agree on the most important attributes;
- the management valuing the opinions of the volunteers;
- all parties speaking their mind and giving their honest opinions without holding back.

#### a. What are governing principles of voluntary work?

This question is answered by desk- and field research. First of all I used literature and the internet to find different definitions. I used these definitions in combination with my own research to determine the correct definition of governing principles of voluntary work for ESL and my research.

#### b. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the ESL volunteers?

This question is answered by field research. I used a group discussion, a session, with both volunteers and management. The content of this session is explained at the end of this chapter.

I invited all the volunteers to join the session and a total group of five people were available (including management). The volunteers needed to express their opinion about what they think the most important attributes



are. This was done by asking each individual participant to write down his or her 8-10 most important attributes. The advantage of writing them down is that they do not influence each other and all participants are heard.

c. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the management?

This question is answered using the same method used to answer question 2b. I answered both questions by using one method: the session. The shop manager chose the most important attributes for the management because she is most involved with the volunteers and the work in the shop.

After collecting the individual attributes the group needed to decide on the 6-8 most important attributes. These are the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL.

3. In what way can internal communication help the implementation of the governing principles of voluntary work in the organisation?

The following criteria were important when researching this question:

- involving volunteers;
- it must be doable for the organisation (recourses).

a. In what ways can and will the governing principles of voluntary work be introduced in the organisation?

This question is answered by desk- and field research. I gathered information from the internet and other dissertation projects. I then used my own observations to determine the best way to introduce the governing principles. It is important that this happens in the right way to make sure that the volunteers and the management continue to improve the volunteering environment using the governing principles.

b. What steps need to be taken by the organisation to ensure that the governing principles are adhered to?

This question is answered by desk- and field research. I needed to research both the current and the desired status of the governing principles. I did this during the previously mentioned session.

An interview with the management made clear what the possibilities for internal communication are. It is important to write an action plan for the implementation of the governing principles, which is suitable for the situation and the recourses available within ESL. A search on the internet and in literature provided information on how the principles can be adhered to.



### The session

The session is based partly on the Spiderweb method by Bernstein (Bernstein, 1986, in: van Riel, 2003:54). Bernstein describes how a session is used to determine the current and desired corporate identity. The content and some of the methods used in Bernstein's session were adjusted to fit my research and the organisation. The method by Bernstein can easily be applied to find out the current and desired status of the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL.

The session was held with 5 people, the shop manager and 4 volunteers, because ESL is a small organisation and this is the biggest group that can gather for the session.

It was important to have both volunteers and the management present because the volunteers need to know that the management values their opinions and they need to decide on the governing principles together.

The volunteers are most important in this research because they need to feel ownership of the governing principles and need to help with the implementation of the principles.

It was important to have some volunteers present that have been with ESL for a longer time because they know more about the organisation and also some new volunteers because they might have different ideas and a different view on the situation.

First each participant wrote down 8-10 attributes that they found most important for voluntary work within ESL. The advantage of writing them down is that they do not influence each other and all participants are heard.

The next step is slightly different from what Bernstein describes. All participants decided together on the most important attributes, the governing principles, during a discussion. All members of the group participated by sharing their thoughts and opinions about the importance of a certain attribute. In the end the group agreed on 7 governing principles and their definitions.

To find out what the current status of these principles within ESL is, the principles were graded. Every participant individually graded each principle on a scale from 1-10 for the current and the desired situation. The grades were filled in on paper.

The average grade of all participants determines the final grade, this way every participant has a say in the grading process.

The difference between the grades for the actual and the desired situation show what governing principles are already adhered to and what principles need improvement. My advice is based on these grades combined with the description of the current volunteering environment.

### Answering the central question

The answers of the sub-questions provide me with the information needed to answer the central question: in what way can internal communication help to improve the volunteering environment within ESL?

The final product consists of a description of the governing principles of voluntary work for ESL, the introduction of these principles, a governing principles action plan and several further recommendations.

The action plan describes how the governing principles can be implemented and adhered to in the organisation.

Besides this action plan there are some further recommendations on improving the volunteering environment that are not focussed on the governing principles.



## 6. Research results

This chapter describes the research results and the answers to the sub-questions.

The research methods used to find the answers to the sub-questions are: desk research, interviews, observation and a session.

The research results are described per sub-question followed by a description of the research method(s).

### 6.1 What is the current volunteering environment within ESL?

1a. What is a volunteering environment?	
Research	Results
Desk research: literature and internet	<p><b>Definition</b></p> <p>The work environment of a volunteer, a person who performs a service without pay, with both practical and cultural aspects, needed to meet the objective(s) of the volunteer and the organisation.</p> <p>Practical aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leadership</li> <li>▪ Policies</li> <li>▪ Facilities and Recourses</li> </ul> <p>Cultural aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Tasks</li> <li>▪ Treatment</li> <li>▪ Individual</li> <li>▪ Group</li> <li>▪ Organisation</li> </ul>

- Definition practical and cultural aspects

To make it clear what is included in the volunteering environment I created two categories that cover all areas of the volunteering environment: the practical and the cultural environment.

The practical environment includes:

**Leadership:** leadership style, method of decision-making and supervision.

**Policy:** policies that are in place, rules and regulations and the use of these.

**Facilities and Recourses:** the kind of facilities and recourses available to the volunteers.

**Communication:** information and communication lines and the way of communicating with each other.

**Tasks:** task descriptions, task appointment and learning possibilities.

**Treatment:** support and treatment of the volunteers (challenge, encouragement, appreciation, trust, etc.).

The cultural environment includes:

**Individual:** the way a volunteer feels and is treated within the organisation (comfortable, confidence, etc.).

**Group:** the way volunteers feel and are treated in the group of volunteers (fellowship, appreciation, tolerance, etc.).

**Organisation:** the way volunteers feel and are treated within the organisation by the management (appreciation, challenge, encouragement, etc.).



- Research

The research performed to answer sub-question 1a is described below.

The volunteering environment is, simply put, the work environment of a volunteer. But what exactly do we mean by this? I used the definitions of others and my own perception of the situation to define a volunteering environment.

There are many definitions for what a volunteer is. It is important to properly define this word.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language a volunteer is: *A person who performs or offers a service voluntarily* (2000).

Many volunteer organisations also define the word volunteer, for example the Volunteer Resource Guide: *A person who performs or gives services of his/ her own free will and acting on his/ her own initiative* (found on 07-04-2006 on: [www.cristina.org/guide/what.html](http://www.cristina.org/guide/what.html)).

The Cudeca Fundación defines a volunteer as: *a person who wants to collaborate with no remuneration, dedicating his/ her skills and spare time to be a service to the community* (found on 07-04-2006 on: [www.cudeca.org/eng/index.asp?secc=/voluntariado/vdefinicion](http://www.cudeca.org/eng/index.asp?secc=/voluntariado/vdefinicion)).

My definition of a volunteer is: a person who performs a service without pay.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language a volunteering environment is: *The complex of social and cultural conditions affecting the nature of an individual or community that does charitable or helpful work without pay* (2000). This definition of a volunteering environment clearly stresses the social and cultural conditions involved in the volunteering environment but it neglects the obvious practical aspects of a volunteering environment.

The same can be said for the following definition of a work environment by organisational development consultant Gregory P. Smith: *The feeling they [employees] get when they come to work* (n.d.).

I agree that the feelings of the employee, or in my case the volunteer, are important aspects of the volunteering environment, but these feelings are also connected to the practical aspects of volunteering. When a volunteer is unhappy in a work environment some practical things cannot simply change this, but they can add value to the work environment and change the way a volunteer feels.

Every job that requires human effort has a work environment. This work environment can best be described in terms of behaviour: *If it [work environment] could talk, what behavioural characteristics would it ask for?* (People Success Solutions, 2001).

These characteristics can be grouped into four categories:

- Dominance – Challenge: kind of leadership, method of decision-making, power of authority and the encouragement in the environment.
- Influence – Contacts: trust, openness, discussion, communication, influence, rewards and appreciation.
- Steadiness – Consistency: reaction to change, persistency, consistency, listening skills and confidence.
- Compliance – Constraint: rules and regulations and constraints.

(People Success Solutions, 2001)

This description combines the practical and social/cultural aspects. I do not think these categories cover everything that should be included in the definition of a volunteering environment. Therefore I combined the previously mentioned definitions to create the correct definition for my research.



**1b. What is the current volunteering environment according to the volunteers?**

Research	Results
Field research: interviews	<p>The complete description of the current volunteering environment according to the volunteers can be found in appendix F. The most important aspects of this description are described below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Volunteers do not feel part of the ESL team, do not have much contact with each other and do not know each other well.</li> <li>▪ There is not enough communication between the volunteers and the management. The Trustees do not communicate with the volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Most of the volunteers do not know about the policies and the rules and regulations within ESL.</li> <li>▪ Task descriptions are not always clear for everyone. The learning possibilities are limited.</li> </ul>

▪ Research

I conducted interviews with the volunteers to find out what the current volunteering environment within ESL is according to them. The results of these interviews can be found in appendix E. I used the answers from these interviews to describe the volunteering environment according to the volunteers by using the definition established by answering question 1a.

**1c. What is the current volunteering environment according to the management?**

Research	Results
Field research: interviews	<p>The complete description of the current volunteering environment according to the management can be found in appendix F. The most important aspects of this description are mentioned below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The group of volunteers is not unified, they do not know each other and often work alone.</li> <li>▪ The volunteers are not dedicated enough.</li> <li>▪ Volunteers complain about things and look at the problems instead of looking at solutions.</li> <li>▪ Most of the times there are not many volunteers present at the volunteer meetings.</li> <li>▪ There is a gap in the communication between the Trustees and the volunteers.</li> <li>▪ More communication from the shop manager about the project is necessary.</li> <li>▪ Volunteer supervision is not good enough and happens sporadically.</li> <li>▪ Volunteers do not have the rules and regulations in writing.</li> <li>▪ The tasks descriptions could be clearer, volunteers often do not know what their tasks are.</li> <li>▪ The learning possibilities within ESL are basic.</li> </ul>

▪ Research

I conducted interviews with the project director and the shop manager. The results of these interviews can be found in appendix D. I used the answers from these interviews are used to describe the volunteering environment according to the management by using the definition established by answering question 1a.



**Answer sub-question 1: What is the current volunteering environment within ESL?**

Research	Results
Field research: interviews and observation	<p>The current volunteering environment within ESL is described in appendix F, the most important aspects are mentioned below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The group of volunteers is not unified, they do not know each other well and the team spirit is missing.</li> <li>▪ New volunteers are not properly introduced, volunteers hardly meet and often work alone.</li> <li>▪ Some of the volunteers are not dedicated enough.</li> <li>▪ Some volunteers complain and look at the problems instead of looking at solutions.</li> <li>▪ Volunteers usually do not feel like their opinions are being taken into consideration.</li> <li>▪ There are often not many volunteers present at the volunteer meetings.</li> <li>▪ There is a gap in communication between the Trustees and the volunteers.</li> <li>▪ There is not enough communication from the management to the volunteers. The volunteers do not feel involved enough.</li> <li>▪ Volunteers are often unaware of the policies and rules and regulations within ESL.</li> <li>▪ Task descriptions are not always clear and there is not a wide variety of tasks available.</li> <li>▪ The learning possibilities within ESL are basic.</li> <li>▪ The volunteers occasionally feel challenged, appreciated, encouraged and rewarded but feel this does not happen enough.</li> </ul>

- Research

To get the right description of the current volunteering environment I combined the volunteering environment according to the volunteers, the management and my own observations.

**6.2 What are the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL?**

**2a. What are governing principles of voluntary work?**

Research	Results
Desk research: literature and internet	<p>Definition</p> <p>Collectively chosen basic attributes of voluntary work within the organisation that have a determining influence on the volunteering environment.</p> <p>Collectively chosen: chosen by representatives of all parties in the organisation involved in voluntary work.</p> <p>Basic attributes of voluntary work: attributes that should be adhered to because they are most important.</p> <p>Determining influence: they outline the volunteering environment. When these basic attributes change, the volunteering environment changes.</p>

- Research

The research performed to answer sub-question 2a is described below. I used the definitions of others and my own perception of the situation to define what governing principles of voluntary work are.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language governing principles are: *a collectivity of basic standards that have a determining influence* (2000). This is a very brief definition that does not mention where the governing principles originated and what they are used for. My definition needs to be more specific.



Biosis Research uses the following definition: *how we do it [carry out our mission]* (found on 04-04-2006 on: [www.biosisresearch.com.au/aboutus/article70.asp](http://www.biosisresearch.com.au/aboutus/article70.asp)). Biosis Research does not mention the importance of their governing principles. It only states what the governing principles are used for, to provide direction on how to carry out their mission. It is important to define if these governing principles are guidelines or rules.

The governing principles of The Financial Planning Association *outline the core ideals on which the organisation was established. The documents govern our actions and decisions, as an organisation, and as individual members. [...]* *As a whole they represent the vision for our association* (found on 05-04-2006 on: [www.fpanet.org/member/about/principles/?renderforprint=1](http://www.fpanet.org/member/about/principles/?renderforprint=1)).

According to this definition governing principles are ideals. They provide direction to the organisation and its members when acting on behalf of the organisation and making decisions. Basically everything that is done by the organisation and its members is based on their governing principles. This definition shows the importance of the principles, and how important it is that the members of their organisation know these governing principles.

**2b. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the ESL volunteers?**

Research	Results
Field research: session	<p>The most important attributes according to the volunteers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service delivery skills</li> <li>▪ Team work skills</li> <li>▪ Office working skills</li> <li>▪ Willing to do anything</li> <li>▪ Positive atmosphere</li> <li>▪ Not too much pressure</li> <li>▪ Respect for each other</li> <li>▪ Creating safe environment</li> <li>▪ Acknowledgement of input</li> <li>▪ Honesty &amp; diplomacy</li> <li>▪ Working towards a common purpose</li> <li>▪ Caring</li> <li>▪ Reliable</li> <li>▪ Genuine</li> <li>▪ Loyalty</li> <li>▪ Approachable</li> <li>▪ Helpful</li> <li>▪ Variety of jobs</li> <li>▪ Calm atmosphere</li> <li>▪ Feel valued</li> <li>▪ Develop personal skills</li> <li>▪ Pleasant environment (physical + in other words people)</li> <li>▪ Feel valued</li> <li>▪ Trust</li> <li>▪ Consistency</li> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Flexibility</li> <li>▪ Tolerance</li> <li>▪ Friendly</li> <li>▪ Sense of team</li> <li>▪ Creativity</li> <li>▪ Knowing the local community</li> </ul>

▪ Research

During a session the volunteers each choose their most important attributes of voluntary work. This was done by individually writing down 8-10 attributes. The complete outcome of this session can be found in appendix G.

**2c. What are the most important attributes of voluntary work according to the management?**

Research	Results
Field research: session	<p>The most important attributes according to the management are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appreciation</li> <li>▪ Work as a team</li> <li>▪ Respect</li> <li>▪ Drive</li> <li>▪ Support</li> <li>▪ Dedication</li> <li>▪ Enthusiastic</li> <li>▪ Positivity</li> <li>▪ Constructive</li> </ul>

▪ Research

During the session the shop manager wrote down 7 most important attributes of voluntary work.



**Answer sub-question 2: What are the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL?**

Research	Results
Field research: session	<p>The following governing principles of voluntary work were chosen by the management and the volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Appreciation</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Positivity</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Teamwork</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Challenge / Creativity</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Respect</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Internal Communication</li> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">▪ Commitment</li> </ul>

- Definition of the principles

**Appreciation:** Appreciation is the expression of gratitude towards each other in the organisation. It makes us feel valued for our contribution. It is the recognition of our input and also the expression of appreciation.

**Teamwork:** Teamwork means that we work together as a group. We offer support and stimulate each other to achieve the best results. It also means learning from each other, good communication and synergy (1+1=3). But most importantly teamwork is what makes our work fun!

**Respect:** Respect means that we treat others the way we would like to be treated ourselves. We are aware that people have different opinions and respect them. We regard other people's feelings and opinions when making decisions. We are tolerant towards each other and are open to constructive criticism.

**Commitment:** Commitment means being reliable and loyal. We are all dedicated and enthusiastic about achieving a common goal, getting the ESL Community up and running. We are consistent in trying to support this goal and the ethos of what Emmaus tries to achieve goes beyond volunteering.

**Positivity:** Positivity means being optimistic and attentive towards each other. We try to share our enthusiasm with others and put some humour into our work. We think in solutions, not problems and give constructive criticism.

**Challenge / Creativity:** Challenge means being able to do a variety of stimulating tasks. We let other people know what our skills, interests and qualities are. Creativity means looking at situations with an open mind and try to make suggestions. We take initiative and offer our help when possible.

**Internal communication:** Internal communication is the exchange of information between all members of our organisation. Our communication is open. We try to involve others in the project by sharing our knowledge and provide regular updates.

- Research

During the session the management and the volunteers choose 7 governing principles out of the attributes mentioned in question 2b and 2c. This was done by a discussion between the management and the volunteers. After choosing these principles they talked about every principle to define the meaning of this principle. This was written down in key words. From these key words I created a definition for each principle.

The session was held during a volunteer meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 in a meeting room at L'Arche Lambeth. I specifically choose this location because I did not want to hold the session in the ESL basement. This is not an inspiring room and I wanted to hold it on neutral territory to prevent starting out with a negative atmosphere.

The day before the session I received an e-mail from one of the volunteers. He explained his vision on volunteering within ESL and the role of the management. I was surprised at how much effort he had put into writing his thoughts down and very glad to see that he was this much involved with helping improve the ESL volunteering environment.



**6.3 In what way can internal communication help the implementation of the governing principles of voluntary work in the organisation?**

**3a. In what ways can and will the governing principles of voluntary work be introduced in the organisation?**

Research	Results
Desk and field research: literature, internet and observation	<p>The following was used to introduce the governing principles of voluntary work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The principles: Seven small boxes in a 'wardrobe' represent the principles. These boxes contain the definitions of the principles and a notepad and pen to leave (anonymous) suggestions.</li> <li>▪ Volunteer representative: The volunteer representative checks if the governing principles are adhered to. The tasks of this representative are written down in a guidebook (appendix L).</li> <li>▪ Presentation of the principles: The volunteers and the shop manager each received a gift. They were asked to open their gift and blow up the balloon that was inside. Everyone worked together to make the principles more visible in the organisation (blowing up the balloons). The volunteers could ask questions about the principles, the definitions and what they can do to help.</li> <li>▪ Brochure: The brochure contains all the information on the governing principles (appendix I). It was presented to all volunteers during the introduction and new volunteers receive it during their interview.</li> </ul> <p>An impression of the introduction of the principles can be found in appendix J.</p>

▪ Research

The governing principles need to start living within the organisation. This should begin with a proper introduction and also includes the shape or form in which the principles are present in the organisation. First of all I defined the criteria for the introduction of the principles: volunteers need to feel involved, they need to feel ownership and the principles need to be present in the organisation.

The introduction had to be more than just a presentation of the principles to make it memorable for the volunteers. Ideally the volunteers become part of the introduction by being actively involved.

Volunteers need to feel ownership of the principles. Therefore it is important that they know exactly what the principles are, what they are meant for, and what they can contribute to them.

A volunteer representative was chosen to guard the governing principles.

I used a brainstorm to find ideas for the introduction of the principles, the results can be found in appendix H.

The introduction took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April during a volunteer meeting. This meeting was the perfect situation to introduce the principles because almost all the volunteers, the shop manager and project director were present. The presentation went really well. The small presents and the balloons were a great way to start out. The volunteers were interested and understood the idea of the principles. An impression of this introduction can be found in appendix J.

I searched the internet and looked at other dissertation projects to find a good way to introduce the principles.

I looked at a project by Marloes van Nistelrooij and Kim Janssen. They presented a corporate story to the organisation and started with a story to catch the attention of the people that were present (Janssen & van Nistelrooij, 2005). This story represented the process the organisation went through. The on viewers only realised it was a fictional story to represent their organisation when they were told what the meaning of the story was. This came as a nice surprise to them and it started the presentation in a positive way.

Another example on how to start a presentation is the presentation of the advice report to SOS Noord-Brabant (Harks, van Nistelrooij, Stoef & Verkuijlen, 2006). They started their presentation with a small play. One of the group members acted out the advice they were presenting to the organisation. The play made it clear what the idea was they wanted to portray.



Criteria for the introduction are volunteer involvement and an unforgettable character. This way the volunteers are interested and it helps explain the principles. The volunteers need to become enthusiastic about the principles because they are the ones that need to implement these principles in the organisation. The volunteers and the shop manager need to be present.

### 3b. What steps need to be taken by the organisation to ensure that the governing principles are adhered to?

Research	Results
Desk and field research: session and informal chats	A volunteer representative is appointed to make sure the governing principles are adhered to. The tasks of this representative are described a guidebook (appendix L). Furthermore, the governing principles action plan describes the steps needed to ensure that the governing principles are adhered to (appendix K). A summary of this plan is provided in chapter 7.

- Research

I used the session to find out how much the principles are imbedded in the organisation and how much they should be adhered to. The participants graded the governing principles on their actual and desired situation. The difference shows how much the principles need to be improved (table 6.1).

Governing Principles	Actual situation*	Desired situation*	Difference*
Appreciation	5,5	9	3,5
Teamwork	5,5	8,5	3
Respect	7,5	9	1,5
Commitment	7	9	2
Positivity	6	8,5	2,5
Challenge / creativity	4,5	8,5	4
Internal communication	5,5	9	3,5

Table 6.1: Difference between the actual and the desired situation of the governing principles of voluntary work within ESL

The principles with the biggest difference between the actual and the desired situation need to be improved the most. For these principles the most steps of improvements are needed.

I had several informal chats with the shop manager and the volunteers to find out how the principles can be adhered to in the organisation.

### Answer sub-question 3: In what way can internal communication help the implementation of the governing principles of voluntary work in the organisation?

Research	Results
Desk and field research: Literature, interviews and informal chats	The answer to this question is provided in the governing principles action plan (appendix K). A summary of this plan is provided in chapter 7. This plan provides the basic guidelines on how the governing principles can be implemented in the organisation. Further input needs to be provided by the volunteers themselves because their involvement is important.

- Research

The input for the governing principles action plan is a result of interviews and informal chats with the management and the volunteers about the current volunteering environment. They gave me suggestions on how the principles could be improved. I used this information, desk research and my own knowledge to complete the governing principles action plan.

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\* Numbers are rounded of when necessary.



## 7. Governing principles action plan

The goal of the governing principles action plan is to provide the shop manager with guidelines on how the governing principles can be implemented and adhered to in the organisation. By doing this the volunteering environment will be improved. This chapter provides a summary of this plan. The complete governing principles action plan can be found in appendix K.

The volunteers were involved in choosing and introducing the governing principles and they have to stay involved with the implementation of the principles.

The volunteers can leave their (anonymous) comments in the governing principles boxes. During the volunteer meetings the principles and the comments from the boxes will be discussed. This way the volunteers provide further input on how to improve the governing principles. They are asked to think about the principles: what do they know about them, what can be changed and how can this be changed?

This is done with the help of the volunteer representative. This representative is provided with a guidebook that describes what his or her tasks are and how they can be performed. This guidebook can be found in appendix L.

The shop manager is involved in a programme called 'Investing in Volunteers'. This is a programme by Volunteering England that helps small charities like ESL achieve the Investing in Volunteers' standard. It is not yet clear what this programme consists of exactly but it might have some overlap as to what is mentioned in this plan. This programme starts in June 2006.

The governing principles action plan, the volunteer meetings and the comments in the principle boxes altogether provide the necessary input to implement the governing principles and improve the volunteering environment. The objective is to improve all principles with 0,5 points within six months. This first period is the hardest because the most changes have to be made. The ultimate goal is to achieve the desired situation within 1,5 years time.

Every principle is described separately with a situation analysis, advice and action points on what needs to be improved. There is a lot of overlap between the different principles and therefore improving one principle goes hand in hand with improving the other principles. At the end an overview of all the actions, a time planning, the budget and the evaluation methods are described.



## Challenge / Creativity

This principle is graded 4,5 for the actual and 8,5 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 4 points.

### Situation analysis

The tasks of the volunteers are often unclear. At times volunteers do not know what they should be doing and what the tasks of others are. Volunteers want more variety and challenge in their tasks. There is a limited variety of tasks available because the only work that can be done is in the shops. They also want to be asked about their tasks, if they like what they do, if they have suggestions about different tasks or how the tasks can be performed best.

### Advice

The first thing to do is to have clear task descriptions for all volunteers. This includes creating more variety in tasks. The information about different tasks is collected in a 'task book' (including a 'to-do-list' with small one-time tasks). Furthermore, it is important to find out what skills, knowledge, interests and qualities the volunteers have. This is already asked during the informal interview between the shop manager and the volunteer, but because the volunteer might not have a good idea of what can be done within ESL it is important to ask this again during a review meeting. This meeting takes place one month after a volunteer starts volunteering for ESL. After that it takes place every three months. In this review meeting the volunteer can suggest his/her own ideas about tasks and the way these tasks are best performed. In the informal interview with the volunteer he or she needs to be told about this meeting, the goal of the meeting and that the organisation is always open for suggestions.

When volunteers provide ideas it is important to give them feedback within one week. Even if this is explaining that their idea will be reviewed at a later time (name a date).

Because the volunteers are regularly asked about their opinions and for their input they start to think about creative solutions for tasks more and more. This way the volunteers get motivated to show initiative.

This way initiative, challenge and creativity become more and more imbedded in the volunteering environment.

Ideally there is an atmosphere in which it is normal for volunteers to seek challenge on their own when needed.

When volunteers hear about the success of others that have shown initiative they become more motivated. A volunteer news brief is a good way to spread stories about successful ideas and initiatives. This news brief is made mainly by the volunteers and produced in between the volunteer meetings. Because there is no volunteer news brief at the moment the shop manager needs to lead the production of this news brief in the beginning. Producing this new brief is a new challenge for the volunteers and something to be proud of.

Regular brainstorm sessions also challenge the creativity and initiative of the volunteers. Volunteers have a lot of knowledge about the shops, the customers, etc. that the organisation can use to their advantage.

### Action list:

- **Task book:** clear task descriptions and a clear division of tasks amongst the volunteers.
- **Informal interview:** inform volunteers about the review meeting, the goal of this meeting and that the organisation is always open for suggestions.
- **Review meeting:** one month after a volunteer starts volunteering, then every three months. Ask about the volunteers' skills, knowledge, interests, qualities and their own suggestions.
- **Feedback:** give feedback to the volunteers about their input within one week.
- **Volunteer news brief:** every month, in between volunteer meetings, a volunteer news brief is produced by the volunteers with news on the project but also personal stories from volunteers.
- **Brainstorm session:** this is used to involve volunteers, stimulate their creativity and get new ideas.



## Appreciation

This principle is graded 5,5 for the actual and 9 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 3,5 points.

### Situation analysis

Volunteers do not feel appreciated enough. Even though there are many 'thank you' moments it is important to not just say it but also show it. Furthermore, they want more learning possibilities.

### Advice

Volunteers can be shown appreciation by rewarding them. A good moment to reward volunteers is when they have been working for ESL for a certain period of time. It is important to have volunteers that are committed to the organisation, thanking these volunteers and showing them appreciation is necessary.

The perfect moment to show appreciation is on the birthday of a volunteer. Therefore a birthday calendar can be made. Every volunteer who would like the others to know when their birthday is writes his or her name on the calendar. Furthermore, on his or her birthday the volunteer gets a card with a voucher of five pounds to spend in the shop.

Volunteers see learning possibilities as a sign of appreciation. More learning possibilities can be provided either within ESL or by external courses.

Internal courses can be free, for example role-plays on customer relations, and even external courses do not have to cost ESL much (e.g. the free unleash volunteer training for volunteers of homelessness projects, found on 22-04-2006 on: [www.unleash.org.uk](http://www.unleash.org.uk)).

Furthermore, volunteers can be given more responsibilities. The tasks can be chosen from the task book (principle: Challenge / Creativity). This can only be done when volunteers are reliable. Another example of giving volunteers more responsibilities is to appoint a deputy shop manager. This way volunteers learn more about leadership and management. Volunteers need to know that there are opportunities to learn and get more responsibilities.

### Action list:

- **Rewards:** when volunteering for six months the volunteer receives an ESL mug with sweets. This can be repeated when a volunteer has been with ESL for one year.
- **Learning possibilities:** create more opportunities for internal and external courses and let the volunteers know about them.
- **Responsibilities:** volunteers can get more responsibilities, let them know what these responsibilities are.
- **Birthday:** create a calendar with the birthdays of all volunteers and give them a card on their birthday with a coupon to spend in the shop.



## Internal Communication

This principle is graded 5,5 for the actual and 9 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 3,5 points.

### Situation analysis

There is not enough communication between the management and the volunteers. Volunteers want to be more involved with the project and the decision-making. There is also not enough contact between the volunteers, they do not know each other well and new volunteers are not properly introduced.

### Advice

Do not rely on informal chats to share important information with the volunteers. It is a good additional way of communication but make sure important information is consequently given to all volunteers.

Volunteers want to get more involved and the volunteer meeting is a good way to do this. They have to be asked about their opinions focussed on specific issues that the management needs to decide on.

Volunteer meetings should take place every month and the volunteers should all receive the minutes of these meetings. The goal of these meetings needs to be communicated to the volunteers.

The notice board (in the new shop this is a white board) in the basement can be an effective way to spread information from the management to the volunteers, the other way around and amongst volunteers. To be able to do this the board needs to be used frequently and volunteers need to know the importance of using the board. This can be done in the informal interview with new volunteers and by speaking to the current volunteers.

Contact between the volunteers can be improved when there are more volunteers available. But because volunteers work on different days it is still hard to introduce them all personally. An introduction book is a good way to introduce the volunteers without them meeting each other. It consists of a picture of every volunteer and an introduction (preferably written by themselves). The volunteer news brief can also be used for this.

E-mail can be used as an additional way to inform and communicate with the volunteers. At the moment this is not done consistently. E-mail newsletters can be sent to the volunteers but because not all volunteers have access to the internet hard copies should also be provided.

There should be post boxes for the volunteers, the shop manager, the project director and the Trustees.

Volunteers can leave notes for each other, the shop manager, the project director or the Trustees in the post boxes.

### Action list:

- **Informal chats:** do not rely on these to share important information but it is a good additional way to communicate with the volunteers.
- **Volunteer meeting:** every month to inform and involve the volunteers. Ask volunteers about their opinions and give them the minutes of this meeting. Let them know what the goal of this meeting is.
- **White board:** keep it up-to-date and let the volunteers know the importance of using the board.
- **Introduction book:** with pictures and introductions to introduce the volunteers to each other.
- **E-mail:** used as an additional way to inform and communicate with volunteers.
- **Post boxes:** to leave messages for the volunteers, the shop manager, the project director or the Trustees. Important information left in the volunteers' post box should have their names on it.



## Teamwork

This principle is graded 5,5 for the actual and 8,5 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 3 points.

### Situation analysis

There is not one close group of volunteers and not much team spirit because volunteers do not work together much and do not know each other well. Volunteers do not feel involved enough with the organisation.

### Advice

Volunteers want to get to know each other and work together more. To be able to do this ESL needs more volunteers. The shop manager is already working on this.

Team building activities are a good way to create team spirit. An example is a preliminary conversation with the shop manager and the volunteers every morning to discuss the shop. Furthermore, some activities outside of the workplace should be organised. This means spending some money but more involvement with the organisation and each other creates more dedication and passion for the project. This results in the volunteers taking their work more serious and being more punctual.

### Action list:

- **Working together:** recruiting new volunteers.
- **Preliminary conversation:** morning meeting to discuss news and the daily activities.
- **Team-building:** activities outside of the working place should be organised.

## Positivity

This principle is graded 6 for the actual and 8,5 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 2,5 points.

### Situation analysis

Volunteers are often already positive but at times they complain too much and see problems instead of solutions. There are only a few volunteers that do this but they can still influence the atmosphere.

### Advice

This is hard to change because it is a personal character trait. Let people know when they are being negative and try to turn this negativity into positivity. Let them know that they have to think in terms of solutions instead of problems (for example by introducing them to the governing principles). Furthermore, explain that they should give constructive criticism only. When the volunteers notice improvements in the principles the atmosphere becomes more positive.

A good exercise to create a positive atmosphere is the 'positive game'. It is an exercise in which the participants write down positive things. For example everyone writes down one positive characteristic of the other participants. The leader writes all the positive comments for one person on one piece of paper and hands it to them. This way all participants have a list of positive characteristics for themselves.

### Action list:

- **Communication:** tell people to take a positive attitude, look at solutions and give constructive criticism.
- **Positive game:** a game to spread positivity can be played during the volunteer meetings.



## Commitment

This principle is graded 7 for the actual and 9 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 2 points.

### Situation analysis

Not all volunteers are dedicated and passionate enough, volunteers are often late or do not show up for work.

### Advice

This principle is closely connected to the others, when there is more teamwork, more involvement (internal communication) and when volunteers feel appreciated and challenged they will be more committed.

Volunteers can be motivated to be more committed to the organisation by rewarding them for their commitment. For example a box of chocolates for the volunteer that has been in at the right time every day for two months, or to give the volunteers something when they have been working for the organisation for a certain period of time (principle: Appreciation).

Action list:

- **Rewards:** reward volunteers for their commitment to motivate them to keep up the good work (e.g. box of chocolates if they are on time for two months in a row).

## Respect

This principle is graded 7,5 for the actual and 9 for the desired situation. This is a difference of 1,5 points.

### Situation analysis

The level of respect in the organisation is already reasonably well. There are certain people that have more problems with respect than others but these are exceptions.

### Advice

There have to be clear rules for what behaviour is considered tolerable and what not. These rules have to be written down and known by everyone in the organisation. When someone crosses the line they should receive a warning. Respect also has to do with teamwork. When there is one team and team spirit they treat each other with respect.

Action list:

- **Rules:** create clear rules for behaviour inside the organisation.



### Budget

Most activities can be done without it having to cost ESL extra money, but not all. The estimated costs for the first year are portrayed in table 7.1.

Activity	Item and cost	Quantity	Total cost
Brainstorm session	Lunch: £15.00	app. 4 times a year	£60.00
Rewards	Emmaus mug: £5.00	app. 22 volunteers	£110.00
	Sweets: £0.50		£11.00
	Box of chocolates: £0.80		£17.60
Birthday	Calendar: £2.00	One	£ 2.00
	Card: £1.00	app. 22 volunteers	£22.00
Volunteer meeting	Lunch: £15.00	app. 12 times a year	£180.00
Team-building	Lunch and or drinks: £25.00	app. 4 times a year	£100.00
<b>Total:</b>			<b>£502.50</b>

Table 7.1: Governing principles action plan cost overview

### Evaluation

To be able to reach the objectives it is important to evaluate during the implementation to make sure ESL is moving in the right direction. This will be done by the volunteer representative as described in the guidebook (appendix L). Every volunteer meeting one (or more) principle(s) are discussed. The volunteer representative leads this discussion. If the volunteers and the shop manager feel like there is more that can be done to improve the principles they decide on what actions to take.

The goal is to improve all principles with 0,5 points within six months. This will be evaluated by filling out a questionnaire in October 2006 (appendix L). After determining how much the principles have been improved over the past six months (compared to the first grading in April 2006) another session is held. The goal of this session is to determine a strategy for improving the volunteering environment even more to achieve the desired situation in October 2007. This is organised by the shop manager and the volunteer representative.

In October 2007 a questionnaire is filled in again to check of the desired situation has been achieved. If so this situation needs to be guarded by the volunteer representative and the shop manager. If the desired situation is not achieved they need to revise the strategy.



## 8. Further recommendations

The governing principles action plan, the volunteer meetings, the comments in the principle boxes, the Investing in Volunteers programme and the further recommendations in this chapter altogether provide the necessary input and actions to improve the volunteering environment within ESL.

My project is the kick-off for improvements in the volunteering environment. The complete volunteering policy is yet to be organised and drawn up.

Together with the governing principles action plan these recommendations answer the central question: In what way can internal communication help to improve the volunteering environment within ESL?

The recommendations in the governing principles action plan are focussed on the governing principles. The recommendations in this chapter are based on observations during my project and interviews with staff members.

### Volunteer programme

At the moment there is no volunteering policy in place and even the policies that are there are not familiar by most volunteers. Setting up a proper structure for volunteer involvement (a volunteer programme) takes time but is necessary when creating a better volunteering environment. Involving the volunteers in setting up this policy is important. Not only does it improve the policy itself it also creates volunteer involvement and the volunteers feel appreciated and valued. Furthermore, involving them also makes the volunteers familiar with the policy.

A volunteer policy demonstrates the organisation's commitment to volunteers. By having a policy, the organisation shows that they care and that thought has gone into the volunteer programme. Furthermore, it helps fairness and consistency. Being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions are made consequently and all volunteers are treated equally and fairly (Volunteers' Week Planning Group, 2002). It also provides the organisation with a guide on how to react when problems occur.

For volunteers, the policy lets them know where they stand. They have a standard by which they can expect to be treated, and a mechanism for addressing problems and taking up complaints (National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>a</sup>).

Another part of the volunteer programme is the volunteer welcome pack. This has to contain the most important information for volunteers about ESL and the volunteering policy. At the moment this welcome pack is too big. When the volunteer welcome pack is condensed will be more manageable. Informing volunteers only verbally about the volunteering policy is not enough. Therefore this welcome pack is extremely important.

ESL received a grant to participate in the Investing in Volunteers programme. This will help ESL achieve the Investing in Volunteers' standard. The program starts in June 2006. This is extremely good timing because it ensures that ESL continues what has been started during my project. They will help ESL set up a volunteer programme.

A lot of information on how to draw up a proper volunteering policy can be found on the internet, a good website is Volunteering England: [www.volunteersweek.org.uk/Policies%20Booklet.pdf](http://www.volunteersweek.org.uk/Policies%20Booklet.pdf).



## Involving volunteers

A start with involving volunteers has been made during my project and by the advice that is mentioned in the governing principles action plan. However, volunteers have to be encouraged to become integrated into the daily life of the organisation.

As mentioned in the governing principles action plan the shop manager can actively involve the volunteers by setting up a volunteer news brief, holding regular brainstorm sessions and through the volunteer meetings. It is important that she invests time in the volunteers and keeps them informed about what goes on in the organisation.

Volunteers have to be given a chance to do more in the organisation. At the moment the shop manager is hesitant in giving volunteers more responsibilities because she is not used to doing this and the volunteers are can be unreliable. However, the new volunteers have already proven to be reliable and with the governing principles to work on it is important to give them more responsibilities. This is already briefly mentioned in the governing principles action plan but I want to stress it again because it is important for the volunteers that they feel like they actually contribute something to the organisation.

Another important aspect in volunteer involvement is the future. The ESL Community is being built and the question arises what the future role of the volunteers will be. At the moment volunteers are necessary to run the Community shops but when companions start moving into the Community they can man the shops.

The Trustees and the project director are still debating this issue. The Trustees want the companions in the shops and think that the volunteers will not be needed anymore. The project director thinks it is a good idea to keep volunteers involved because they are their link to the West Norwood community. Volunteers can help improve their own neighbourhood and spread the word about ESL.

There are some Emmaus Communities that have a shop run only by volunteers. This can work out really well for ESL. On the other hand some Communities are not so keen on volunteers as they can become a burden.

It is important to decide on this matter as soon as possible and ideally to involve the volunteers in the process. If this is not possible at least keep them up to date on the matter and inform them on the exact reasons behind the decision.

## Involving students

ESL does not have enough recourses to hire professionals for all aspects. Getting student trainees can be the answer to this problem. There are many possibilities, for example communication trainees (there have been three communication students from the Netherlands over the past 2 years and 2 more will start in January 2006) or students from Cultural and Social Education (CMV). They can be of great help for volunteer management, event management, etc.

Involving students is a win-win situation because these students have to find a place to do their internship or just need work experience and have a lot to offer. ESL can use their skills and offer the work experience they need.

## Recruitment

ESL needs to recruit more volunteers to be able to run both Community shops. Recruiting the right volunteers is hard but there are some things that can help.

It is useful to think about the motivations people have for becoming a volunteer. This can help with designing the recruitment message (National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>6</sup>).



These motivations are:

- Commitment to an organisation or a cause – it is important to emphasise how their contribution will make a difference. For example Violet, she knew Emmaus and now that she has some spare time wants to help the organisation.
- Meeting people – volunteering can be a very social activity. For example Ann, she has recently moved into the West Norwood area and would like to get to know more people.
- Gaining skills – when recruiting stress the skills and experience that volunteers can gain. For example Elaine, she is still at school and wants to gain work experience and skills.
- Utilising existing skills – some people want to put their skills to a good cause. Keeping active – more and more older people are volunteering. For example Seilagh, she is retired and has some spare time to donate to a good cause.

(National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>5</sup>)

These motivations can be used when determining what message to use for volunteer recruitment. This message generally includes: what the voluntary work is, what the organisation as a whole does, how a new volunteer can make a difference and how to find out more. Ensuring that the volunteers are informed, motivated and know how to get involved (National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>6</sup>).

The most effective way to recruit volunteers, according to the National Centre for Volunteering, is by word of mouth. 80 percent of those directly asked to volunteer say 'yes'. Most productive is the one-on-one, face-to-face personal request about a specific volunteer job especially asked by a volunteer or someone known to the person being asked (McCurley, n.d.).

It can also help to look at things that make it easier for people to volunteer. These are: being asked, if someone helps them to get started, if family or friends are involved too, if they know it improves their skills, if they can work from home and if it leads to qualification(s).

The barriers that cause people not to volunteer can be useful as well when determining the right recruitment message. The most important barriers according to the National Centre for Volunteering are that people do not know if they are allowed to volunteer or if they can afford it. Furthermore, they are unsure about what they will be asked to do, how much time they need to give, if they will be treated well and get on with people. People are afraid they are not up to it or that the commitment will end up being more than they can handle (National Centre for Volunteering, n.d.<sup>8</sup>).

### **Trustee and volunteer relationship**

At the moment there is no relationship between the Trustees and the (shop based) volunteers. It is a good idea to think about the reason for the non-existence of this relationship. It might needed to reconsider this and get them involved with each other.

This is connected to the future of the volunteers within the organisation. At the end of 2007 Companions will start living in the Community. If ESL wants to keep working with volunteers it is even more important to think about the volunteer – Trustee relationship.



## Evaluation

Before going to London I had my whole internship planned out, but it all turned out a little different from what I expected. I changed my plans and started again with finding out what the exact problem and the right solution were.

The best time during my internship was when I could put my plans into action. Holding the session was a great experience. Especially the reactions from the volunteers were motivating and satisfying. They confirmed that I was doing was exactly what the organisation needed at that moment.

The introduction of the principles was a lot of fun as well. Making it something fun and something to remember was definitely achieved and considering the response I got the volunteers understood the idea of the principles.

The session went really well and the reactions afterwards were positive. The volunteers told me that such a session should happen more often because it gave them the chance to express their opinions and share their ideas in front of the management.

Doing my project in England has not been an obstacle. The language was not a problem during my day-to-day activities within ESL and my project. Writing this report was challenging but went all right with help of colleagues and friends.

I have not encountered any obstacles regarding the English culture because the people within ESL are all from different backgrounds and cultures. It was interesting and fun to work with them.

As to doing this project on my own, I did experience some moments where I could use a colleague student to discuss things with. But because this was not possible it did teach me to become more critical of my own work.

Walking past the wardrobe I could not resist looking inside to check if there were already any comments in the boxes. I was glad to see that some suggestions were already left in the boxes. This shows volunteers do have something to contribute and feel involved enough to think about new ideas and suggestions.

Looking back on the past five months I am happy with what I have been able to do for ESL. Unfortunately the end of my project also means leaving ESL and not being able to see the whole Community being build. The organisation is at a crucial point; the build of the Community is kicking off.



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